

Trustee Board Meeting

Monday 11th September 2023
Mandela Room, 18:00 – 20:00

Present

Robert Smeath, External Trustee **(RS)** (Chair)
 Amira Campbell, Guild President **(President)**
 Joseph Hill, Education Officer **(EO)**
 Catherine Hardiman, Sports Officer **(SO)**
 Tinajie (Alice) Liu, International Officer **(IO)**
 Dean Turner, Welfare & Community Officer **(WCO)**
 Harry Brooks, Activities & Employability Officer **(AEO)**
 Benjamin Lockley, Postgraduate Officer **(PGO)**
 Serabi Opiyo, BAME Student Trustee **(SEO)**
 Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**
 Mitali Gohel, External Trustee **(MG)**
 Yinbo Yu, External Trustee **(YY)**
 Emma Wedge, External Trustee **(EW)**
 Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)** (arrived at 18:10)

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
 Ruth Pipkin, Incoming Chair of Board **(RP)**
 James Lindsay, Director of Community & Representation **(JL)**
 Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)**
 Tim Owen, UoB Associate Director of Accommodation **(TO)** (Agenda Item 1 only)
 Christine Milburn, Communications Consultant **(CM)** (Agenda Items 1 – 7 only)

Apologies

Kantai Melau, International Student Trustee **(KM)**

The Chair welcomed all attendees and the meeting began at 18:00.

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
1	Residence Life Presentation	<p>TO joined the meeting at 18:00.</p> <p>TO and JL delivered a presentation on the University and Guild's Residence Life project work, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>TO presented the history of the Guild and University's programme of support for students living in Halls, including the Guild's long-running Hall Reps and Student Mentors Schemes. TO noted that over the previous 18 months, the Guild and University had undertaken a review of the campus offering of 'Residence Life'.</p> <p>JL noted the January 2022 external Residence Life review commissioned by the Guild and the key recommendations from the report, including improving communications of the 'Residence Life'</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>schemes, expanding the quality of the offer to students, and improving support to students living in accommodation.</p> <p>JL ran through the ‘Events and Activities’ project theme from the report, noting the aim of combining the three existing schemes and brands of Hall Reps, Community Wardens and Student Mentors into one cohesive service and identity. TO noted that student communications and branding was currently the weakest element of the University’s Residence Life offering. JL noted the value of the Guild’s transition to engagement and service user data capture via MSL, which was critical to improving services to students. TO noted a recent successful collaborative staff conference between the Guild and University to share knowledge of working practices between the two staff teams.</p> <p>TO updated the Board on progress to date on the Residence Life action plan, including joint events between the Guild and University, and the launch of the new Active Residents programme in partnership with the UB Sport team.</p> <p>JL noted the impacts of the Student Mentors scheme in the 2022-23 academic year, including 400 students supported with mental health needs, 11k students engaged during Welcome Week 2022, and 14 pizza parties held in Halls during the same welcome period. JL noted an 85% satisfaction rate with students using the Student Mentors service.</p> <p>JL noted the next steps of the Residence project, including a new Residence Life Strategy to be shared with the Board in future, the launch of a refreshed brand for Residence Life, and a new governance system to be put in place.</p> <p>EC joined the meeting at 18:10.</p> <p>EW asked what additional branding and communications to University Staff would be delivered. TO noted additional content on Residence Life being shared through the Staff wellbeing network for front-line staff. TO noted the importance of the Guild and University staff involved acting as ambassadors for the three schemes.</p> <p>EW asked about plans for Residence Life beyond the next 12 months in terms of continual improvement. JL noted plans for the new strategy document to be presented to the Board later in the current academic year, ready for launch for September 2024. JL noted that the new strategy would cover 5 years of targets and growth for the Residence Life programme, with mechanisms for responding to student feedback.</p> <p>JD noted the importance of the Guild retaining its visibility in the delivery of the Residence Life offer with regard to student engagement. JL noted the opportunity within the University’s new branding to simplify and pair-back the branding of Residence Life to focus on the core brand of the Guild and the University. TO noted increased discipline over the University’s branding in future, with no specific ‘Residence Life’ brand or logo planned.</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> <p>Noted</p>
--	--	--	---

