

06 Board of the Trustees
30/6/15

Action

63 ATTENDANCE

63.1 Members Present

Grace Anderson (Officer trustee elect), Megan Bennett (Officer trustee), Alisha Galdo (Student trustee), Sarah Halder (Officer trustee), Janice Maclean (External trustee), Evalyn Oloo (Student trustee), Leigh Rooney (Officer trustee elect), Daryl Sharpe (Officer trustee), Claire Sharples (External trustee), Kathleen Vanderpuye (Student trustee), Sammi Whitaker (Officer trustee elect)

In Attendance

Linda Collett (Minute taker), Matt Ensor (Chief Executive), Guy Stepney (Head of Student Engagement and Communication) – (Item 65 only)

63.2 Apologies

James Barlow (External trustee), Gail Cottage (Student trustee), Melanle Digney (External trustee), Paul McHugh (External trustee)

63.3 Absent

None

63.4 Declaration of Interest

Megan Bennett, Sarah Halder and Daryl Sharpe declared an Interest In Item 4 of Schedule 2 (CEO report).

DS welcomed the new officers and explained that they would not have voting rights until the August meeting of the Board.

64 ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

64.1 Accuracy

54 – Officer reports – DS had spoken at the Westminster HE Forum not the Times Higher. The previous Minutes were accepted as a true record.

64.2 Matters Arising

None

65 STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING

GS introduced the strategic plan monitoring report, which was a working document for managers and staff, and explained that as the plan had been drawn up after research in 2012, some of the commitments were no longer relevant to the current student population. The report had been considered by the Union Steering Group who had contributed to its contents and to the recommendations. Any further recommendations and approval was now sought from the Board.

The Board indicated that a timeline would be useful and that commitments needed to be prioritised according to what was achievable. It was agreed that USG would look at this and bring it back to the next Board meeting.

ME

66 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

1. It was noted that the Chair of the Board of Governors had decided to recruit the new VC using an external recruitment agency and that the panel of six would include neither a student nor a staff governor. The SU had indicated that this was not acceptable and DS would be speaking to the Chair at the next Board of Governors' meeting on 9 July. It was also confirmed that ME was continuing discussions with the University CMT to ensure that the SU remained prominent in their future plans.

2. ME explained that there had been a number of years of underinvestment and that he had received assurances from the Head of Student Opportunities and Services that the previous budget deficits had been rectified and that going forward the budget would be controlled. It was noted that previous Experience Officers in Chelmsford had conducted a lot of research amongst students and that they had indicated there was a need for good

sound equipment, which would also create opportunities for students to increase their knowledge and experience. It was also noted that the figure requested was well within the cash flow limits.

The investment was **APPROVED**.

3. It was noted that implementation of the living wage would also encourage discussion on remuneration of officers.

4. MB, SH and DS made a declaration of interest in this item and left the room. The Board agreed that the current practice of re-distribution of salaries of any officers who terminated their contract early should be discontinued. It was **AGREED** that current officers should be paid a one-off gesture of goodwill to reflect their additional responsibilities.

5. It was noted that there was a desire to maximise the effect of each Board member and it was agreed that DS would speak to GC about her position on the Board.

DS

67 FINANCIAL REPORT

ME explained that the new layout and explanation of variances would enable managers to make good decisions by giving them timely and accurate information. It was noted that the cash flow was currently predicting a surplus.

68 APPROVAL OF BUDGET 2015-16

It was noted that the draft budget which had been presented to the Board in April had predicted a loss of approximately £55k. Following further adjustments the budget now delivered a small surplus. It was confirmed that the block grant figure had not yet been finalised but that indications show that it would be agreed by the Board of Governors.

A question was raised about the possibility of holding campus specific balls and it was explained that the Venue Entertainments and Events manager had been tasked with creating a brand image for a cross campus ball for all ARU students. It was accepted that there had been negative feedback following this year's ball, particularly regarding the food provision, and that this had been recognised.

