

Paper Title:	Minutes to Board of Trustees Meeting, 6th April 2022
Author/s:	Ann Binks
Date:	6 th April 2022

Topic and Purpose of the paper in brief:	Record of meeting of Board of Trustees.
Key Points from the Paper (5 maximum):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Block Grant request for 22/23 was the most pertinent item on the agenda – trustees discussed the SU's funding strategy for the coming negotiations. • Standard updates were received and reviewed by Board.
List data or information sources:	Board paperwork
Please tick box if this paper refers to any one of the following:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A standing agenda item (or periodic planned item) <input type="checkbox"/> The Strategic Plan or Strategic Action Plan <input type="checkbox"/> An emerging priority or issue
<p>To what extent could the outcome of this paper affect the inclusiveness of the SU and the accessibility of the SU in respect to promoting equality, diversity and mitigating barriers to equitable engagement with the students' union?</p> <p>Board is the strategic, governing body of the SU from a legal and administrative perspective and therefore business directly relates to the SU's strategies to promote equality and diversity and provide an accessible, inclusive membership organisation.</p>	
Is this paper:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For decision or approval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For information and acknowledgement



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6th April 2022 Board of Trustees Minutes of Meeting

Present:	Dylan Cox	Co Vice President Campus equality & experience.
	Laura Tamara	Co-President
	Quadri Yusuf	Co-President (Chair)
	Paida Mash	External Trustee
	John Dix	External Trustee
	Winifred Soribe	Student Trustee
	Tania Struetzel	External Trustee
	Dan Login	External Trustee
	Beverley Hoare	University Trustee
Attending:	Mark McCormack	CEO
	Ann Binks (minute taker)	Head of Finance and Resources (minute taker)
	Amy McLaughlan	Head of Membership Services & Engagement
	Lisa Roerig	Head of Marketing, Communications & Business
Date	6 th April 2022 5.30pm to 7.17pm	
Location	Zoom	

1: Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologise received from Catalina Nita and Suman Naz (invited as observer).

2: Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th December 2021 were **agreed**.

3: Conflicts of interest

Standing conflict of interest around CEO performance review.



4: Matters Arising/Outstanding Actions

Action
To see if a representative from the University would come to a Board meeting to discuss their new strategic plan and how they envisage the SU being involved. The current plan is that they will attend the staff conference that trustees are also invited to. The Register has agreed to attend and we are just waiting for the secretary to confirm, CFWD
To report to the Board the plan for the 'PR' campaign to increase awareness of the Union's achievements with the University. The plan is to work on this over the summer while looking at the strategic plan. CFWD
Further in-depth work on KPI's. I.e. explore how we are measuring website KPI's and to obtain more quality data reporting around our reps to try to ascertain outputs. The plan is to work on this over the summer while looking at the strategic plan. CFWD

5: Governance matters

Six students had applied to be student trustees and two have been appointed Fiona McFeeley and Suman Naz. The Union Parliament had not been quorum so the Appointments panel had ratified their appointment. They will take up their positions in the June meeting.

The terms of Daniel Login and Tania Struetzel had both come to an end. They had both agreed to do another term and the Appointments panel would be meeting to hopefully ratify this by the end of the month. Both John Dix and Paidia Mash fully supported their re appointment.

6: Executive Team Update

The Officers advised that they had been working hard to achieve their objectives and lecture capture was one of the items they had been working on. They advised that



they had also been working with PGR students who experienced challenges with BREO and they were working closely with the University to try and fix it. They were also working with the University on non-disclose agreements.

The Trustees advised that they did not have any questions regarding the Executive team update.

7: HR Report.

7a) CEO Performance review and Objectives 2021/22

A formal one to one had taken place since the CEO returned from Paternity Leave. Some of the challenges discussed are on the Agenda today. Discussions were held around the committee's structure, student voice, elections and the new officer team coming in.

The Union was being involved in a more strategic approach with the University and now a new Committee structure has been introduced, albeit this had added more work across the staff and Officer teams. Although the Union's inclusion in it is positive. Therefore, although greater discussions in the University's 'top line' and decision making is great, the downside is the extra work generated. With the extra workload created by the new Committee structure, it is important that key issues on the Union's agenda are not dropped.

The CEO reported there was a new proposal being put forward between the SU and a new PVC regarding paid student representatives who would have a wider portfolio than representation and not be elected.

7b) H&S update and return to campus operations

This is a standard agenda item, the staff survey goes into more detail how the staff feel Flexi working is going, and at a top HR level, the results are very positive. The overall sense is that staff do not want to give up flexible working but miss everybody being together. This was reflected in the positive feedback from the March conference. Unfortunately we are seeing an increased number of staff off with COVID19. Flexi working has helped to manage this as staff are able to start working again as soon as they are well enough to.



Trustees advised that they did not have any questions on the HR reports.

8: Finance Report

8a) Management accounts and reports

The Board were advised that management accounts were now reflecting a forecasted deficit at the end of the year of (£17.5k) last reported (29.4k). The Finance Committee had requested that budgetary savings are found to reduce the deficit but did not want core service affected by any cuts. SLT had carried this exercise out to reduce the deficit.

