

## Students' Union Trustee Board

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustee Board**  
**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 – Via MS Teams, 18:00**

**Present:**

Al Linforth (Chair and President) – AL  
Meg Lee (VP Student Activities) – ML  
Gemma Allcott (VP Education) – GA  
Rebekah Williams (Lay Trustee) – RW  
Melanie Brittain (Lay Trustee) - MB  
Margaret Jolley (Lay Trustee) - MJ  
Matthew Osborne (Student Trustee) – MO  
Dylan Dudley (Student Trustee) – DD  
Matthew Payne (Student Trustee) – MP

**In attendance:**

Samina Fiaz (SU HR Coordinator, also Minute Secretary) – SF

**1. Attendance and Apologies**

Apologies received for Sophie Williams (SU Chief Executive) – SW, Erin Boddice (Student Trustee) – EB (arrived at 17:45) and Melanie Brittain (Lay Trustee) - MB

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**3. Matters arising**

SW will liaise with the Director of Finance and Commercial to re-model the costs of staffing over the next couple of years and the impact on the reserves:  
Done and the extra-ordinary meeting was held.

SW to convene again with the University PVC Students, Tim Jones, to discuss the staffing costs:

The SU Director of Finance and Commercial and SW were due to meet with University staff (PVC Students, Director of Finance and the Deputy Director of Finance) for the next quarterly finance meeting in January, to give an idea of the budget the SU will need next year and the staffing costs from the restructure. However, this was postponed as the PVC Students was on holiday. This quarterly meeting is still to be rearranged by them.

SF to arrange an Extraordinary meeting for the board to agree a way forward regarding the costs of the organisation restructure:

Done

SW to update the student trustees on the SUSS pension scheme:  
Done

**4. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (including Register of declarations of Interest)**  
None declared.

**5. Chief Executive Officer Report**

In SW's absence the Officers updated the board on key SU activities as follows:

- An All-Staff meeting took place last week to agree priorities going forwards, with pleasing progress on the operational plan to date. Updates on Speak Week and the Hangar Bar were also given at the meeting.
- At Audit committee, the SU staff and Officers were praised for their work in a difficult year (due to difficulties in student engagement post-Covid) and were pleased with the SU report. The Governors asked about when the block grant is agreed and mention in the report of a need to review the SU space and reasons behind this. The Vice Chancellor stated that the SU receives a 'significant' block grant but does not want the SU to be in a position where there is too much focus on seeking independent commercial income. The Audit Committee were really pleased to hear about the work of the SU and praised this.
- The appendix to the CE report included a report on the demographic information of students involved in the SU and how to engage those less engaged students. This information was presented to SU staff at the all-staff meeting and the EDI committee would be taking this forward.
- Regarding Antonia, the new Director of Representation and Membership Services, her secondment from NUS ended yesterday but NUS have asked for her to work full time with them until her notice period ends in mid-March. She has nearly two weeks of annual leave owed from NUS and so would use those days to work for the SU in the interim, including during the Elections period when her presence will be needed. In the meantime, SW would continue to manage Antonia's direct reports.
- The Student Teaching Excellence Framework has been submitted (to evidence excellence regarding student experience and outcomes). SW and GA were involved in meetings around the submission of the University's TEF submission, providing input where required. Some Student Reps were also involved and supplied evidence and input to the University's TEF submission. The SU's student-led submission was made in the form of a 30 minute video and the SU's Creative Content Coordinator did a fantastic job of producing this with such short notice. The University are really hoping to achieve Silver accreditation in the TEF submission, the results of which will be published in the summer.
- RW queried the recent incident involving a couple of sports clubs. ML gave an overview of how the issue was being handled but due to a conflict of interest, was not able to disclose any specific details but assured the board that the matter was being dealt with by SU and University staff with meetings scheduled to take place this week.

## 6. Monthly Management Accounts – December 2022

No update given but the accounts had been shared with the board prior to the meeting. The accounts are approved by the Board.

## 7. WSU Operational Plan 2022/23

Updates on the operational plan were shared at the recent SU All Staff meeting. The highest scoring sections of the plan, according to progress made so far were Representation and Networks, Governance and Democracy, TeamWorc Action, RAG, and Health and Safety. Progress on all the objectives has been made with some areas still with low progress due to when those objectives can be achieved (such as Elections).

