



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday 27th November 2019 at 09:30 in SU Boardroom

Present: Sue Doherty (SD) (Student Trustee); Louise Duffy (LD) (External Trustee); Timothy Holmes (TH) (President of the Students' Union) (Chair); Kirsten Jolly (KJ) (President of Wellbeing & Diversity); Jenny Marchant (JM) (President of Education); Richard Quayle (RQ) (External Trustee) (Deputy Chair); Michael Slavin (MS) (External Trustee); Mike Wilkinson (MW) (External Trustee)

In Attendance: Dan Grayson (DG) (Clerk to the Board); Donna Smith (DS) (Chief Executive Officer)

1. Welcome and Introduction

TH welcomed the Board to the meeting.

2. To receive apologies for absence

None

Absent without Apologies

None

3. Declarations of interest & review of Register of Interests - TB/1920/02/01

DS reviewed the register to examine its fitness for purpose. The new version captures anything and everything which might be considered an interest. DS requested the opportunity to complete the register.

ACTION: Trustee Board to email DS any updates to the Register of Interests

The Trustee Board **approved** the new format for the Register.

4&5. Minutes from 18th July 2019 and Matters Arising - TB/1920/02/02

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th July 2019 were **approved**.

Several drafting and typo-amendments were made.

Item 3: DS to explore using a revised template for the Register of Interests

Covered by agenda item 3.

Item 4a: DS to review adjusting the Subvention risk within the Risk Register

Covered by agenda item 6.

Item 4b: DS to create and present a Business Continuity Plan

Covered by agenda item 7.

Item 11: DS to explore a possible new schedule for Board meetings for the 2020/21 year

Covered by agenda item 8.

Item 14: DS to circulate the Value for Money Audit Report to the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

This has been completed.

Item 16a: DS to present the results of the External Stakeholder Survey

Covered by agenda item 12.

Item 16b: Service Development Committee to consider appointing an assessor for a para-QSU assessment
This is deferred to the next meeting.

6. Approval of the 2020/21 Sabbatical Officers' Salary – TB/1920/02/03

DS presented paper TB/1920/02/03 – Sabbatical Officer Salary. The Trustee Board was asked to approve the recommendation for the 2020/21 Sabbatical Officer salary so it can be included in publicity ahead of the February 2020 elections.

The Sabbatical Trustees left the room until the matter was disposed of. RQ was in the Chair.

Proposed figure. DS noted that the salary is based on 18/19 figures, as at the time of writing a NUS 19/20 benchmark had not been released. Following its release, DS reported that the proposed salary is £18,362 in addition to the cost of living increase which will be determined next August. RQ noted that the increase is not substantial but reflects cost of living increases.

Perks and Benefits. LB enquired about the base rate. This is the figure before the cost of living is applied. LB enquired about other benefits and perks received by the Officers. SD noted the discussion at People & Culture Committee about the allocation of electronic devices for Officers. SD asked if this is considered a perk or a tool. DS noted that the allocation is mentioned in the contract and the device is owned by the Union.

The Trustee Board **approved** the proposed salary.

7. Approval of the Risk Register (Update) – TB/1920/02/04

DS presented paper TB/1920/02/04 – Risk Register Review. The Trustee Board was asked to review and approve the Risk Register, specifically the significant 'Red Risks' detailed on pages 6 and 7 of the Register.

Overall the significant risks are being managed well and there are currently no additional significant risks being brought to the Trustee Board's attention.

Several drafting amendments were made.

Subvention. DS increased the risk ranking of the Subvention from 16 to 18 in response to the Trustee Board's comments at the last meeting.

Wellbeing & Advice Provision. KJ asked to note that the University provides wellbeing advice, not the Union. KJ noted that students still approach the Union for advice, though it isn't offered. LB asked what the risks are relating to advice provision and mitigating the risk of negligent advice. DS advised separating out academic advice risk, and the specific risks of *Students*, point 4. LB noted the risk is captured in *Legal & Statutory*, point 1. RQ asked if the risk under *Students*, point 4 is a risk of the Union or just the University. LB proposed removing *Students*, point 4 and expand *Legal & Statutory*, point 1 to include advice given by Union staff, and to add as mitigation the scope of advice given by the Union. MW noted that the academic advice is procedural.