The trustees advised that they had no questions or comments.

8b) Finance Sub-Committee minutes

These are taken as read.

The trustees advised that they had no questions or comments.

8c) Approval audited accounts 2021

The audited accounts have been presented to the Finance Committee and they are recommending the accounts to The Board for approval. The final Year-end deficit was ~£31k as budgeted (expected slight adjustment to bring to £32k), due to the extraordinary circumstance during the year.

The Board **approved** the audited accounts for Year-ending July 2021.

9: CEO Report

9a) Membership Campus demographics

This report has been provided for the Boards information only. The trustees advised that they had no questions or comments.



9b) CEO Report Summary

The paper was taken as read and the Board was invited to comment on it. It had been a busy term with challenging but great work under taken.

The trustees enquired if the University is supporting the Union more in regards to the Academic Reps. Head of Membership replied that in principle they are supporting us with getting reps into classroom. They felt less certain about achieving this before the summer but were hopeful for the new term. As the Union now has increased capacity in that area, with two new Student Engagement Coordinators, the Union is already engaging with the Faculties and over the summer will have contacts in place for the new term. They were confident that the Union will do better than last year.

The Board acknowledged the recent Exec Election turnout result; thanked the staff for their work; and, commended the Exec on wide engagement with the Membership in a challenging year and circumstances – it was noted that this was not too surprising as engagement levels had been low since the start of the year and Beds SU was not alone in this (as per anecdotal feedback from other unions). Nonetheless the Trustees expressed concern regarding election turn out in general and email engagement. Is the Union missing something fundamental, as it appears that students are not engaging with us? At 9% the election turnout is very low and could appear to indicate a broader problem with engagement.

Head of Comms advised that in October the University implemented a change which has resulted in students receiving messages that external emails might be harmful, so we are currently working on why our emails are receiving this message. Comms were surprised when they saw the drop, currently we are working with the website developers to offer a 'magic link' so there will be less barriers to go to our website.

The CEO advised that the fall in engagement is all connected with the presence of the Union in a student's life. The Union really does need to get in front of students and they will also be getting a lot more emails then they used to. The Union needs to cut through the noise; it really is so important that we get into their classrooms.

An officer suggested that the emails need to be short as students cannot be bothered to read long emails.



The Board were advised that during the election it had been discovered that an entire campus of students had been given a different email address to the ones that been provided by the University to the Union. Head of Comms advised that many small changes are having a big effect. The Union sent out a lot of different messages and it was a question of getting the balance of communications right.

9c) Strategic Plan Monitoring

This was taken as read and the Board advised they had no questions or comments.

9d) Risk Register

The Board advised they had no questions or comments.

9e) Student Leadership elections 2022

The Elections report had highlighted a couple of recommendations. It was the first year that Head of Comms had been in the role of Returning Officer. There had been fewer and less diverse candidates then the Union would have liked but then a lot of SU's would love to have the diversity of our candidates.

The Board minuted a thankyou to the Comms & Membership services teams for all their hard work during elections. Although turnout was lower than expected, reported recommendations should help and the diversity of the candidates fantastic.

10a) Block Grant strategy and preliminary budget 22-23

This Agenda item was moved and was discussed after the Officer update to allow for a full discussion.

The CEO stated that they hoped all The Board members had been able to review the video and feedback from the Finance Committee. There was gap of about £30k in the budget at this stage and although this is not the final budget without action, we will definitely be looking at a deficit budget this year. When the block grant negotiations are settled, we will revisit the budget and review it with the incoming officers, but the budget will need to represent how the Union is going to spend the University's money.



There are three options: reduce the expenditure, ask for some more money or spend from reserves. On the other hand, there is an option to do a bit of all three things. There are pros and cons to each position so it is not always that easy to find a clear direction. The CEO foresees a lot of competition for University funds this year and strategically we need to start building a case for next year.

The CEO stated that they feel fundamentally that the University is not paying enough for their Student Voice and Experience; that said the University are facing cost living rises and challenging recruitment conditions. That is what has informed this consultation.

The common consensus from the trustees was presenting a break even budget would be prudent. Some trustees felt that the Union should present a breakeven budget and then present a further ask for set strategic priorities. Does the Union ask the University for that money or take it from reserves? Essential work around our project outreach is currently not funded from the University and we have been absorbing the cost ourselves. The CEO opened it up to the trustees for comments.

The Board agreed the Union needs to make sure year on year deficit is addressed while at the same time being respectful of university's position. Some trustees felt that £150k was not a big ask considering what is known about the University's financial position.

ACTION The CEO is to prepare a Block grant request based on what they feel is a 'reasonable request' but ask for some more funding on a bold base – greater clarity on what a bigger ask would be should also be developed; the attitudes of the VC/DVC could be gauged tactfully before deciding how to proceed with an ask, to give clarity on appetite on the university's financial aims. However, the bid should be based on items that will hold up under scrutiny. When this is completed it will be circulate to the trustees.

11.AOB - The Board advised that they did not have any AOB items.

12.DONM - It was confirmed that the next meeting will be in person on the Wednesday 29th June.