

Trustee Board Minutes

From meeting held on Monday 7th September 2020
Online Meeting, via Zoom

Present

Robert Smeath, External Trustee **(RS)** (Chair) (arrived at 17:15)
Tobiloba Adeyemi, President **(President)** (Vice-chair)
Rebecca Cutler, Postgraduate Officer **(PGO)**
Jules Singh, Education Officer **(EO)**
Amie Raphael, Activities and Employability Officer **(AEO)**
Charlotte Minter, Welfare and Community Officer **(WCO)**
Rob Hegarty, Sports Officer **(SO)**
Wei-Lun Chen, International Officer **(IO)**
Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**
Henrietta Brealey, External Trustee **(HB)**
Wyn Williams, External Trustee **(WW)**
Ian Pain, External Trustee **(IP)**
Emma Wedge, External Trustee **(EW)**
Rosa Alaluf, Student Trustee **(RA)**
Tom Goodman, Student Trustee (Postgraduate) **(TG)**
Maya Davey, Student Trustee **(MD)**

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement **(AS)** (agenda items 7 & 8 only)
Sarah Wright, Director of Support and Development **(SW)** (agenda items 6 only)
Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)** (agenda items 3 to 5 only)
Sam Jones, Interim Executive Assistant **(SJ)** (note taker)

Apologies

Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)**

The Chair welcomed everyone and the meeting commenced at 17:05.

No	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	NOTES	ACTION
1	Approval & Minutes of last meeting (29.06.20)	The Vice-chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting dated Monday 29 th June 2020 for the Board's approval. The minutes were taken as read, with no questions asked. The Board approved the Minutes dated 29th June 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting.	Noted Approved
2	Matters Arising	The Vice-chair noted an outstanding item from the action tracker relating to the Guild's new brand identity. EB noted that the Guild's new branding was in the process of being implemented, however had been delayed due to the closure of the building and COVID-19. EB noted that the new branding and logo would be utilised in welcome week 2020, and branding guidelines would be circulated to departments.	Noted Noted