ACTION: DS to amend the Risk Register to reflect the Union's provision of advice and the associated risks thereof

The Trustee Board **approved** the Register with the proposed amendments.

8. Business Continuity Plan – TB/1920/02/05

DS presented paper TB/1920/02/05 – Business Continuity Plan. The Trustee Board was asked to review and approve the Plan.

Clerk's note: An *in camera* discussion took place.

9. Schedule of Business for 2020/21 – TB/1920/02/06

TH presented paper TB/1920/02/06 – Schedule of Business 2020/21. The Trustee Board was asked to approve the proposed Schedule of Business.

The proposal is in response to a question about the suitability of the timetable in relation to the Union's financial year.

Horizon Scanning. LD asked about *Horizon Scanning and Discussion Day*. RQ and LB noted this happened in January in the past, though this may not be the appropriate time, and would make more sense to be in April.

Audited Accounts. RQ asked about the approval of the audited accounts, and if January is too late to review the accounts. DS noted that information from the auditors would not be available in time for the October meeting. Discussion about finances. Can shift audit date.

Committee Schedules. MW asked if work is being done to schedule Committee meetings to be suited to this Schedule. DS confirmed there is, and a consensus was formed that this Schedule should be approved in combination with the Committee Schedules.

ACTION: DS to revise the Schedule of Business in conjunction with Committee Schedules

10. Update on University activity from the Presidents – Verbal

TH gave a verbal update on the activities of the University.

11. Strategic Plan KPI Progress Report – TB/1920/02/07

DS presented paper TB/1920/02/07 – Strategic Plan KPI Progress Report. The Trustee Board was asked to discuss the report.

Highlights. There are proportionally less members of sports and societies compared to last year. Zones are attended above the KPI attendance target. Academic Representatives of which the Union is aware have been trained, but there is some unrest within the schools (including the transition from eight to five schools) is presenting a barrier to holding some elections. There have been vast improvements in the Union's digital presence and communications. The Investors in People and External Stakeholder KPIs will be discussed later in the meeting.

Wellbeing Zone. The University Wellbeing Zone has not been held for some time. The Trustee Board asked why attendance at this University zone is one of the Union's KPIs. No explanation was available from the time of the KPIs being set.

Mental Health First Aid. MW asked if the Union provides mental health first aid training. DS reported that a company has been sourced which will provide a 40% discount on training.

Unipol. MW offered to assist with the Union's services in his capacity as Chair of Unipol.

12. Strategic Plan Theme Presentation – Student Voice – Presentation

Paul Murtough (PM) gave a presentation on Student Voice themes.

Student Council. PM and the Student Voice Coordinator have been examining the purpose and structure of Senates/Councils in the sector. Regarding Membership, the present membership is the Sabbatical Officers, Chairs of School, and Liberation Officers. PM noted the blurred lines between the powers of an Executive Committee and the Council. PM noted the potential conflicts of the Sabbatical Officers sitting on both the Council and the Trustee Board. PM proposed a new membership be Chairs of School (five down from eight due to the schools' restructure), Liberation Officers, and elected representatives of Clubs and Societies as defined by categories already in use. The Sabbatical Officers would not be voting members but would represent the Trustee Board. The Chair of Council would also be elected in a cross-campus ballot, who would be invited to report to the Trustee Board in person. Elections to the Council would be held as part of the February elections.

Scrutiny Panel. PM noted the proposal that the Panel be dissolved, and the scrutiny powers return to the Council.

Scrutiny. SD asked about the advantages of dissolving the Scrutiny Panel. PM noted the ethos that the elected officers are accountable to each other. PM noted that the practicality of the Panel was difficult in the

past year. KJ asked about who would be scrutinised. PM noted that the idea for the Panel was that it scrutinised all officers. However, last year the Liberation Officers were elected later in the year. PM noted concerns about the morality of scrutinising volunteers.

Number of Votes. LB asked about dynamic elections. PM confirmed that only members of specific Schools, Clubs, and Societies would be able to elect those representatives. LB asked about the number of votes of Members of Clubs and Societies. PM confirmed Members would hold a vote for each category of Club or Society of which they're Members.

Other Positions. JM and LB noted that some students would not be Members of Clubs and Societies and that Members are required to pay to be Members. MW suggested adding general student positions to the body of Council. RQ noted the need for a perspective including non-active students.