The budget was **APPROVED**.

69 OFFICERS' REPORTS

The reports were received and noted.

It was agreed that in future, it would not be necessary for officers to present their reports at the meeting, but that any questions would be taken and answered.

70 STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORTS

EO reported that she had gained a lot of knowledge and experience in the past year and hoped to continue to do so in the forthcoming year.

KV congratulated the officers on their year in post and looked forward to working with the new officers.

AG thanked the Board for their support during her term as a trustee. She also noted that the new format for the financial reporting was much easier for a lay person to understand. The Board thanked AG for her input and wished her well for the future.

71 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

The annual impact report video was shown to the Board who congratulated the officers on its production.

72 STUDENT COUNCIL/AGM REPORT

The report was received and noted.

It was noted that the Democracy and Representation Manager would be conducting a full governance review over the next year.

73 AMENDMENT TO BYE LAWS 5 AND 11

Appendix 1 – It was noted that the low number of founding/elected members facilitated the

setting up of a society. The amendment to Bye Law 5 was **AGREED**.

Appendix 2 – The amendment to Bye Law 11 – Rep role descriptions was **AGREED**.

Appendix 3 – DS explained the background to the new officer job descriptions and titles and that the changes reflected the changes in roles new covered by staff members and trends across the sector. It was noted that the job description of the President could not be changed without taking it to the Board of Governors. The proposed amendments had been taken to Student Council who had passed them at the last meeting. The Board was now asked to indicate the best way of taking the changes forward and to take a decision on the timescale that the changes would take effect.

Members of the Board expressed concern at losing the title of President. It was noted that the removal of this title would eradicate the current perception of hierarchy and that the other titles were all self-explanatory and reflected similar moves across the sector. It was also noted that a full governance review would be undertaken over the next twelve months.

After some debate a vote was taken and it was **AGREED** to change the other four titles and job descriptions immediately and to take the changes to the President title to the Board of Governors for the change to be effected in a year's time.

The Board requested that the changes to the President's title and role be brought back to the Board for review at the October meeting, before being taken to the Board of Governors.

LC

74 LEGISLATION CHANGES

The introduction of the government's anti-terrorist PREVENT strategy which places an obligation on the University and the SU to enforce it. ME confirmed that he was holding continued discussions with the University Secretary and Clerk and that the Head of Student Opportunities and Services currently sat on the committee responsible for this. It was noted that NUS had passed a policy not to support the strategy.

75 MATTHEW ENSOR PROBATIONARY REVIEW

JM explained that a questionnaire containing closed questions in five categories had been circulated to all staff and officers. As well as the questions, 159 comments had been received from 24 people. The purpose of the questionnaire had been to identify strengths and areas requiring further attention.

ME noted that it had been a thorough process which had given a better idea of where to focus: there was a need to concentrate on how and when to communicate with wider groups.

ME left the room.

Some concern was expressed that the CEO probation review had been handled solely by an external trustee. The depth and amount of work involved in the questionnaire was recognised but it was felt that it was important that individual comments from staff and officers working closely with the CEO were taken into account. It was agreed that both detailed positive and negative themes would be fed back to ME and an action plan would be drawn up, and that JM would then feed back at the next Trustee meeting so that the Board could monitor progress.

After some discussion a vote was taken and it was **AGREED** that, barring any change of circumstances between now and the end of the probation period, ME should be considered to have successfully completed his probation period. However, some members indicated reservations that 4 ½ months was a very short period for a probation.

76 ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITY ACTION PLAN REPORT

The report was received and noted.

77 SUSS UPDATE

There had been no update received.

78 ANY OTHER BUSINESS


None.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 25 August –

3.00-4.00 pm – meeting with Managers – face to face in Chelmsford – Mar 102

4.00-7.00 – Board of Trustees’ meeting – face to face in Chelmsford – Mar 102


7/9/15