

Trustee Board Minutes

From meeting held on Monday 12th July 2021
Online Meeting (Zoom)

Present

Robert Smeath, External Trustee **(RS)** (Chair)
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)**
Wei-Lun Chen, International Officer **(IO)**
Tom Goodman, Student Trustee (Postgraduate) **(TG)**
Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**
Wyn Williams, External Trustee **(WW)**
Ian Pain, External Trustee **(IP)**
Emma Wedge, External Trustee **(EW)**
Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)**

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
Nick Bailey, Head of Finance **(NB)**
Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)**
Sarah Wright, Director of Support & Development **(SW)**
Lucy Gill, Student Voice & Representation Manager **(LG)** (Agenda Item 9 and 10 only)
Sam Jones, Interim Executive Assistant **(SJ)** (note taker)

Observing

Mikey Brown, President-Elect **(MB)**
George Christian, Sports Officer – Elect **(GC)**
Josephine Conway, Activities & Employability Officer- Elect **(JC)**
Danielle Murinas, Postgraduate Officer-Elect **(DM)**
Serabi Opiyo, Incoming BAME Student Trustee **(SEO)**
Jake Poulton, Incoming Undergraduate Student Trustee **(JP)**

Apologies

Henrietta Brealey, External Trustee **(HB)**
Sarah Aray, International Student Trustee **(SA)**
Rosa Alaluf, Student Trustee **(RA)**
Maya Davey, Student Trustee **(MD)**
Rob Hegarty, Sports Officer **(SO)**
Aaliyah Simms, Welfare & Community Officer- Elect

The Chair welcomed everyone, and the meeting commenced at 16:00.

No	ITEM FOR DISCUSSION	NOTES	ACTION
1	Minutes of last meeting (10.05.21)	The Chair presented the Trustee Board minutes, dated 10 th May 2021 for the Board's approval. The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.	Noted Approved

2	Matters Arising	The Chair noted that all previous actions had been completed.	Noted
3	HR Committee Minutes (06.06.21)	The WCO presented the HR Committee Minutes, dated 6 th June 2021 for the Board's approval. The Board approved the HR Committee Minutes.	Noted Approved
4	Finance Committee Minutes (24.05.21) & (15.06.21)	The President presented two sets of Finance Committee Minutes, dated 24 th May 2021 and 15 th June 2021 for the Board's approval. The Board approved the Finance Committee Minutes.	Noted Approved
5	Audit & Risk Committee Minutes (21.05.21)	The EO presented the Audit & Risk Committee Minutes, dated 21 st May 2021 for the Board's approval. The Board approved the A&R Committee Minutes.	Noted Approved
6	Officer Action Plans	<p>The Officer Team presented their Action Plans for the Board's information.</p> <p>The President noted their progress over the last 12 months in establishing the Black Voices Committee, recruiting the Guild's first dedicated BAME Student Trustee, supporting the University in recruitment of the incoming Vice-Chancellor, planning for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022, and national collaboration with other Students' Unions on tuition fees and lobbied the University on responsible investments. The President noted the success of the Guild in securing a 1-year transitional funding agreement from the University.</p> <p>The AEO noted a successful round of Student Groups Committee training and inductions, with a new skills framework developed and rolled out. The AEO noted positive progress in transitioning documents online for student groups, including financial paperwork. The AEO noted improvements made to Officer team visibility with a move to a ground floor office. The AEO noted further work required on society committee handover documents. The AEO noted stronger collaboration between existing Guild groups and MedSoc following their transition.</p> <p>The PGO noted significant progress on Postgraduate student engagement and feedback collected via Speak Week 2021. The PGO noted a positive working relationship with the new Dean of Postgraduates and input into the University's PhD review, with a stronger focus on EDI. The PGO noted national action by Postgraduate Officer's on government support for Postgraduate Research students.</p> <p>The WCO noted significant progress over their time in office in expanding the 'Not On' sexual harassment campaign, including roll-out to students via University communications and course content. The WCO noted a new wellbeing service, 'UB Heard' expanded online with 24 hour student access. The WCO noted ongoing work to collect feedback on the new system from</p>	Noted Noted Noted