Key points and progress on the operational plan were reported as follows:

- The SU is keen to increase its' presence at City and Riverside campuses by ensuring weekly staff presence. Some of the Student Engagement Team and Help and Advice service will be based at City Campus one day per week and plans were under way to enable this to happen, as of this month.
- Membership of Networks is down on last year's figures to 106 members and it is harder to engage with committee members this year. Some SU staff have discussed the issues in much detail and AL will be submitting a paper to the University to discuss the possibility of utilising funds from some under-used initiatives such as Get Involved to help fund bursaries for Network committee members. School Reps are paid for representation work and so it seemed only fair to incentivise network committee members too. It is hoped this would increase Network engagement and help boost the work of the committee members. There is also Network Week coming up (to be discussed further in the Officers Report) which will hopefully help improve engagement. On a more positive note, 98% of School reps have been trained (which is above the target of 95%) and 75% of Network committee roles have been filled, including a recent new member on the Disability Network.
- In Governance and Democracy, we have recruited EB, our new Student Trustee.
- In the Hangar, the SU wishes to increase the number of cultural events. So far there has been a Diwali event and others will be planned in due course, including potentially a Chinese New Year event.
- The SU is awaiting information from the University Finance Team relating to potential SU usage of the café area in the Hangar to increase its offer and sources of income – commercial in confidence.
- SU EDI work is going well with the end of year EDI report having been published, as well as an anti-racist statement. EDI training has taken place for committee members and this will be rolled out to student group members. The SU also wishes to take up student recommendations to work on an Autism-friendly campus and so the SU will be making recommendations to the University EDI committee for this. A former student at the University submitted a report to the University on their experience as a student with

autism and included recommendations for improvements on campus. A question was raised as to what specific work would be undertaken to create an autism-friendly campus and it was explained that this would include developing sensory guides and sensory rooms, a review of physical spaces and colour themes used (such as the feedback on the chairs being too bright in the SU welcome area) as well as increased signage (recently added in the SU). The University also run an autism summer school which the SU also gets involved in. The SU will submit a paper with recommendations, to the University EDI committee, after reviewing the former students report and the outcomes of the Disability Audit recently conducted by the University. Although still in the early stages, AL has started working on this with the SU Academic & Welfare Advisor.

The SU would like to increase representation in race and LGBTQ+ in Sport as numbers are currently low and so activities and discussions are under way to boost this.

The SU would also like to lobby the University to develop a religious observance policy which GA has started working on as well as work to increase the ethnic diversity of elections candidates.

The Officers have also had discussions with Tim Jones (Pro Vice Chancellor Students) about the prayer room and breastfeeding room (and quiet room) which are currently the same room. It is hoped that both these facilities will be relocated and separated, hopefully to a more convenient and central location on campus.

- The Help and Advice Service is working on campaigns to help students with the cost of living and has also revised material for students on degree classification to make this easier to understand. The mitigating circumstances process will also be reviewed. The student charter is also currently under review.
- In Sports, Societies and Student-Led services, the Team Worc points system will be reviewed and the Worc Star initiative has been continued with many Worc Stars already awarded in semester 1. Recreational Sport (Rec Sport) at the University is struggling to take off but work will continue to push this initiative. To support TeamWorc Action, a volunteering fair was held. RAG week took place recently but the RAG total so far is much lower than last year, largely due to the Cost of Living crisis and reduced donations as a result of this. The SU Drive saw food donations from students and locals for both the Community Cupboard and the local food bank.
- In People and Culture, the GDPR annual data cleanse had taken place and the Staff Consultative Forum had been re-established following a membership review.
- In Finance a healthy SU reserve is being maintained and the SU will continue to look at the Pension review as well as a potential partnership with the Cricket Club and links with Worcester Bid to increase income.
- Within Health and Safety, the required number of staff first-aiders has been re-instated following staffing changes last year and training for new staff members has taken place. The Health and Safety Committee remain active

and continue to update the Health and Safety Action plan, with regular updates for staff. New risk assessment training is being developed for sports and society committee members.

