

Goldsmiths Students' Union
 Trustee Board Meeting
 Liberation Room, Goldsmiths Students' Union
 22 February 2018

Trustees in attendance	Eva Crossan Jory (chair), Taylor McGraa, Joseph Tema, Tara Mariwany, Joe Leam, Toby Peacock, Theresa Kanneh, Andy Gilroy
Apologies	Patrick Moule, Tiia Meuronen
Staff in attendance	Dave Lewis (Chief Executive), Ed Nedjari (Director of Commercial & Operations), Peter Greaney (Finance Director), Leah Kurta (Minutes)

Minutes:

Item	Summary points	Action	Role / deadline
3. Minutes from last meeting	Last minutes approved.		
4. Officer Priorities Oral Update	<p>Officer Update</p> <p>ECJ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has been working a lot with UCU. - Preparing an internal strategy prior to leaving her role. -Involved in the recruitment of the Activities manger. <p>TMa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Against sexual violence campaign, a programme of student training to focusing on bystander intervention. This is a pilot programme which TMa hopes the university will fund in the future. - BME attainment gap for which TMa has provided a paper to committees to continue the work. -UCU strike and a mitigation strategy concerning the strike running into the assessment period. <p>TMg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UCU: commented that lots of student support the cause. - Launching boycott the NSS again this year for which an assembly motion was passed. - Working with TMa on the BME attainment gap. - Planning alternative careers week. A week of talks on the creative industries. <p>JT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strike again taking up a large portion of time with a higher volume of students asking questions, lots of face-to-face work with students. - Facilitated a student space user group, which is concerned with understanding what spaces students need and how spaces can be improved. This is in collaboration 	Ahead of the next board meeting the sabbs will provide the student assembly report papers so that the board are informed of the update ahead of the meeting.	All sabbs

	<p>with the Estates dept. who confirmed they found the group useful.</p> <p>TMg: commented that an outcome of the strikes is that the students are more politically involved and more aware of what's happening in the Union and the work that happens behind the scenes.</p> <p>Questions: The officers asked the board what they would find useful in terms of future structure or content of these updates?</p> <p>TK: suggested a paragraph ahead of the meeting would be useful and suggested that reports should focus on any risks and actions which may impact the Union's reputation. AG: confirmed that it would be useful to have a written document ahead of the board meetings but something which isn't a burden.</p> <p>Student assembly reports were deemed to be a good guide for trustees. (See action for next meeting)</p>		
<p>5. Chief Executive Report Dave Lewis</p>	<p><i>Paper document supplied – additional comments and discussion points below</i></p> <p>AG: Questioned why the auditors were unable to access all the information in December. DL commented that this was historical. Some aspect of what the auditors needed was still in process, for example the finalised college income position from 2016/17. DL confirmed that the auditors had now left and had all the information that they needed. Work involving clubs and societies balances and bad debt have been addressed.</p> <p>TK: asked about staffing. She queried how the recent staff losses affect the Sabbs and whether any additional support was needed for them to successfully function in their roles. DL: stated that one departure was mutual for both parties, and the other was not expected. He stated that some of the additional work has been filled by the Engagement Manager. Other work previously undertaken by these posts has been redistributed or delayed. DL stated that these solutions were only sufficient in the interim and stated that the strategy for filling these posts needed to be considered carefully in the next couple of months. TMa also inputted that some of this work will be filled by part-time officer roles. However, capacity concerns were raised. ECJ: confirmed that it has been difficult since the welfare role does need staff support so important to reconsider how this can be filled. TP: queried how the loss of the Democracy Coordinator affected the work in the lead up to the election? DL suggested the likely impact would be felt with some</p>		

	<p>aspects of best practice such as regularly engaging with candidates may not take place, or to a lesser degree this year due to this staffing loss. He commented that the Engagement manager had been picking up a lot of the administration work this year rather than communicating with students and planning the elections strategy although the elections plan was being delivered. DL stated that these issues would be addressed ahead of next year.</p> <p>TMa: stated that she foresees an impact on voting turnout, especially because voting also falls within the strike action so less students are on campus. This may also impact on associated work within the broader engagement team.</p> <p>DL: agreed that there are lessons to be learnt for next year.</p> <p>TMg: stated that there have been problems due to planning and staffing however, there is a lot of student engagement and student action. There are positives to take.</p> <p>AG: queried whether staff turnover had decreased from previous years. She stated that she noticed an improvement in terms of staff retention on previous reports.</p> <p>DL: stated that much of the previous turnover could be attributed to the natural academic cycle. However, he agreed that currently there is better retention. He commented that a lot of the turnover is within student staff. Commented at the start of his employment there was a lot of change, some people were in roles that they were not suited to. These things have now settled down. He stated that it was an ambition now to highlight the opportunities to progress within the Union and will be ensuring staff have learning and development plans.</p> <p>AG: commented that constitution made provision for a finance committee chaired by co-opted trustee, and given the increase of business to the Trustee Board, this should be reinstated as soon as practically possible. It was also suggested to develop a staffing committee which would consider issues related to staff.</p> <p>AG: suggested this should be presented by DL to the next board meeting so all the trustees can consider this. She also commented that more details were needed on finance.</p> <p>DL was asked to provide more information in relation to incorporation and to make a decision at the next Board on how this could be taken forward.</p>	<p>TK: action for DL bring what formally existed for the terms of reference for the finance and staffing committees so a decision can be made. Suggest any changes which would be appropriate.</p> <p>DL to provide more information needed on the process of incorporation.</p>	
6. Finance Update	<p><i>Paper update is provided. Additional comments below</i></p> <p>PG, finance consultant: gives a presentation to the board.</p> <p>Questions on the presentation:</p>	The trustees can expect an audit report at	

