



AUSU
Trustee Board Meeting
3rd October 2014
Committee Room

Present

Jacob Dafydd Ellis (JDE) – AUSU President, Chairperson & Trustee
Miriam Williams (MW) – AUSU UMCA President & Trustee
Will Atkinson (WA) – AUSU Student Support Officer & Trustee
Grace Burton (GB) – AUSU Student Education Officer & Trustee
Harriet O’Shea (HO) – AUSU Student Activities Officer & Trustee
Stephen Meachem (SM) – AUSU External Trustee
John Glasby (JG) – AUSU CEO
Andrew Morwood (AM) – AUSU Membership Services Manager
Catrin Hopkins (CH) – AUSU Finance Officer

In attendance

Annamarie Evans – AUSU Board of Trustee Clerk

JDE welcomed everyone to the meeting but took the opportunity to remind all members that they need to abide by all current AUSU policies and if these were breached at any time during the meeting, they might be asked to leave.

JDE also asked that any changes to Agenda Items be requested through himself and cc’d to Annmarie Evans.

1. Apologies for Absence

Estelle Hart – AUSU External Trustee
Christopher Lloyd-Jones – AUSU Postgraduate Trustee

2. Declarations of Interest

EH – Joined university of Wales, Trinity St David as a staff member
SM - Law Tribe, solicitors firm
JDE – NUS Wales Welsh Language Officer, Member of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, WRU referee, Llywydd Cymdeithas Myfyrwyr Celtaidd Iwerddon a Phrydain, Aberystwyth University Council Member, Cadeirydd Pwyllgor Gorchwyl Gwyl Ienctid Cymru
MW – NUS Wales Welsh Language Officer, Member of Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg, Aberystwyth St David’s Parade Committee, Member of Committee for Aberystwyth Eisteddfod, Member of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
WA - Partner in Policy & Change Office for Mind Cymru

Further declarations to be submitted by the end of today (03/10/14)

Action – GB/HO

3. Approve Minutes of Meeting held 1st August 2014

Minutes of the previous meeting, held on the 1st August 2014 were approved as a true record of account.

Proposed: GB

Seconded: HO

4. Matters Arising

Any outstanding matters have been included in agenda items.

5. Report from Dan Francis/NUS

Dan Francis of NUS provided a report following his observations from the last Trustee meeting. JG made particular reference to the following:

- i. *'It was also identified by trustees that the operational and strategic plans needed further development to be in sync with each other, but also better reflect current officer priorities. Given that Quality Students' Unions states....."the union's members should have strong awareness of its plans and are able to link the plan to their own needs" - it would be wise to revisit the priorities and goals set out in the document to ensure they remain relevant to the union's membership.'*

A meeting has taken place with the Officers to review the current strategic plan. JG will amend the Plan based on the discussion and send to the Officers for approval before circulating to the full Board.

Action – JG

- ii. *'The board had a tendency to prioritise some matters of operational activity over strategic or generative discussions..... trustees appeared to focus their time on detailed scrutiny of senior staff. This led to operational discussions around individual staff performance and processes.....better dealt with outside the boardroom..... where staff are empowered in their roles and trustees can focus on ideas and future plans'*

Senior staff will be invited to present updates to future meetings where Trustees will have the opportunity to ask questions directly to them concerning their area of operational expertise. However, please note that staff performance is scrutinized via the Staff Appraisal Scheme 2013 and should remain so to avoid line management being undermined and to facilitate staff empowerment in their roles.

- iii. *'At present, however, there is a sense that these opinions are shared by trustees who each have a varied view on organisational purpose and direction.'*

Trustees are responsible for setting the organisational purpose and direction of the Union:- as per point I, JG will facilitate a full Board discussion and review of the Organisation's mission, vision and values, following a meeting with the officers. (this discussion will be underpinned by the proposed amended Strategic Plan document)

JDE explained that he had spoken to Dan Francis following his report and their discussion was focussed on the need for every member to start thinking like a Board and not to use this meeting as a vehicle to express negativity about operations. Rather the Board should decide how to deal with an issue and move on.

Noted

6. Risk Register Review

CH gave an overview of the changes made to the Risk Register and explained that higher risks ratings have been assigned to commercial because of lowering student numbers and to HR due to the outcome of the staff survey.

In order to mitigate these risks, the budget has been reforecast and provided to the Board and a series of measures to address staff dissatisfaction had begun including a staff team building day that had received positive feedback.

It became apparent during the discussion that the Officer Trustees had never seen the Risk Register in its entirety. CH will circulate to the Officers.

Action – CH

7. Finance Report

CH discussed the previously submitted accounts for August 2014. Various factors have contributed to the deficit including delay in waste collection invoices being received from SITA from 2013/4, translation costs not being budgeted for and fewer commercial bookings over the summer months. JG stated that due to the relatively small turnover during the summer, a picture of how we are performing financially will become clearer from September onwards once students are back.

