

## Students' Union Trustee Board

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board**  
**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – Via MS Teams, 18:00**

**Present:**

Liam Lees (Chair and President) – LL  
Ragnar Mularczyk (VP Education) – RM  
Neve Ricketts (VP Student Activities) - NR  
Rebekah Williams (Lay Trustee) – RW  
Andrew Humphry (Student Trustee) – AH  
Margaret Jolley (Lay Trustee) – MJ  
Melanie Brittain (Lay Trustee) - MB

**In attendance:**

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

**1. Attendance and Apologies**

Apologies received for Matthew Osborne (Student Trustee) – MO

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**3. Matters arising**

Both actions from the last meeting had been completed:

LL to contact MB and MJ to decide a way forward for SW's remuneration and also liaise with the Finance and Commercial manager regarding affordability of a pay increase.

SF to update 'external' trustee to 'lay' trustee in the terms of reference.

**4. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (including Register of declarations of Interest)**

None declared.

**5. Chief Executive Officer Report**

SW updated the board on key SU matters as follows:

- 5.1 An update on the presentation of the end of year accounts 2020/21 to University Audit and Risk Committee. This meeting went very well with high praise for the SU Officers and staff team for continued success and high outputs/good outcomes.
- 5.2 Staff are currently or about to undertake their annual Personal Performance Appraisals, linking their objectives and personal development plans in with the Operational Plan.

- 5.3 An update on the Union's and Tramp's response to the 'Girl's Night In' campaign around drink spiking, which has also resulted in additional measures required to achieve Gold Best Bar None in 2022.
- 5.4 The performance of the bar, which was going well. Takings were slightly down on the same period 2020, mainly due to the effect of the 'Girls Night In' campaign, when students boycotted venues on a Wednesday night.
- 5.5 Societies have reduced in number following the pandemic, albeit memberships of the current societies was healthy. Work was underway to encourage the establishment of new societies.
- 5.6 An update on ongoing frustrations with the University's timetable for appointing performances coaches, which has a detrimental affect on students' morale and performance. SW had, once again, made representations about this at the Sports Development Board for coaches to be appointed earlier in 2022, ready for the start of the academic year. The situation was repeated each year and was highly frustrating.
- 5.7 SW and LL updated the group on the current challenges around the Student Network membership, committees and engagement. Whilst a couple were doing very well, others were struggling in these respects, as well as disappointing engagement in Welfare and Inclusion Council and a lot of work was being done by the Student Engagement Team to try and address this. The picture nationally was very much around students not engaging as we would have expected them to, not willing to take on positions of responsibility, and lacking confidence, which is real concern for many SUs.
- 5.8 An update on the Leadership and Race Equity training undertaken by SW and Tim Hewes-Belton and the ongoing EDI work of the Union.
- 5.9 SW updated the group on the plans proposed by the University to redesign the senior executive, with the imminent departure of DVC and Provost Sarah Greer, and the previous departure of Ross Renton.
- 5.10 A planned review of progress against the Operational Plan in December at all staff 'away day'.

## **6. Monthly Management Accounts (October 2021)**

- 6.1 Income was down but so was expenditure. No areas for concern, the management accounts look healthy with no cause for concern at present.

## **7. Risk Register (and safeguarding policy)**

- 7.1 There were no changes to the Safeguarding policy from last year.
- 7.2 SW goes through the changes to some of the risks on the risk register with explanations.
- 7.3 The board approved the risk register.

## **8. Annual statement of Legal Compliance**

SW explained that this is a relatively new document, which was first brought to the Board in May 2020, as another means of reassurance for Trustees. The statement details how the SU is meeting its legal requirements in relation to several areas,

including Charity law, HR law, Health and Safety etc. It is a useful tool for management to ensure that the SU is keeping on top of its' legal responsibilities. The document is reviewed annually in the November trustee board meetings. The board approved the annual statement of legal compliance.

#### **9. Matrix of delegated responsibility**

Minor amendments had been made to the matrix of delegated responsibility which SW explained to the board.

The board approved the matrix of delegated responsibility.

#### **10. Draft annual Impact Report 2020/21**

The board are pleased with the progress on the impact report, which will have some amendments before being printed and posted/emailed to key stakeholders (including students who are featured in the report). The SU will start to create distribution lists in the near future and the impact reports will be sent out in the new year. A question was raised in terms of sustainability and printing the reports. SW clarified that only a relatively small amount of reports were printed and sent to a select group e.g. Board of Governors who are less likely to access on-line, as well as students who can keep them as mementos.

