



AUSU
Trustee Board Meeting
16th January 2015
Committee Room

Present

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

Skype

Estelle Hart (EH) – AUSU External Trustee
Peter Curran (PC) – Proposed AUSU External Trustee (observing only)

In attendance

Annmarie Evans – AUSU Executive Assistant to the Board
Tony Bickley – AUSU Events Coordinator (in attendance for the Events Presentation only)

JDE welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked each member to introduce themselves.

1. Apologies for Absence

Sam Bache – AUSU Undergraduate Trustee

2. Declarations of Interest

JDE declared that he had an interest with agenda item 15, Officer Role Review.

3. Approve Minutes of Meeting held 3rd October 2014

Minutes of the previous meeting, held on the 3rd October 2014 were approved as a true record of account.

Proposed: GB

Seconded: HO

4. Chair’s Business

The Chair updated the Board on the developments of the Mauritius Campus due to open this September. He explained that we have been asked to produce operating manual outlining services that we provide and what we believe would be good practice there. He stated that there are still a lot of unanswered questions and decisions to be made by the University but he will continue to update the Board as and when information becomes available. He asked whether anyone had any International Links and or best practice that could be useful. EH stated that she would provide contacts to the Chair after the meeting.

Action – EH

The Chair reminded the Board of the importance of letting either himself or Annmarie know if you are unable to attend the meeting. The dates are planned well enough in advance to be able to give your apologies in an acceptable timeframe.

Noted

5. Matters Arising

Update regarding Academic Representation Coordinator Position

AM updated the Board on the latest information with regard to the University funding the role of Academic Representation Coordinator. He stated that he had emailed John Grattan in November regarding this and John Grattan had informed him that a fund would become available that we could bid into to fund the role. In the meantime, the staff member has been given a six month contract that ends in June.

EH stated that this must be part of a broader discussion as we look at officer roles/services.

Noted

6. External Trustees

On behalf of the Appointments Committee, JDE asked the Board to endorse the appointment of Mr Peter Curran, Director of Finance for Sports Wales as AUSU External Trustee.

Unanimously Approved

EH stated that we must get moving on appointing the final External Trustee but to be mindful that we should have Members on the Board that represent all our students. EH requested that we get quotes to recruit through a specialist recruitment agency. JG will circulate quotes to the Board via email.

Action – JG

7. Finance Report

CH discussed the previously submitted accounts for November 2014 and explained that we are still experiencing losses in revenues from a reduction in student numbers versus budget predictions. CH did however inform the Board that pizza deliveries have been extremely successful and had led to Stone Willy's trading above expectations. The Board were also informed that we have taken over running the bar at Brynamlwg and although we are currently showing 1k deficit, we only opened in November and this will improve month by month as we build trade.

CH informed the Board that she has reforecast the Budget with the reduced student numbers which shows a 46k deficit for the year.

PC questioned what measures were put in place to pull this back where possible. JG explained that the trading cost of sales and payroll ratios were both improved significantly on 2013/4 showing that we are trading more efficiently despite the lower numbers. PC suggested that we look at grants and make it clear in Finance and Strategy meetings with the University that we have taken every step possible to avoid this deficit and that the budget was based on 500 less students, as provided in the Planning Round, whereas the actual number of students here was 1000 less.

Noted

8. CEO Report

JG gave a summary of his report that had been previously submitted. This covered Trading, Staff Engagement Survey, NSS and HR. He placed particular emphasis on the amount of his time that is taken up on HR issues and explained that he is currently investigating the cost of completing job evaluation against the cost of having a dedicated HR Staff member and will give this option to staff.

Noted

9. Operational KPI Update

JG provided the Board with an updated Operational Plan and explained that the KPIs would be amended when the Strategic Plan amendments are approved.

Noted

10. Risk Register Review

JG gave an overview of the updated Risk Register. EH requested that a section on the risk associated with External Speakers is added by the next meeting. NUS have some templates that can be used to help build this.

Action – JG

WA stated that the Officer Team are in the process of completing an Equalities and Diversity Policy with the aim to have in place by the start of summer. EH offered support on this.

Noted

PC questioned risks 8 and 9 in Section 1 of the risk register. The impact of falling student numbers would raise the net risk of item 8 to 20. The register will be amended to reflect this.