		<p>MG asked about the link to the Guild's Strategic Plan. JL noted the line to aim three in the Guild's Strategic Plan of supporting students to feel part of the University community.</p> <p>RS noted the value of incorporating elements of the project with respect to improved collaboration between the Guild and University.</p> <p>The Board noted the Residence Life Presentation.</p> <p>TO left the meeting at 18:20.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
2	Minutes of Previous Meeting (03.07.23)	<p>The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting, dated the 3rd July 2023, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
3	Matters Arising	<p>The Chair presented the Trustee Board Action Tracker, for the Board's Information. The Chair noted two outstanding actions.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
4	Officer Action Plans	<p>The Officer Team each introduced their Action Plans, which had been developed over the summer training period, for the Board's information. The Officer Team presented their plans in turn:</p> <p><u>President</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-In Sessions for the Officer team with Student Groups. • A new project on workers/labour rights and the right to strike for student workers. • Additional support for Liberation Groups societies. • Activist-led campaigns. • Workers and Renters Rights toolkits • Unions Fair annual event. • Expenses for student course placements. • Improving EDI working by University Staff. <p><u>Activities & Employability Officer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifying the Guild's club nights • Supporting the re-introduction of Vale Fest 2023. • Encouraging societies and committee members to be more inclusive, and more accessible to become a student group committee member. • Making the Guild's Room bookings system more accessible. <p><u>Welfare & Community Officer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the Guild's support offer for students renting in the local area. • Expand the existing Community Pantry scheme and offer a Free Breakfast programme for students in hardship in the Guild. • Roll-Out a new cultural calendar in the organisation to celebrate the diversity in our student groups. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate drugs and alcohol harm reduction policies in the Guild for club nights and the Guild's venues. <p><u>Postgraduate Officer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver an earlier than ever student timetables, to help PG students plan their studies alongside work. • Improve the Guild's Fab N Fresh offerings to PG students with new deals on drinks. • Lobbying the University to create a Widening Participation discount scheme for postgraduate students, mirroring the A2B scheme which is already available to Undergraduate students. • Ensure that the University provides adequate academic and non-academic support for PG students. <p><u>Education Officer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased promotion of the Guild's Student Reps. • Arranging for additional EDI training for student reps to develop a stronger sense of belonging on campus. • Enforce tighter turn-around times for assessment and feedback and exam timetables. <p><u>International Officer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development from last year's action plan. • Improved information for international students on their visa requirements and processes. • Targeted outreach to International Students to bring them into the Guild and join more societies. • Encourage international students to join the Guild's student rep programme. • Engage with ISA Committee to support the development of this student group. • Develop stronger representation for International Students through a stronger feedback loop to increase international student's voices. • Expand the Guild's cultural exchange offer, Language Café events and Lunar New Year, and a model UN conference hosted at UoB. <p><u>Sports Officer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for a new sports day event on the Vale, in partnership with UB Sports. • Deliver termly second-hand sports kit and equipment's sales to address sustainability and the cost of living crisis, building on last year's clothing swap events. • Arrange for new Committee breakfasts between UB Sport Staff and Sports committee members to facilitate better communication between the two groups. • Deliver guest passes and a trial period for gym membership at the University's two sites. • Bring in a new Sports Hardship Fund. 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
--	--	--	---

