



AUSU
Trustee Board Meeting
20th May 2016
Committee Room

Present

Lewis Donnelly (LD)	– AUSU President, Chairperson & Trustee
Hanna Medi Merrigan (HMM)	– AUSU Welsh Affairs & UMCA President & Trustee
Ieuan Gregory (IG)	– AUSU Student Welfare Officer & Trustee
Kelly Keat (KK)	– AUSU Student Activities Officer & Trustee
Lauren Marks (LM)	- AUSU Education Officer & Trustee
Peter Curran (PC)	- AUSU External Trustee
Sam Bache (SB)	- AUSU Undergraduate Trustee
Alastair Wager (AW)	- AUSU Postgraduate Trustee

In attendance

Trish McGrath (TM)	- AUSU CEO
Catrin Hopkins (CH)	- AUSU Finance Officer (in attendance for finance section)
Annmarie Evans (AE)	– AUSU Executive Assistant (notetaker)
Officers Elect	- Observing
Daniel Benham (DB)	- University Finance Director (in attendance for Finance Provision)
Mark Godsell (MG)	- University Assistant Finance Director (in attendance for Finance Provision)

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

1. Apologies for Absence

Estelle Hart (EH)	– AUSU External Trustee
Sue Parnell (SP)	- AUSU External Trustee

2. Declarations of Interest

AW informed the Board that he is a member of AUSU Student Staff.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting, held on 24th March were approved as a true record of account.

Approved

4. Matters Arising

Any matters arising were covered in agenda items. The Chair reminded everyone of the confidentiality of items to be discussed.

Noted

STRATEGY

5. Finance: Management Accounts

CH stated that the Managements Accounts to the end of April 2016 show a deficit of 140k against budget target. CH explained that she has had discussions with the Food & Beverage team to look at various options of using cheaper suppliers and reducing staff costs. CH asked the Board to note that from April, there are associated costs with the National Living Wage for 25 plus which was not budgeted for.

Noted

PC thanked CH for her report but asked whether the National Living Wage has been factored into next year's budget. The Board were assured that this cost has been included in both the salary structure and the budget going forward.

CH further informed the Board that if we adopted the policy of giving the National Living Wage to all ages, it would cost us a further £7k. The Board discussed the implication of this in line with the Commercial transfer and agreed that this would be discussed as one of our values.

Action - TM

6. CEO Report (confidential)

TM gave a summary of the activities and progress of AberSU since she took up post on 25th April.

- Induction – meetings with all CEO direct reports, Full Time Officers, all staff meeting
- Change Programme – this was discussed under Agenda item 7
- Strategic Plan – NUSSL held sequence focus groups to develop a questionnaire to be sent to students – update to be provided at the next Trustee meeting
- Draft Budget – there have been meetings with the University Finance Director but are still in negotiations regarding the final block grant and the request to forgive our debt.
- Unison – working on a recognition agreement
- NUS Strategic Conversation/NUS Wales CEO Network – attended by CEO and President
- Officer handover and induction – planning has started by building on the review completed by Dan Francis
- Sports Awards, Societies Awards and Student Led Teaching Awards – well attended with a really positive atmosphere, really celebrated the achievements of our students and University Staff.
- Aber7s and Space Ball – these were a great success that brought income and excitement

TM went on further thank staff and officers for her induction and warm welcome.

Noted

7. Change Programme (Confidential)

TM updated the Board on developments from her meetings with the University:

Payscale

TM explained that since the Trustees approved the pay scale back in January's meeting, since her appointment as CEO, she has met with the Assistant Director of HR who has suggested a different scale. The reason for the change of scale was to decrease the amount of roles at risk of redundancy by two. TM informed the Board that she would be concerned with a larger fall out of unhappy staff if we went with Option 1, although Option 2 reduces the amount of staff at risk, fundamentally, the roles are

still available for them to apply for. Those deemed at risk will have priority of applying for the roles which includes the approved senior roles.

TM asked the Board to consider which pay scale they would want to use, Option 1 or Option 2 (previously agreed)

Option 2 approved

Commercial Transfer

TM explained that although the Tupe of staff has been agreed by the University, what is unclear is whether we will be compensated for transferring all our commercial business and assets. There is no clear set of principles of how this will operate or how the service provision will be in line with our needs as an SU. TM also explained that a project group with the University has been set up to look at a timeline and plan of when all aspects need to be completed. TM asked the Board to consider how they would like to sign off any further developments or changes, whether they would like to set up a subgroup or meet as a full board.

The Board agreed to meet as a full Board and AE will coordinate a date for a meeting to be scheduled at the end of June.

Action – AE

Finance Provision

TM informed the Board that following a meeting with the University Finance Director (Daniel Benham), he made a strong preference for transferring all of our 4 finance staff, not just the 2 that were included as part of the commercial transfer. TM explained that although there was assurance that the 2 staff would remain here in the SU and would continue to provide us with the same service, it was unclear as to what the benefits of agreeing this were.

DB and MG entered the room to explain the reasoning for this proposal and answer any questions the Board had.

DB gave a detailed view of why he believed the University should take over all of our finance provision. He explained the financial difficulties the University faces and stated that they are looking at efficiencies across all departments to share resources and best practice. He stated that although our finance provision would be reporting to the University, services would remain independent. He also suggested that this could be trialled for a year and then reviewed.

PC stated that we need to remember that the Union is separately constituted from the University. He felt that there was no clear proposal given or compelling arguments of why the SU should enter into this agreement. Furthermore, there was no clarity on how this would affect our block grant or current debt owed to the University.

Questions that were asked were:

If a member of the finance provision left, how much input would the Union get with the new appointment? DB stated that it would be a joint interview process and they would only recruit if both parties were in agreement.

If cuts in funding were needed further down the line, how could we guarantee that the core function to our clubs/societies is maintained? DB explained that this would be a decision made by the Union under its block grant agreement. He further explained that it wouldn't be in their interest to cut services here and this is something that could be looked at within a service level agreement. He also explained that if we were not happy with the service, we could end our agreement.

Would our block grant be reduced? DB stated that it would be up to the Union to agree a budget that was necessary to complete its activities.

Would our debt to the University be cleared? DB stated that he would be happy to take this proposal to University meetings with a fresh approach to helping the SU.

What would happen if we said no to this proposal? DB explained that he would give his view to the University Finance and Strategy Committee, that all things are possible.

DB and MG left the room

The Board continued their discussion and decided that now was not the time to take this proposal forward but would keep this option open to revisit in the future.

Finance Provision declined for now

GOVERNANCE

8. Elections Report

TM informed the Board that this paper was produced by our Campaigns & Democracy Coordinator. She explained that there will be a lot of change going forward and an elections working group will be formed to start looking at improvements and how to engage with more students. If there is anything you would like us to look at in the future then please let us know.

Noted

9. Outcome of the AGM

LD informed the Board that the AGM was inquorate so has been moved to October.

Noted

10. Date and Time of next Meeting

The meeting date will be rescheduled in line with the agreement for the end of June.

Noted

The chair ended the meeting by thanking the Trustees on behalf of the outgoing Officers and stated that he has no doubt that the Officers Elect will do a fantastic job.

PC thanked the current Officers for their dedication and professionalism during such a difficult period of office.