- For sustainability, 'Go Green' week is taking place in a couple of weeks. The monthly repair workshop will begin from February onwards. The Green Impact Students Union submission is not due yet but work is in progress. There are a number of issues with public transport for students, which the SU raised a few months ago with the local MP and local transport providers, about which the SU is waiting to hear back on. There was a Bus summit which the Officers were unable to attend and so they are arranging a meeting with Mike Rouse who will be able to provide an update from the summit. The Student Communities Coordinator is currently writing up the plan for the Cost-of-Living initiatives which will form the campaign for the Green Impact Students' Union report this year.

A question was raised about what the SU is doing to ensure that SU events are sustainability-friendly. Whilst there were no recent discussions specifically about events, the SU does have its' own sustainability committee which works to increase sustainable practices in the SU. The SU achieved gold accreditation for sustainability and are always mindful of sustainable practices and some of the ways this is achieved is using re-usable tablecloths at events, avoiding balloons and stickers and minimising printing.

- Within employability there will be a review of the recruitment of student staff. Employability workshops will also be arranged for students, including committee members and school reps, to ensure they know what their transferrable skills are to help them in the workplace. In addition, some sample CV's and applications forms will be posted on the website.

The operational plan is approved.

## **8. Budget Submission**

The preparation for the budget submission is under way but not complete and so there was no current figures for discussion (only a planning document). The budget submission discussions will be postponed to the next meeting.

## **9. Board Sub-committees**

- a. The finance subcommittee will be meeting tomorrow and discussions will include:
  - The management accounts
  - Student staff pay
  - A re-forecast for 2023
  - University finance update.
- b. The HR subcommittee had not convened earlier as SW was unwell and with many agenda items to cover it was agreed SW should be in attendance. The meeting will be rescheduled to take place in the next week or two.

## 10. Officers' report

The Officers had an objectives review meeting recently to discuss progress on objectives and to redefine priorities for the current Semester.

ML, GA and AL updated the board on recent activities, as follows:

- The Winter Wellbeing Fair took place in December, this was essentially the last Wellbeing Wednesday of the Semester (these had been taking place once per month) and it was very well received. Over 129 students attended and the event stalls included Fancy a Cuppa, Sexual health, library, University Support, PCSO's and Pets for Therapy dogs, which were again very popular.
- The Help and Advice Service is seeing many students who are facing issues with the cost of living and are being referred to relevant services including the Worcester Food bank, the community cupboard and the University Hardship Fund. The Hardship Fund is currently not available to international students and so the Officers are lobbying the University to change policies to make this more inclusive and accessible to international students. It is hoped this may be achieved in time for the next academic year.
- As part of the Cost-of-Living campaign, the 'Community Cupboard' has been supporting students through the cost of living crisis. Initially donations were plentiful but recently they have reduced whilst the number of students accessing the cupboard has increased. More than 800 items valued at over £850 have been received, making the scheme very successful so far.
- The Breakfast club has fed over 380 students so far and this has been funded through the Officers' budget who had agreed to set aside £1000 of their budget to fund the initiative. It was suggested that an app called 'Too Good to Go' should be promoted to students as well as other cost of living funding schemes, including warm space funding.
- The Officers are working on the Green Impact report. The Responsible Futures reaccreditation is not due for another couple of years but this is regularly being reviewed. Go Green Week will be taking place next week and the Officers have been working with the Director of Sustainability at the University in planning this. The SOS UK Sustainable Life Skills survey was promoted to students and the University finished in the top 5 on the national leader board with 420 responses. The results of this will be analysed and used as part of the Green Impact SU accreditation. The SU achieved 'excellent' last year and it is hoped the same can be achieved this year.
- Refreshers is currently taking place over a period of three weeks. Day time events have included the Housing Fair, Course Rep Conference and the Clubs, Societies, Networks and RAG fair. Evening events have included the new Gin and Juice night, Quiz night, Karaoke/Bingo night and a Lip-sync battle night coming up later this week.
- The Academic Representation System is working very well with 366 course reps registered and a record 362 having completed their training due to the training being easily accessible online. The rep Reward and Recognition system is also

working very well with three course reps of the month and one school rep of the month.