Trustee Board Discussion. LB noted that segregated votes could be problematic. SD noted difficulties in engaging students from broader bases, which is hampered further by segregated votes. LB asked for clearer objectives and an understanding as to why the current model doesn't work and why the proposed system would be better, tied to the overarching objectives. There was a discussion about the Sabbatical Officers sitting on the Council as Trustees, and the consensus was reached that they should not have that role.

Implementation. RQ noted that the changes should be student-led with advice from the Trustee Board. PM reported that there will be a discussion at the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 03 December. The Byelaw changes required to implement the changes will be brought to the January Trustee Board meeting for approval.

13. Code of Practice – TB/1920/02/08

DS presented paper TB/1920/02/08 – Code of Practice. The Trustee Board was asked to discuss the proposed Code.

Code of Practice. The Code was sent to the University Governing Body before the Union had chance to properly input and before it could be presented to the Trustee Board. The Governing Body had amendments to make, which gives the Union the opportunity to weigh in on the Code concerning it and the University.

Complaints Procedure. MW noted the University's request for an independent person to form part of the complaints procedure. It was noted that the University would appoint such a person. The complaints procedure has been submitted to the People & Culture Committee, and an independent person would be the point of contact once the appeals procedure is exhausted.

14. Strategy 2020 Discussion – TB/1920/02/09

DS presented paper TB/1920/01/09 – Strategy 2020 Discussion. The Trustee Board was asked to discuss the prospective 2020 strategy.

Highlights. DS gave a summary of the strategic discussions and workshops held thus far and the next steps in developing the Plan.

Trustee Board Discussion. JM noted that Students' Unions of similar universities have Widening Participation Officers and asked if the Union should consider this. SD noted a change in how students want to engage with the Union (especially considering the average age of entry increasing to 22-years old). The Union therefore has an important impetus to adapt to change the engage a wider audience. MW noted the lack of participation of academics in the External Stakeholder Survey. MW also noted that civic and community organisations are often hostile to students in so-called student cities, and it is therefore important to maintain good, senior level links with civic and community organisations. MW asked if the Union is sufficiently financed to support the University's desire to increase its student numbers to 10,000. LB noted the purpose of the Union being to stand up for students, therefore the Union needs to focus on making the University great enough to support such numbers.

15. External Stakeholder Survey Results – TB/1920/02/10

DS presented paper TB/1920/01/09 – External Stakeholder Survey Results. The Trustee Board was asked to discuss the results of the survey.

Results. DS noted that feedback was positive. The responses from University stakeholders indicated that the relationship with the Union is based on the Union’s representation of students, whilst external stakeholders commented on commercial prevision and the social element of the Union.

Academic Feedback. DS noted that no academics had completed the survey. This is a matter of urgency to be resolved. SD proposed taking the issue to the next SU/EXEC meeting.

ACTION: Lack of academic engagement with the External Stakeholder Survey to be taken to SU/EXEC

Items to Note (items 16-22)

TH presented papers TB/1819/04/15 – 21. The Board was asked to note these reports.

Update from Elections Committee. MW asked about the inconsistency in the plurality of Deputy Returning Officers. LB replied that all instances should be “Deputy Returning Officer(s)”. LB noted a discussion at the Committee regarding the timeframe for submitting complaints.

Any Other Business

Membership of the Trustee Board. The Trustee Board noted its thanks to Michael Slavin for his term of office. The Appointments Committee will meet on Thursday 05th December to decide on the next steps of the appointment of a Student Trustee and an External Trustee.

Elections Committee. TH sought a confirmation of willingness from LB to become a member of the Elections Committee following his nomination to the Committee at the last Trustee Board meeting. LB accepted.

Investors in People. The Union achieved Developed status. The Trustee Board was asked to agree to a state of amnesty, by which the Union retains Established status, and will be reassessed at a cost in 12-months’ time following the implementation of an action plan drawn up by DS and the assessor. The cost is unknown at present.

The Trustee Board approved the ask for amnesty and the reassessment.

Trading Subsidiary. JM and MW reported that the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee has suggested **not** to form a trading subsidiary. The Committee and the Auditors do not believe such a venture is necessary or expedient.

Meeting closed at 12:50 p.m.

Signed _____ (Chair)

Date _____