3	Annual Health & Safety Report	<p>EB presented the Annual Health & Safety Report for the Board's approval.</p> <p>EB updated the Board on progress with the major incident which occurred in January 2020. EB noted that the Guild had completed its investigations and had planned changes to the Guild's stairwells following consultation with the University Estates team, however this had been delayed due to the closure of the building. EB noted that the incident was now with the Guild's insurers.</p> <p>EB updated the Board on the implementation of the closure of the building in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and subsequent ongoing phased Covid secure reopening in August.</p> <p>EB noted that the Guild's H&S policies were currently under review, in collaboration with the University and in consultation with Guild managers and that Health & Safety committee would be reviewing feedback received and considering changes.</p> <p>The Board approved the Annual Health & Safety Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
4	Officer Action Plans	<p>The Officer Team presented their Officer Action Plans for the Board's Information. The President noted that the PGO would be presenting their action plan at the next Board meeting.</p> <p>President – Supporting BAME student through the Black Voices campaign by lobbying the University to provide additional training for staff, increasing representation for minority groups within the Guild, engaging students in the Guild's reformed democratic structures, working with campus services to promote sustainable practices to staff and students, and lobbying the University to declare a climate emergency.</p> <p>MD asked about the University's current wellbeing provisions for BAME students. The President noted that the University's current offering for BAME students was not culturally relevant and very few University wellbeing staff identified as BAME.</p> <p>EO – Improving study space and access to amenities such as microwaves and water, ensuring that the student voice is heard on the transition to online teaching, improving student access to employability skills and part-time term time work, and signposting to part-time work opportunities.</p> <p>TG noted the significant reduction in opportunities for part-time work for returning students both on and off campus.</p> <p>RS arrived at 17:15 and assumed the chair.</p> <p>AEO – Improving training access for society committees via inclusivity training together with liberation PTOs, improving access to welfare information, streamlining student groups processes and moving forms online, and ensuring the Guild is transparent and accountable in its decision making.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>IO – Enhancing induction for international students with the Guild's activities, improving inclusivity for international students in Guild and society events together with the SO, engaging with year-abroad students on their experiences during the COVID-19 outbreak in collaboration with the Study Abroad and Student Exchange teams, improving access for year-abroad students to accommodation, and expanding the annual 'One World' festival.</p> <p>SO- Improving inclusivity and representation in sports teams, tackling historical issues of prejudice with the new 'inclusive legacy' team, delivery of a successful LGBTQ+ sports week and 'One World-Cup' tournament, enabling sports teams to train and play matches in a COVID-19 secure model, improving student health following limited access to exercise during lockdown, and improving communications between the Guild, University and Sports teams.</p> <p>WCO- Increasing engagement with the 'Not On' campaign and improving student understanding of sexual harassment and the University's processes for sexual harassment survivors, introducing student training on sexual conduct and bystander support, undertaking a review of wellbeing in sports teams, improving access to the University's counselling services and out-of-hours wellbeing support and tackling issues of racism in the student community.</p> <p>RS noted the value of promoting the Officer Teams action plans to student via Guild communication channels. EB noted ongoing work to improve the communication of officer priorities and wins, in-light of the online nature of the Guild's current operations.</p> <p>The Board noted the Officer Action Plans.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
5	Strategic Plan Year 3 Update	<p>EB presented the Strategic Plan Year 3 Update for the Board's Information.</p> <p>EB noted that in-light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Guild strategy delivery had been very challenging over the last 6 months, however the Guild had maintained the majority of the current operating plan and some items had been accelerated due to changes in working while the building remained closed, such as the IT transition. EB noted that KPI figures remained concerning, and a number of variables and uncertainties remained for the Guild's strategic delivery over year three of the strategy due to the ongoing pandemic.</p> <p>EB noted that the Guild was moving towards the next strategic review period for 2021-2024. JT noted that a large amount of the Guild's future pathways and performance remained unknown, however the Guild had taken the decision to maintain the current strategic plan and previous working targets while the return to campus continued.</p> <p>JD noted that year three strategic targets may need to be prioritised following the welcome period due to financial pressures, compounded by the closure of two of the Guild's former</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>franchisees. HB noted that the number of strategic priorities may need to be re-focused within the Guild's current resource envelope. WW noted the value of a 'digital first' outlook going forwards and possibilities for co-delivery with societies and members of the student community. An update would be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>EB left the meeting at 17:50.</p> <p>The Board noted the Strategic Plan Year 3 Update.</p>	<p>EB</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
6	Priority Campaigns 2020/2021	<p>SW presented the Priority Campaigns 2020/2021 paper for the Board's approval.</p> <p>SW noted that following the annual officer training period, the Officer team had agreed to move forward with the existing Black Voices campaign for a further year. SW noted that the existing Climate Emergency campaign had been removed as a focussed priority campaign considering ongoing sustainability work in other areas of the Guild, but work in this area would continue.</p> <p>The President updated the Board on plans for the Black Voices campaign for the year ahead. The President noted plans to lobby the University on decolonising course curricula, improve the Guild's engagement with black and BAME students, improve black student's access to culturally appropriate wellbeing services and support Guild staff teams to improve inclusivity in the Guild's services and activities.</p> <p>The President noted the current significant black student's attainment gap at the University and satisfaction gap as highlighted in 2020 NSS data.</p> <p>The President updated the Board on plans for black history month and plans to collaborate with representative societies and provide funding for student-led events.</p> <p>The EO updated the Board on the 'COVID-19' strategy for the year ahead. The EO noted that due to the unprecedented impact on course teaching, academic provision and welfare issues, it was critical for students to view the Guild as the representative body and to collect feedback on the University's current operating model.</p> <p>IP noted the need to maintain the momentum of the Guild's previous sustainability work. The President noted that ongoing work of the Ethical and Environmental Part-Time Officer and E&E Committee on NUS Green Impact and the annual Go Green week.</p> <p>The Board approved the Priority Campaigns 2020/2021 paper.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
7	COVID-19 Update	<p>JT presented the COVID-19 Update paper for the Board's information.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