CH provided a reforecast budget taking into account lower student numbers as requested by the Board. No further requests were made.

Noted

CH stated that a letter of support from the University has been sent to KPMG which should finalise 2011/12 accounts.

Noted

8. UMCA Presentation

MW gave a presentation on how and when UMCA was formed. AM questioned where UMCA see themselves in terms of growth, possibly becoming a Students' Union in their own rights. HO questioned whether they would like to look at getting a further role as a lot of MW's time is taken up on Admin. JDE stated that AUSU and UMCA will continue to come together and discussions will be ongoing.

9. CEO Report

JG gave a brief summary of his report that had been previously submitted. His report covered the success of Freshers' Week, the success of securing two rooms on Llanbadarn campus, HR updates and democratic structures. Further items were reported on as part of the agenda.

AM informed the Committee that a new Democratic Structure has been approved at AGM. He explained that it needs to get approval from the University Committee, Charter and then Senate before it can be implemented. It is hoped that it will be in place by the end of November.

JDE explained that various 'zones' will be available for groups of students to meet and debate issues relevant to the zones. This would enable underrepresented groups of students to have an opportunity to send policy forward to council and ensure representation for liberation groups and specialised areas.

Noted

10. Operational KPI Update/Strategic Review discussion

An update Operational KPI report was previously submitted and the Board were asked to note that Volunteering & Societies is yet to be added.

Noted

The Officers explained that they held an away day to review and come up with a collective vision and tasks to correspond with the outcomes of the Strategic Plan. This report was previously submitted and has been noted.

Noted

11. Membership Services Strategy

A Strategic Plan has been provided for each department within Membership Services as a wider task to help join together the department and address some feelings that came from the staff survey.

GB questioned how we aim to measure ASM coverage as reported in the Elections Strategy. AM explained that the metric used would be the number of articles written on ASM's website.

Noted

The Board asked that AM pass on their thanks to the staff for their work on these Strategies. GB informed the Board that she was concerned regarding the role of the Academic Representation Coordinator. She explained that it was a core function of this organisation that is currently being funded by the University and from January 2015 we do not know where the funding will come from (will the university continue to fund it?). A conversation was held about mounting a campaign going forward to get this role bought fully into the SU structure and funded. It was agreed that CH will provide a costing for the role in its entirety.

Action – CH/GB/AM/Sam Reynolds

12. Delegated Scheme of Authority

AM informed the Committee regarding the outcome from the Governance & Equality Sub Committee Meeting held earlier that day. He provided the amended document to be approved by the Board.

Approved

JDE reiterated that members of the Sub Committees would still be expected to behave in the correct manner alongside the policies of our Organisation.

13. NSS, Student Satisfaction, Recruitment

JG gave an overview of the NSS report previously circulated and the action plan to address the slippage in Question 23 scores. JDE stated that the results were not a shock for us and that we have already been working hard on improving this. He felt that in recent years the Organisation had focussed on Trade/Commercial and turning round the finances, to the possible detriment of student services. It was also agreed that the SU does a lot of things that the University try and take credit for - in the future we need to make sure we market and take the credit for our own successes more.

JG discussed the impact of lowering student numbers and explained that the reforecast budget is conservative based on current trading, but we must be ready for possible future talks about a reduction in the block grant. JG stated that despite the lower overall numbers, there seem to be more students in campus accommodation than ever before which was benefiting the Union's trading operations. JDE will investigate and communicate this figure.

Action – JDE

14. Staff Engagement Survey Update

JG gave an overview of his response provided on Staff Engagement. He covered actions that have been completed to date along with actions going forward. He explained that staff seemed more positive regarding these changes.

Noted

15. Recruitment Plan for External Trustee

JDE explained that he is still awaiting the Skills Audit from EH and as soon as that is received he will put together a proposal and send for approval to the Board.

Action – JDE/EH

16. A.O.B.

Executive Steering Group - GB and WA discussed their previously submitted proposal to set up an Executive Steering Group that would provide a regular opportunity for Officers to steer the CEO, to provide a channel of communication that would always exist regardless of the President being available. A short debate was held regarding this proposal and the Board were invited to vote.

Approved unanimously

Officer Reports – It was agreed that the Officer Reports would no longer be necessary as they would continue to feed into the Strategic Plan and report when necessary.

Approved

Admin – AE proposed that we switch to paperless meetings and aim to utilise the projector more to reduce on paper usage. It was agreed that it will be electronic only apart from External Trustees being able to request a paper copy.

AE also made reference to using the Dropbox system and asked that anyone submitting a report to please ensure that they do not number their pages. An evaluation form will be sent out as to the effectiveness of these systems in due course.

JDE informed SM that a vote of no confidence had been placed against him and he will receive a letter in due course with 14 days to reply.

Noted

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday 5th December, 10am, Committee Room.