The Business Continuity plan mentioned in risk 9 has not yet been reviewed by the Board; this will be available to review for the March meeting.

Action - JG

11. Events Presentation

Tony Bickley, Events Coordinator gave a presentation to inform the Board of the decline in night-time events and that a strategy has been implemented to combat this.

EH stated that some other Students' Unions have cancelled Tony Lee as they feel the act is inappropriate.

Noted

JDE thanked Tony on behalf of the Board for all his work on Events.

12. Events/Bars Discussion

JG outlined his submitted report and asked the Board to consider/debate the role of Students' Unions regarding bars and events in light of declining commercial performance.

JDE invited the Board to have an open debate where various ideas were suggested. In general, the feelings were that we should concentrate on just doing main events such as Freshers week, May Ball, Rugby 7s, Superteams and utilising the space for conference bookings.

EH commented that she felt that this was part of a wider discussion that needs to be looked at over the next few meetings as well as looking at what we want the Union to be, what function

we need to perform. With possible lower student numbers again next year, it is important for the Officers to talk to the students and get a survey/qualitative data completed on what students would like to use the Union facilities for.

Action – Officers/Ongoing

JG stated that he would like to widen the debate on whether we want to deliver the services ourselves or ask the University to deliver them as has happened in Bangor, Essex and other places.

Overall there was strong feeling that we cannot just rely on the block grant and must consider the financial risks of continued commercial operations, particularly those in national decline such as night time events.

13. Amended Strategic Plan

JG presented the amended Strategic Plan and explained that as we are 50% through the life cycle of the Plan, it is sensible to update it given various macro changes and the changing priorities of the Officer Teams since it was first published. He informed the Board of the amendments made and explained that of the 6 key themes, 'Employability' has been replaced with 'Equality', with some of the employability outcomes now sitting under 'Opportunities'.

Under Key Theme 3, 'Equality', EH requested that we add a section for Liberation Groups to run a Union campaign at least annually.

Action – JG

Under Key Theme 4, 'Facilities', the Board discussed getting student feedback as to what they want the facilities to provide. JG replied this is covered in one of the questions on the all student survey launching February 9th.

PC commented that during Planning Round meetings with the University, it would be useful to ask where they are on debt finance to enable the estates/capital programme. The planning round submission should reflect the expected outcome.

Noted

EH explained that we should perhaps look at employability further in terms of utilising our own staff skills e.g. our Digital Marketing Executive to offer help/training to students to help provide them with softer skills and confidence building.

Noted

14. Constitution Update

AM explained that a new Trustee Board structure was proposed to Union Council where the constitution had been amended as well as schedule 1.3. These changes were approved and JDE asked the Board for final approval before submitting to the University Governing Body to approve.

The Board approved

AM ran through the motions from Union Council and the Board asked that in the future only passed motions are to be submitted.

Noted

15. Officer Role Review

As JDE had declared an interest in this item, GB took over the duties as Chair.

WA ran through his proposal to remove hierarchy in the Officer Team. The Board were invited to discuss and vote on the proposal. After a detailed discussion, the Board agreed that JG would take over the day to day Line Management of the Officers in terms of Annual Leave, Sickness and Flexi Sheets.

In terms of Officer roles/structure, the Board felt that this needed to be part of a wider discussion that would need to be facilitated by someone external.

Ongoing

16. Appoint Remuneration Committee Chair

JDE invited the Board to appoint a Remuneration Committee Chair. A vote was held and Peter Curran was unanimously voted as Chair.

Noted

17. UMCA & AUSU Memorandum of Agreement

The Board were informed of on-going dialogue between UMCA and AUSU regarding their relationship. Over the last 40 years there has been no concrete agreement and as such, relationships have been tentative at times. The Officer Team are currently working on an agreement and will update the Board as and when there is anything to report.

Noted

18. A.O.B.

JDE informed the Board that the Officer Team have been working on producing a Students' Union Newspaper outlining what has been achieved and what is happening for the rest of the semester.

Noted

Admin – Please be mindful to provide papers by the deadlines given by Annmarie.

The next meeting will take place on **Friday 13th March at 10am, in the Committee Room**
of the Students' Union