

Students' Union Trustee Board

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board
Tuesday 28th January 2020 – EE 2019, 18:00

Present:

Megan Price (VP Education) – MP
Harry Lonsdale (Chair and President) – HL
Michael Harris (VP Student Activities) - MH
Margaret Jolley (External Trustee) – MJ
Melanie Brittain (External Trustee) - MB
Rebekah Williams (External Trustee) – RW
Deborah Andrews (Student Trustee) – DA
Isobel Lines (Student Trustee) - IL

In attendance:

Sophie Williams (SU Chief Executive) - SW
Samina Fiaz (SU HR & Admin Coordinator, also Minute Secretary) – SF

Absent:

Ivan Steblyuk (Student Trustee) – IS

1. Attendance and Apologies

Action: HL to contact IS as this is the second consecutive meeting not attended and no apologies received.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 RC (Finance and Commercial Manager) had reported back to the Finance subcommittee after conducting further research on bank accounts for the reserves.
- 3.2 SW & RW had met with the Sports Development Co-ordinator, to discuss potential funding grants for recreational sport and some follow up actions had been agreed.
- 3.3 SW had liaised with the marketing team regarding an infographic for the impact report and it was agreed this would be a very good idea for the next impact report but capacity would make it difficult to implement this year.

4. Declarations or conflicts of interest/ Register of declarations of interest

HL declared a conflict of interest with regards to quotes for the outdoor space proposal (a wellbeing garden outside the Hangar) which he had initiated.

5. Chief Executive Officer Report

SW updated the board on key SU activities as follows:

- 5.1 At a recent Finance meeting with the University to discuss the 2020-21 budget, the University had seemed supportive of the SU's proposal for an £11k increase in the block grant to help accommodate an additional member of staff, to support the new Student Networks and volunteering. £11k related to the inflationary increase in salary costs, as the SU had made savings elsewhere (such as reduced NUS affiliation fee and the end of the photocopier contract). The SU will, therefore, submit a block grant request for of £540K and hope to have an indication of the University's response in April, following the University Finance and Development Committee.
- 5.2 The University's Director of Finance will be liaising with the ICT department on behalf of the SU on whether the SU can be incorporated into their rolling renewal programme. The SU will have difficulty ensuring staff PCs are 'in date', bearing in mind the cost of the latest required PC specification, and several are about to reach the end of the time whereby they are supported by University IT.
- 5.3 New lighting will be fitted in the Welcome Desk area of the SU in the week commencing 17th February.
- 5.4 Facilities are investigating installing two windows in the main office in the SU (SU 005) to allow more natural light to enter the office, following a request via the Staff Consultative Forum.
- 5.5 Totum sales had declined significantly with only 648 cards bought so far this year (compared to over 2000 at the same point last year) resulting in a large drop in income. The projection for Totum income is approximately half of income received last year in NUS Extra card sales.
- 5.6 Advice Service case numbers were lower this year to date but this is believed to be due to the work the University had done to reduce levels of academic misconduct, resulting in fewer cases.
- 5.7 The Housing fair held in the Hangar had gone very well, being attended by over 600 students.
- 5.8 Preparation for the annual elections was under way with Elections nominations due in a couple of weeks.
- 5.9 The recent All Staff session had a positive atmosphere, with updates and presentations from a few staff on key SU activities and a review of progress against the strategic plan.
- 5.10 SW attended the NUS Strategic conversation conference where discussions mainly focussed on the new NUS organisation structure, proposed changes to NUS conference and a move to focus on five priority campaigns per year. Some of the sessions focussed on how international students can be better supported, the National Education Service, Totum and NUSSL. SW informed the board that NUSSL had conducted a health check on the SU a couple of years ago and as part of the service, a free follow up visit is offered, which SW will chase.
Action: SW to ask RC to invite NUSSL back for a follow-up health check.
- 5.11 The annual All Student Meeting has been postponed to April.
- 5.12 A new cohort of 330 international students had arrived from India the previous day as part of UWIC (University of Worcester International College). The

University and SU had been liaising to ensure they receive a warm welcome and help to settle in.

6. Monthly management accounts (November and Dec 2019)

- 6.1 There were no concerns with the accounts.
- 6.2 Bar income was 12.5% higher compared to the same point last year which was pleasing. Disco Binglew had been a very good night, as well as Monday nights which had seen a significant increase in takings. All nights had seen an increase except Fridays, which remains the highest takings night. Student staff wages for the Bar had crept up slightly and so would continue to be monitored to ensure they were in line with income.
- 6.3 All other budget areas were on track, with no concerns.

7. Strategic Plan

The board had already received the Strategic plan with progress updates. SW gave an overview of areas where more work was needed, as follows:

- 7.1 In core goal 4, around employability and volunteering, the SU had not met many of its targets, however, it was hoped that if a Student Development Assistant is recruited then work on this area would grow and improve.
- 7.2 Following student advice appointments, students had been asked to feed back on the service provided, however, not much feedback had been received. The Board had a discussion on how students can be encouraged to engage more with this process.
Action: SW to liaise with the Student Engagement Manager to develop a more effective process to gain client feedback on the Advice Service.
- 7.3 More ideas had been received via the Ideas Forum in Semester 2 following none in the first Semester and so much more work was needed to promote this. The Ideas forum would be a key focus during Change Week, taking place next week.
- 7.4 More work was still needed to promote arts-based societies as the Arts Collective has now folded. This had, unfortunately, proved a very challenging area to develop.
- 7.5 There had been no progress on the Sport Strategy.