		<p>MG suggested reviewing the Officer's action plan template in terms of linking the content to the Guild's Strategic Plan, and clearly separating between Outcomes, Measures and Impacts.</p> <p>JD noted the number of common themes across the Officer's action plans, including Student Rep System improvement, inclusivity in the curriculum and improvements to the Guild's club nights offering. JD suggested that the Officer's look to collaborate closely on a number of projects. EW noted the issue for a student who fell into multiple categories (e.g., Postgraduate, Mature, International) who may feel overloaded by the number of different events that they meet the criteria for.</p> <p>RS noted the value of linking action plans back to previous Officer teams and building on their progress. RS noted that Officer Teams often met a number of unexpected challenges in their year's in office which could require a significant amount of Officer and staff time.</p> <p>YY noted the significant Officer team capacity which may be taken up by the expected UK General Election in the Autumn of 2024. The President noted ongoing work to promote the West Midlands mayoral elections in May 2024 and increase student engagement and awareness of the current political environment.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
5	CEO Report	<p>JT presented the CEO Report, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on the recent recruitment of RP as the new Chair of the Board. JT noted ongoing recruitment for 4 other trustee vacancies, with the aim of recruiting these before the next Board meeting on the 23rd October 2023.</p> <p>JT updated the Board on progress on the Guild's IT Transition to the University platform, and the planned Guild's 'Compact' review process with the University.</p> <p>The PGO asked about progress towards the Pay & Benefits review. JT noted that an extraordinary HR Committee meeting had been arranged for the following week to present the review recommendations.</p> <p>The PGO asked about progress on a new trade union recognition agreement for Guild staff with Unison. JT noted that the document was currently with Unison for review.</p> <p>RS noted the update on the Higher Education Act on Freedom of Speech. JT noted that the Guild were waiting on additional advice from Universities UK and the NUS on the specific requirements of the act. JT noted ongoing discussions with the student services team and the roll-out of new training for University staff. RS noted the importance of sourcing additional advice from the University.</p> <p>EW noted the focus in the new act on Students' Union regarding speakers. JT noted that occasionally the Guild was required to request that events were re-arranged to meet the University 21-day speaker</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>process, however it was extremely rare that the Guild were to decline a speaker.</p> <p>JT noted that the significant change in legislation on what constituted an invitation, include a casual invitation from a student group committee. RS suggested including an update on Freedom of Speech at the next Board meeting. SJ to include on agenda.</p> <p>The Board noted the CEO Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>SJ</p> <p>Noted</p>
6	Communications Review Update	<p>EB and CM presented the Communications Review Update, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>EB noted that the Guild had previously commissioned a review of the Guild's operational and strategic communications in March 2023, which had made 64 recommendations approved by the Board. EB noted that at the May 2023 Trustee Board meeting, the Board had agreed to progress the recommendations of the review as a priority. EB noted that the Guild had subsequently made management changes to the Communications & Marketing team and contracted with CM on a fixed term basis to support the department.</p> <p>EB updated the Board on progress to date, noting significant progress on improving the delivery of operational communications. EB noted ongoing challenges for the Guild's communications both in terms of internal delivery, and through external engagement with the University's communications.</p> <p>The IO noted the significant improvement that the Officer Team had seen in the Guild's communications operations since the implementation of the recommendations. The SO and PGO noted the professionalism and improvement in support provided by the Communications & Marketing team.</p> <p>JD noted the value of the detailed report and the progress to date, and of focusing on the new communications strategy post-Welcome Week, and the importance of behavioural change within the organisation. JD noted the value of communicating how these changes would affect the existing processes of other departments.</p> <p>CM updated the Board on the key focus for messaging during Welcome Week. CM noted the importance of responding quickly to engagement data and changing course when the data indicated a need to do so.</p> <p>The Board noted the importance of Guild staff responding positively and constructively to changes made to internal communications processes.</p> <p>The Board noted the Communications Review Update.</p> <p>ChM left the meeting at 19:10.</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>