- The Rep conference took place in January. Two external speakers attended the event. The first was Nehal, the Vice President Liberation and Equality at NUS, who delivered sessions on the history of NUS and also on decolonisation. The second was a staff member from Nottingham SU who delivered a session on transphobia, LGBTQ+ inclusion and also querying the curriculum. There were also some round-table feedback discussions which were facilitated by SU staff, followed by a sustainability session delivered by University staff. The Officers were really pleased with how the day had gone, with 40 course reps in attendance. The Student Voice Assistant is working on collating feedback from the conference.
- One of the Officers objectives was to lobby the University on undertaking more work on decolonising the curriculum. This is progressing and the University has decided to include decolonisation of the curriculum in the new curriculum design policy. They will also be setting up a working group who will decide how this will be embedded in the curriculum. The SU will follow the progress of the group closely.
- The open panel forums for students which were set up to allow any student (particularly the non-engaged ones) to ask the Senior team at the University questions, had not gone as well as hoped and so only one had been held so far. Most questions had been asked online and students seemed uncomfortable asking questions in person. However, students liked the option to be able to ask questions anonymously so the initiative will be reviewed as to how best to continue with this.
- The Tea Dance was held in conjunction with Active Hereford and Worcester, where members of the community were invited to attend the event. The feedback from the event was very positive with the only criticism from those that attended being that they would have liked more people to attend the event. It was a fantastic opportunity for people to get together, some of whom had experienced loneliness. Our students also had an opportunity to get involved as there were musical performances by Loco, Dance and Christian Union.
- Sixteen Worc Stars have been issued so far and were happily received by the students.
- Team Worc Council also discussed the possibility of running a 'Battle of the Socs' as the societies usually miss out on big events such as Varsity which is held for the sports clubs. This would be a great way to bring societies together and so plans to facilitate this will be discussed.
- The Officers will be working on an Employability Guide this semester, with members of the staff team, to help students complete better job applications. Separate guides will be produced for both reps and network committees.
- EDI training had taken place for all members of sports and societies to increase awareness of EDI and ultimately reduce EDI issues that sometimes arise in clubs and societies.
- The University are working on a strategy for Rec Sport however there have been delays with this which has resulted in limited progress in this area. However,

there is a Rec Sport festival taking place next week which the Officers will be helping at. With BUCS having recently announced that affiliation fees will be increasing, it will be even more important that the University have a Rec Sport offer as fewer teams will be entered into BUCS if fees rise, so an alternative to fill the demand in sport will be needed.

- TeamWorc TV is going well, with Cheerleading having just completed a filming session as part of this.
- Two new sport applications as well as two new society applications have been received. These are the Cosy Soc, the Book Club, Table Tennis and Handball.
- The annual All Student Meeting will be taking place on 14<sup>th</sup> February and so preparations are under way for this.
- Network Week will be taking place towards the end of February, where the Officers will be speaking to students about, for example, what they know about Networks, any barriers to them joining etc. Networks will be holding events throughout the week to help increase membership numbers.
- Fairtrade Fortnight will also be taking place in the latter part of February through to early March.
- LGBTQ+ history month is also in February so the SU will be supporting this.
- In March, the SU leadership elections will be taking place as well as International Women's day.

### **11. Executive Committee summary**

Main discussions at Executive Committee included:

- A Criminology Society had been set up.
- Progress on the Women's workout hour (to allow women to workout at the gym twice a week in an environment solely for women) and extended opening hours at the gym.
- A common room for Jenny Lind at City Campus and other ways to improve the facilities at City Campus.
- An Officer update, including the TEF submission and the Annual Student Meeting.
- Update from SW on matters covered in the latest University Leadership Group
- Current student issues such as mental health services, Personal Academic Tutors, the Access to Learning Fund, food provisions at the Riverside campus and the Garage.

### **12. Student Council Summary**

Student Council had convened in December. Main discussions at Student Council included:

- Approval of the annual accounts.
- An update on the TEF submission.
- Discrepancies in costs and facilities across campuses and how to address some of these.
- Launch of the Insight Survey.



**13. Board of Governors summary**

A Board of Governors meeting has not taken place since the last Board meeting. The next one will take place at the end of February and so an update will be provided at the next Board meeting.

GA and AL attended a Board Development Session recently where discussions included student engagement and retention, potentially increasing the number of postgraduate courses offered and the potential for introducing an online PGCE course.

**14. Any Other Business**

DD will be leaving us at the end of the academic year and so will be attending two further meetings with the Board before his departure.

**Date of next meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Summary of Actions:**

Action	For	To be completed by
None		