8. Outdoor space proposal

- 8.1 Over the last three months, six companies had been approached to tender for the re-development of the outdoor space by the Hangar. Two quotes had been received for completion of the work and supplying new furniture. The board were handed copies of each quote received which included the proposed plans for the space. After some discussion and comparison of the quotes, the board unanimously agreed to go with one company, due to its sustainable practices, including the use of recycled and reclaimed furniture, and the care it had taken in submitting the proposal. SW commented on the support the University had provided to the SU with this project, for which they were very grateful. The Vice Chancellor's Executive Group had, also, approved the plans.
Action: HL to liaise with the University's Project Manager to plan for the work to commence.

9. Governance Review Draft Proposal

MP reported on progress on the governance review which is well under way:

- 9.1 Around 300 students had already been consulted but the SU would, ideally, like this to reach 500.
- 9.2 The Part time Officer roles would be replaced by Student Networks.
- 9.3 There would be various changes to the constitution and the byelaws to make them more streamlined, accessible and relevant.
- 9.4 The timeline for completion of the review was outlined, with the aim for the new byelaws to come into effect on 1st August 2020.
- 9.5 MJ questioned whether the SU had the resources to draft the new byelaws and constitution as this was a major piece of work. SW agreed that it was a lot of work for the SU but that good progress had been made and it was a key priority for the Student Engagement Manager. MP reiterated that the new byelaws were taking shape and looking good. HL stated that having just one election period per year would be better for the SU as engagement with the part time officer elections was generally quite poor and it would free up time for staff to promote the Networks.

10. Board Sub-committees

- 10.1 MP updated the board on key discussions from the HR subcommittee which included:

- probationary progress for new staff
- Budget proposals for 2020-21
- An update on the key discussions at the Staff Consultative forum
- Updates to the staff handbook and the findings of some benchmarking work on rewards and benefits conducted by SW
- Policy developments, including the need to draft a new Safeguarding Policy and, subsequently, include safeguarding within the SU risk register.

- 10.2 Updates from the Finance subcommittee included:

- Management accounts update
- The budget submission
- An update on plans for the Hangar's new outdoor space.

11. Officers' report

MH, MP and HL updated the board on various recent SU activities, as follows:

- Upcoming events included Change Week, Student Volunteering Week and Societies week.
- Varsity would be taking place a little earlier this year, and over a shorter period of time, starting at the end of March. Negotiations had gone well with Gloucestershire to date. The University are also pleased that Varsity is taking place earlier this year as it will not take place so close to the Independent Study hand-in day.
- Other scheduled events included Go Green week and the NUS National Conference which HL, MP and one other delegate (still to be confirmed) would be attending in Liverpool at the end of March.

- The Fellows evening in the Hangar in January, had gone well with 21 Fellowes in attendance. The Officers informed the group about the work of the SU after which discussions were held as to how they might support the SU, including volunteering opportunities and recreational sports facilities.
- HL had been liaising with Christopher Whitehead Language College with regards their student leadership committee visiting the SU in March. It will be a fantastic opportunity for the pupils to gain an insight of what the SU does around student representation and voice and for the school and the SU to exchange ideas.
- HL and MP had met with senior university staff to discuss what improvements they feel should be made to City Campus in the short, medium and long-term. The Officers will keep the board appraised on developments in this area but had found the appetite for change frustrating.
- SW mentioned that, whilst the review of their objectives revealed that the Officers had already achieved a great deal, they were facing resistance in some areas to making fundamental or sometimes apparently quite simple changes at the University. SW and the Officers had raised this separately with senior University management as it had affected their motivation and led to a sense of 'tokenism' at times. A discussion ensued on how the SU might address this going forward.

12. Executive Committee minutes

The Executive Committee did not convene as the meeting was not quorate. A meeting has been arranged for 10th February.

13. Student Council Summary

The key discussions at Student Council were:

- The Night Bus service being withdrawn
- Implementation of a new retention protocol at the university
- Progress on the governance review
- Graduation costs.
- NUS conference
- City Campus
- How students can spread the word and get involved in Change Week and the Student Choice Awards.

14. Board of Governors summary

The Board of Governors had not met, with the next meeting scheduled for 24th February.

15. Any Other Business

None

Date of next meeting: 24th March 2020.

Summary of Actions:

Action	For	To be completed by
HL to contact IS	HL	ASAP
SW to ask RC to invite NUSSL back for a follow-up health check	SW/RC	ASAP
SW to liaise with the Student Engagement Manager to develop a more effective process to gain client feedback on the Advice Service	SW	ASAP
HL to liaise with the University's Project Manager to plan for the work to commence.	HL	ASAP

DRAFT