#### **11. Board Sub-committees**

- 11.1 The finance subcommittee had convened last month. LL updated the board on discussions at the last finance subcommittee in October which had included an update on the management accounts, the end of year accounts and audit by Knox Cropper, sponsorship and income (including an update on Tramps sponsorship), some issues the team were facing with SAGE payroll and migration to a secure server at the University (which has taken an excessive length of time), the purchase of Staff Savvy software, the expected pay and reward review, and BUCS transport.
- 11.2 The HR subcommittee had met earlier. RM updated the board on discussions which included current staffing issues and probationary periods for four new staff members. The Employee Engagement Survey would be run again in March, a year after the last survey. A quote had been received for the pay and reward review and it was hoped that another could be received for comparison but this had been very challenging with no one company able to quote currently due to workloads. The recommendation was to go ahead with the existing quote provider (Atkinson HR) who provided a comprehensive and competitive quote. A further meeting had also been arranged with Atkinson HR prior to the committee meeting, with MJ present, who was confident in their project brief as a result. Staff Savvy HR software had been introduced and was in the early stages of implementation, with good progress so far. The SU was also looking at devising a menopause policy.

#### **12. Officers' report**

RM, LL and NR updated the board on activities to date, as follows:

- LL – Black History Month events

- Event held by Nigerian society
- World Mental Health Day – the SU teamed up with the University to run a mental health day and invited counselling and mental health, healthy minds, fancy a cuppa etc. It was a successful day with students partaking and appreciating the activities.
- International Men's Day – various activities had been arranged including recreational sport, badminton, mixed netball, quick cricket and wheelchair basketball
- The REACH membership is very important to students and a significant amount of memberships have been purchased via students' REACH account. It is, clearly, bringing down some of the barriers to accessing membership and students are definitely benefitting from it.
- Two workshops had been held to promote the 'Consent' campaign, #NeverOK and NR had led a range of activities around this, including sports and societies signing the #NeverOK pledge
- NR updated the group on her WorcStar initiative, aimed at celebrating individuals who have gone the extra mile for others.
- NR had surveyed students about what Life skills they would like help with. A good response had been achieved with a range of requests, such as personal statements and budgeting. NR is now working on how she can support students with workshops and activities to support them in these areas.
- #Teamworc were taking part in the BUCS national rainbow laces event arranged for 8<sup>th</sup> Dec
- A second Varsity meeting had been held with Gloucester University and a Varsity theme was discussed, which has been agreed as #NeverOK as NR's counterpart is also promoting this national campaign, which is very pleasing.
- RM updated the group on developments within academic representation, including School Rep recruitment (with 3 more Reps recruited, leaving 3 vacancies), Course Rep recruitment and the challenges of getting academics to register Reps on SOLE, Course Rep training, Education Council, the Academic Representation Oversight Group (AROG), and Repstival.
- The current RAG total was at around £11k, hoped to reach £18k by Christmas.

### **13. Welcome Week Survey report**

Not as many students filled in the survey as was hoped, the students who did were happy with the range of things on offer and responses were similar to those of previous years. The feedback meeting for Welcome Weekend with the University is in December and the SU will feed back that it went well but that there were perhaps too many activities going on at City campus which led to issues in promoting and resourcing effectively, as well as low attendance at some events.

### **14. Executive Committee summary**

The last two exec committees have been productive. From discussing things raised in the ideas forum, to national campaigns, and discussions / projects involving the University.

As a result of the Ideas Forum, a bookshelf is now in the SU for a book swap initiative.

Societies – a campaign is being planned for Semester 2 called Soc from Scratch, to encourage students to set up new general interest societies, following the challenges faced by societies in the pandemic.

Two new societies and sports clubs have been approved including Knit and Natter which has 30 members already and meet on a Sunday.

#### 15. Student Council Summary

Student Council had convened at the end of October where the 'responsible freebies' policy had been approved (following an idea from the Ideas Forum submitted by Exec Committee). It was discussed that the idea would be approved so staff are working on implementing that. Council were also updated on progress by the 3 Sub-committees, Officer objectives, AROG, the end of year accounts for the SU (2020/21) and the SU operational plan. A live policy ongoing is the fit to study policy, about which RM is liaising with Caryn Thorogood, Director of Student Life. Discussion items included tuition fees and the proposed NUS campaign around a new vision for education. The student trustee vacancy was advertised at Student Council too.

#### 16. Board of Governors summary

An update was given on discussions at the last Board of Governors meeting. [Commercial in confidence].

The board discussed an upcoming project of an inclusive cricket centre, which has been given the go-ahead.

#### 17. Any Other Business

SW informed the Board that every so often SU staff are asked to do a short presentation at a January TB meeting (when the agenda is slightly lighter). SW would like to invite the Academic & Welfare Advisor, and her new assistant, to deliver a presentation on the Advice Service. The board agree that this is a good idea and would appreciate some insight into this area of operation.

**Action:** SF to invite the Academic & Welfare Advisor and her assistant to the next board meeting.

**Date of next meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

#### Summary of Actions:

Action	For	To be completed by
SF to invite the Academic & Welfare Advisor and her assistant to the next board meeting.	SF	ASAP

End