		<p>JT updated the Board on progress on the staff return to the building, in collaboration with the University's Estates team. JT noted that the Guild building had received its 'COVID' secure approval in August.</p> <p>JT noted that the majority of the Guild's staff had begun to return to the building at least part-time, in line with the wider University's approach. JT noted plans for the return of student staff were currently under review.</p> <p>JT noted that the SU sector had not received specific COVID-19 guidelines for the operation of Students' Unions, however the Guild had decided to hold the majority of welcome events and society activity online in semester one. JT noted that the Guild had developed plans for an online series of welcome week events together with a specialist online provider. In addition, an 'in-person' event was planned for the Vale site, in collaboration with the University for the first two weeks of term to allow for some physical activity for students and Guild staff teams in a 'COVID secure' setting.</p> <p>JT noted that the Guild's guidance to student groups remained 'virtual by default', however this guidance would be under regular review by the Student Groups team in-line with national and local guidance. JT noted the possibility of a 'local lockdown' in the West Midlands may prevent in-person society activity for some time.</p> <p>JT noted the hard work of the Venues team to prepare for the limited reopening of Joes Bar in time for the start of semester one.</p> <p>JT noted that the Guild's Emergency Management Team (GEMT) had been reinstated to manage the re-opening of the building and the return of departmental staff in preparation for welcome week.</p> <p>The Board discussed the Guild's approach for the return of the staff team to the building and the possibility for a 'local lockdown' in Birmingham at short notice. JT noted that the Facilities and Venues teams had worked extremely hard to implement social distancing measures in the building and the majority of staff had now returned to the building at least once. JT noted that staff teams continued to rotate on a 'blended working' basis due to office capacity.</p> <p>EW asked about the Guild's and University's relationship on campus COVID planning. AS noted that the Guild was not attending top-level COVID strategic meetings, however was feeding into planning at lower levels and regularly keeping in touch with senior University staff.</p> <p>AS updated the Board on plans for the return of campus to the Guild building. AS noted that due to the closure of society meeting rooms and reduced departmental activity in the building, student footfall in the building was expected to be significantly lower, however staff would be managing capacity and welcoming new students into the building.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
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8	NSS 2020 Report	<p>AS presented the NSS 2020 Report for the Board's information.</p> <p>AS noted that nationally NSS results had been relatively stable despite difficulties with collecting data during the lockdown and possible reductions in student satisfaction as campuses closed.</p> <p>AS noted that overall satisfaction at UoB had fallen significantly, with the University falling from 40th to 76th in the UK, and the decline had been more significant than the national downtrend due to COVID-19. AS noted that the BME attainment gap had widened overall, as had disabled student satisfaction, with bigger declines than the whole student population.</p> <p>AS noted that areas of the most significant decline included perceptions of student safety, which had declined further for black students compared to white, resulting in a significant gap.</p> <p>AS noted that the results for question 26 at UoB had declined, reducing -5.3% from the previous year. AS noted that the Guild's viewpoint on question 26 remained that the question was poorly worded, with many students unsure of how to define 'academic interests' in relation to their student union, and was thus a non-perfect indicator of satisfaction.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>HB noted that the issue of the question 26 should be included in a future review of the Guild's strategic priorities to identify that an improvement of the results was a strategic priority. The PGO noted the Officer team viewed improving Guild engagement with the student voice as a key priority. JD suggested considering the student voice in a wider context than NSS question 26.</p> <p>MD noted the value in additional communications of 'officer wins' on areas of the student voice. RS suggesting focusing on communication of the Guild's representations and successes within the existing Guild resource envelope. JT noted the need for the University to better communicate the Guild's work and recognise which elements of delivery the Guild played a key role in.</p> <p>AS left at 19:00.</p> <p>The Board noted the NSS 2020 Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
9	Annual Attendance Report	<p>JT presented the Annual Attendance Report for the Board's information.</p> <p>RS noted that several trustees had been spoken to earlier in the year about attendance, and issues had been resolved.</p> <p>The Board noted the Annual Attendance Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
10	Appointments Panel Report	<p>JT presented the Appointments Panel Report for the Board's information.</p> <p>JT noted that the Appointments Panel was required to make an annual report to the Trustee Board outlining its work. JT noted that Appointments panel attendance had been significantly improved from previous year.</p> <p>JT noted that in 2019/20, Appointments panel had made 5 appointments to the Trustee Board over three rounds of recruitment, as well as three appointments of independent individuals of appropriate skills and expertise to Guild Committees. JT noted that the Board had seen significant amount of turnover in-year, with 11 Trustee's departing in 2019-20.</p> <p>JT noted that there were currently two vacancies for Trustee positions on HR Committee. JT asked Trustees interested in the roles to get in touch.</p> <p>RS thanked the members of Appointments panel this year for their hard work.</p> <p>RS noted that there was an outstanding vacancy for an International student trustee. JT noted that recruitment for this position was planned for semester one, following the election of new student members of Appointments panel.</p> <p>The Board noted the Appointments Panel Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

11	CEO Report	<p>JT presented the CEO report for the Board's Information.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on the progress of the organisation change project. JT noted that core-staff redundancies had now been completed on a voluntary basis, following consultation with all staff at risk. JT noted that the second phase of the changes was ongoing, with an update to be presented at the next Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board noted the CEO report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
12	Declaration of Interest Policy	<p>JT presented the Declaration of Interest Policy for the Board's approval.</p> <p>JT noted that only minor changes had been made since the policy was last approved by the Board in September 2018, as there had been no regulatory changes to the requirements for declarations of interest.</p> <p>The Board approved the Declaration of Interest Policy.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
13	AOB	No items noted	Noted
14	Meeting Reflection	No items noted.	Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:10.

Signed

Date