7	Research & Insight Framework	<p>EB presented the Research & Insight Framework, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>EB updated the Board on the content of the new Research and Insight Framework, building on the Guild's existing research programmes and rationalising research programmes which currently collected data at multiple touch-points throughout the organisation in non-standardised formats. EB noted significant investments at comparator Students' Unions in staffing in research and insights, which the Guild planned to explore in Year 2 of the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>EC asked about additional funding required to resource the new framework. EB noted that the framework could be delivered within the existing research budget and from within existing research spend.</p> <p>The EO asked about references to 'Speak Week' in the paper. EB noted that the Guild's previous 'Speak Week' event was a large-scale qualitative event led by the Student Voice Team, testing student opinion on specific education focused issues at a moment in time. JT noted that the outputs from the week contributed to the annual Student Voice Report.</p> <p>EW noted the importance of focusing on a small number of in-depth issues rather than an overly-broad data dashboard which overloaded staff with data. EW suggested reframing the 'Business Analyst' role as outlined in the paper. MG suggested focusing first on qualitative analysis for a small number of key research areas.</p> <p>JD suggested seeking support from 'Red Brick Research', the authors of the initial review, on the delivery of the new framework.</p> <p>RS asked about the University's preference for the Guild's handling of its research. EB noted that the Guild, contrary to the University's plans, usually ran its main research content early in the academic year to maximise engagement.</p> <p>The Board approved the Research & Insight Framework.</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>
8	NSS Report 2022-2023	<p>JL presented the NSS Report 2022-2023, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>JL updated the Board on the breakdown of the UoB NSS statistics for 2023, including the Students' Union specific question 25 on academic representation by the Guild, which had seen a significant increase from 48.9% in 2022 to 63.2% in 2023.</p> <p>JL noted 80.32% student satisfaction with the range of clubs and societies on offer, a very positive outcome. JL updated the Board on a new Internal 'Surveys Action Group' to overview and coordinate the Guild's work on key academic surveys such as the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught and Research Student Surveys (PTES & PRES). RS suggested adding learning visits to comparator University's and SU's with higher NSS scores to the plan. JD suggested arranging for staff team visits to Sheffield Students' Union,</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>which had achieved high Question 26 scores and high Officer Elections turnout.</p> <p>The IO noted that the NSS scores reflected only students which had completed the survey, bringing in a possible bias. The IO noted that the Guild had not previously promoted completion of the survey to students. EC noted restrictions from the Office for Students for University's directly encouraging students to complete the NSS, as this may be deemed to be encouraging positive responses.</p> <p>The President noted that previously NSS data 'lowlights' would be used as campaigning points for the Guild and Officer Team in terms of lobbying the University for improvements. JL noted that the Guild was planning to look at specific interventions based on NSS data.</p> <p>EW suggested focusing communications during the NSS completion period on Officer Team 'wins' and other positive outcomes for students.</p> <p>RS suggested providing updates at future Board meetings on the progress timeline of the action plan. JL to review.</p> <p>The Board approved the NSS Report 2022-2023</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>JL</p> <p>Noted</p>
9a	<p>Democracy Review Phase 2 & 3 Consultation & Development</p>	<p>JL presented the Democracy Review Phase 2 & 3 Consultation & Development paper, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>JL updated the Board on the timeline to date following the Board's commissioning of a review of the organisation's democracy in July 2022, which was followed by a consultation period with staff, students and stakeholders, and a three-phased model of change in the democratic processes.</p> <p>JL updated the Board on the planned timeline for additional student consultation ahead of Phase 2 and Phase 3 being proposed to the Board in detail in October 2023. The EO noted their concern about the timeline for student consultation via a survey closing immediately prior to the start of the new academic year. JL noted that the timeline had been dictated by deadlines for the Board's meeting cycle.</p> <p>RS noted that the paper might be tabled to allow for a longer consultation period. EC noted their view that the Guild should spend the additional time necessary for the consultation process. JL also noted the timeline as planned was currently formulated to be in time for the opening of Officer elections nominations in the Spring, pending a change to the Guild's Bye-Laws. RS noted their view that Guild should take the time required to allow for adequate consultation. JD noted their view that the Guild should allow for sufficient student consultation, but should prioritise completing the process in time for the next set of Officer Elections. The PGO suggested arranging for an alternative method of the Trustee Board reviewing the final proposal in November via email or via an extraordinary meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>The EO noted their concern that the change that the consultation was being made on was not sufficiently formed for students to accurately feed back on. EW noted the difference between the Guild holding a consultation on a finalised proposal, and a survey on student's views. The President noted their concerns related to the removal of Part-Time Officer positions as a proposal without a detailed explanation of the Guild's planned next steps. The President noted their concern that the previous survey questions had been poorly worded, with multiple 'buzzwords' that most students would find difficult to understand.</p> <p>RS suggested the possibility of the Board discussing the issue at the October Board meeting, with a later meeting if required to meet the timeline. JL to review timeline and circulate updated options.</p> <p>The Board approved the Democracy Review Phase 2 & 3 Consultation & Development, pending discussion at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>JL</p> <p>Approved</p>
9b	Review of Officer Elections 2023	It was agreed to defer this item to Engagement Committee.SJ to add to the agenda for October Engagement Committee.	SJ
10	Annual Health & Safety Report	<p>EB presented the Annual Health & Safety Report, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>EB noted that the Board delegated responsibility for Health & Safety to Health & Safety Committee, which in turn delegated operational responsibility for health and safety procedures and the review of internal risk assessments to the Facilities Manager post.</p> <p>EC noted about the handling of Fire Doors in the Guild Building, noting some issues in University building about fire doors.</p> <p>EC asked about the processes for reviewing a recent significant incident in the building. EB noted that a Root Cause Analysis report on the recent significant event was planned to be presented at next Health & Safety Committee meeting.</p> <p>RS suggested that H&S incident quantitative data could also include reference to the number of attendees. EB to discuss with the Facilities Team.</p> <p>EW asked about the digitisation of incident reporting mapped against the Guild building as a heat map. EB noted that work was ongoing to digitise incident reporting in the organisation.</p> <p>The Board approved the Annual Health & Safety Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>EB</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
11	External Memberships Update (Inc. Policy)	<p>JT presented the External Memberships Update and Policy, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>JT noted that the Guild's External Membership process was now live and operational, with approximately 20 applications received and approved to date. JT updated the Board on the new DBS requirements for applicants for External Membership. The AEO</p>	Noted