	<p>TMa: asked if it would be likely that the auditors would be informing of adjustments. PG suggests this is unlikely although there is some doubt over money from the university. However, he stated that he thought it would be likely that alignment would be found in the finance and auditor's reports.</p> <p>AG: asked about recovery of bad debt. PG: suggests that most of the debt was incorrect income. However, the accounts reflect the prudent view, that bad debt will not be recoverable.</p> <p>DL: commented on the debt from the nursery. He stated that some debtors were university staff and in this case proposed the debt should be recoverable. However, some of this debt is not recoverable. In the future, the responsibility for this debt will sit with the finance team. He commented that better communication would be needed between the nursery and the Union finance team.</p> <p>A discussion concerning an invoice for music equipment from the university music department followed. It was concluded that provision in the 2016/17 Accounts had been made to cover this cost of re-buying music equipment currently in the stretch. However, it is predicted that paying off this contract will be ceased but discussions need to take place before it can formally be taken out of the budget.</p> <p>AG asked for clarification from the December papers about an increase in staffing costs which PG would investigate and report further.</p> <p>Commercial activity: the board queried the bar staffing costs. It was stated that commercial revenue is trading at a loss overall, however DL commented that these figures were very fresh and had not been interrogated by management team yet.</p> <p>TMa: clarified that these costs are against the inherited incorrect budget. For example, she raised that the previous budget did not have the correct NI figures incorporated.</p> <p>PG: highlighted the challenge of chasing the debtors. He suggested there is a need to do this. He also commented that the cashflow balance is better than predicted, PG commented that this should provide some reassurance to the board. However, clarified the need for management accounts moving forward.</p> <p>TP: asked about where savings could be made for the next year. PG suggested this might come from some contingencies which were built into the budget. However, he confirmed that a decision on savings would be a process to be undertaken by staff for presentation at a</p>	<p>the next board meeting</p> <p>PG provide clarity and additional information</p>	
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	<p>forthcoming board meeting.</p> <p>JL: queried how good the university grant is in comparison with other universities. PG commented that the grant is in line with other universities however there is some negotiation taking place. DL also commented that some of the grant needs to be thought about more flexibly since some monies historically are ring-fenced.</p> <p>ECJ: commented that gaining a meeting about the grant and finances with the university is challenging.</p> <p>EN: commented that staffing costs are not excessive and that staffing is running at a skeleton level. Therefore, comments from the university regarding the Union's staffing seem unfounded.</p>		
7. Skills Audit + Trustee recruitment	<p>ECJ: stated that there is space for two additional trustees. However, TK also commented that her tenure is also coming to an end so 3 positions may be available. ECJ stated that she would like to see recruitment happen before she leaves.</p> <p>TMa: stated that the College have mentioned in passing about Trustee Board composition but College Director of Finance did not think it was appropriate. TMa's view was that this could cause a conflict of interest since the Union should be an independent organisation and receives its core grant from the university.</p> <p>The board came to a consensus to look for an external trustee with financial experience.</p> <p>ECJ: seeks board approval to put out a recruitment advert online.</p> <p>The board reached a consensus that legal and finance positions are the priority roles for recruitment.</p>	<p>Full board involved in the shortlisting of new board members.</p> <p>JL, TK, JT and ECJ to form the recruitment panel of the new trustees.</p>	
8. Improving the Trustee board	<p><i>Report provided: Additional Questions and comments:</i></p> <p>JT gave a verbal report of suggested changes.</p> <p>JL: commented that trustee training is imperative and that training should take place earlier so that student trustees know what is expected of being a trustee.</p> <p>ECJ: suggested that this training could take place during handover week.</p> <p>TK: agreed that these changes were also in line with her ideas.</p> <p>AG: commented that a need for effective administration for the board is necessary. AG suggested that the DWF Report and NUS Diagnostic be revisited because the incidents they investigated, and the recommendations that were made, resonated with the issues the current TB had been discussing vis governance and Officer training and support. It was therefore agreed that everyone would read these before the next TB and that we would have a discussion about them at the next Board..</p>	<p>Everyone reads the DWF report and the NUS diagnostics for historical context prior to the next meeting.</p> <p>Proposed changes within the report were agreed.</p>	
10. Commercial strategy	<p><i>Report provided. Discussion and questions presented below:</i></p>		

	<p>EN gave a verbal report on the commercial strategy to date.</p> <p>TMa: Reported that the University are putting together a zine which is going out to many homes in the community. She suggested that the commercial team could promote their services within this paper.</p> <p>ECJ: suggested a need to work more with the students and incentivize them to use the bar and venue. She highlighted the fact the Union bar is a safe space over and above other venues, and suggested this could be a selling point.</p> <p>EN: commented that any commercial suggestions can be sent to him via email and also suggested to hold a further email discussion since the meeting started to over-run at this point.</p>	TMa sent information to EN	
9. Operational planning	<p><i>Paper report provided: Additional comments below</i></p> <p>DL: commented that he is working towards a date of the 5th of June for a 3-5 year plan. He suggested that at the end of April the board could hold a longer meeting to go through this report in more detail.</p> <p>ECJ suggested a need to invite the new sabbs and trustees to this meeting.</p>	DL to email key dates for a discussion about the operational plan.	
Any other business	<p>AG: suggests that meeting cancellations need to be minimized this year.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 7.34pm</p>		