		<p>suggested a change to point 6.8 in the draft policy, to include provision for an appeal process via the Guild's Complaints process as outlined in point 8.2. AS to review.</p> <p>RS suggested an amendment to the requirement to have a Guild or University email address, noting that External Member applicants would not have one. AS to review.</p> <p>The Board noted it's thanks to the Staff Team and SEO for their hard work over the summer period supporting the task and finish group on External Memberships, to have an updated and secure process ready in time for the new academic year.</p> <p>The Board approved the External Membership Update and Policy, pending minor amendments.</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>AS</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
12	Tri-Lateral Governance Action Plan	<p>JT presented the Tri-Lateral Governance Action Plan, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>RS noted several actions of note from the Peer-Governance review, suggesting to expand an annual review of stakeholders to include local stakeholders. EC noted the tight timeline proposed for the Good Governance Group and Action Plan. MG suggested prioritising the items which affect the Guild's Byelaws. EC suggested bringing an update to the January meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed to recruit members for this group at the next Board meeting.</p> <p>EW offered to join HR Committee on a temporary basis, whilst future Trustees were recruited. The Board agreed to appoint EW to HR Committee.</p> <p>The Board approved the Tri-Lateral Governance Action Plan.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>
13	Governance Attendance Reports	<p>SJ presented the Governance Attendance Reports, for the Board's information.</p> <p>The paper was noted, with no questions asked.</p> <p>The Board noted the Governance Attendance Reports Plan.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
14	Appointments Panel Report	<p>JT presented the Appointments Panel Report, for the Board's information.</p> <p>The paper was taken as read, with no questions asked.</p> <p>The Board noted the Appointments Panel Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
15	Any Other Business	<p>RS noted that this was the last meeting for SEO, after two years on the Trustee Board. The Board thanked SEO for their support and input over the previous two years.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

16	Meeting Reflection	No Items noted.	Noted
----	--------------------	-----------------	-------

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:10.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 23rd October 2023, 18:00 – 20:00, Mandela Room (Guild of Students).

DRAFT