		<p>student's experiences. The WCO noted improved profile for college welfare officers, and support for the Black Voices campaign in relation to University course content, the expansion of drug testing availability and the reinstatement of the Selly Express bus service.</p> <p>The EO noted the difficulties faced by students during the COVID-19 pandemic in accessing their courses. The EO noted the Guild's expansive work on support for students learning remotely. The EO noted the roll-out of an online feedback for student reps and supporting students financially through the Guild's hardship fund. The EO noted plans to continue on the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) moving into 2021-22.</p> <p>The IO noted significant disruption to international students in the Guild and University's activities due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions faced by students. The IO noted ongoing work on travel issues faced by international students, including the cost of isolation hotels and private PCR tests. The IO noted success in lobbying the University to reduce international student tuition fees due to additional isolation costs.</p> <p>RS noted very positive feedback from the University on the work of the Guild's Officer team over the last 12 months.</p> <p>The President noted the resilience of the Officer team during the COVID-19 pandemic.</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> <p>Noted</p>
7	Budget 2021-22 Update	<p>NB presented an update on the Guild's Budget 2021-22, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>RS noted the hard work of Guild staff in securing the Guild's budget settlement with the University for 2021-22, however the Guild should continue with the work to finalise a longer term budget.</p> <p>NB noted that the Guild's budget was approved at Finance Committee in May, and later by the University's Strategic Planning and Resources Committee in mid-June, with additional funding secured of £415k compared to 2019-2020 funding levels.</p> <p>NB noted that the proposed budget set out plans for a break-even budget for 2021-22, including a forecast of circa 80% of commercial revenues in 2021-22 compared to pre-COVID levels. NB noted that the budget was largely considered as a 'neutral hold' position in terms of resource.</p> <p>The Board approved the Budget 2021-22 Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
8	Strategy 2021/22	<p>EB presented the Strategy 2021/22 for the Board's information.</p> <p>EB updated the Trustee Board on progress on development of a one-year transitional strategy in line with the Guild's funding</p>	<p>Noted</p>

		<p>settlement for 2021-22. EB noted planning for the strategy based around 'year zero' for 2021-22 and building back the Guild's services after COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed.</p> <p>EB noted that the Guild's strategy remained partly contingent on securing an additional funding agreement for the Guild's IT transition. EB noted a range of research conducted for the strategy including consultation with managers and external stakeholders. EB noted plans for the 1-year strategic plan to be rolled out to departmental and staff objectives over the summer.</p> <p>The Board discussed the planned one-year strategy. MB asked about the Guild's plans for expansion of new commercial opportunities outside its existing venues in-line with the ongoing commercial review. JT noted the that the Guild's commercial strategy approved in January 2020 had largely been paused during the COVID-19 pandemic due to restrictions, during which discussions had progressed with the University's Campus Services team on possible future joint-operation of commercial operations on and off campus.</p> <p>JT noted the previous discussion with the Board on possible Guild activities to 'stop, start, review' as part of the longer term strategy. RS noted the significant investment sought from the University on digital infrastructure. EB noted the challenge of resource in Guild communications, which had been put under further pressure due to additional online transition during COVID-19.</p> <p>JT noted stronger collaboration with the University's communications team on promotion of Guild activities to make clear the Guild's role in delivery. The President noted misconceptions in the student body around which services were provided by the University, and which by the Guild.</p> <p>WW noted the significant operational targets built into the draft strategy. WW asked about the Guild's management capacity to deliver the KPI's in the one-year strategy. EC noted concern related to the number of strategic aims for the for the next 12 months, which may not be realistically achievable. The PGO noted expanded collaborative working with the graduate school, which may help achieve further progress on strategic aims. RS noted the significant range of the Guild's activities for a small organisation.</p> <p>EW asked about the current state and morale of the staff team. JT noted significant uncertainty for staff over the last two years during the organisational restructure and COVID-19 pandemic. JT noted the hard work of the staff team over the last 12 months. JT noted that the strategic plan outlined the aspirations of the Guild over for the future 5 years and provided clarity in terms of setting a direction. EB noted ongoing detailed work to understand current available resource in the organisation and provisional timelines.</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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9	Democracy Review	<p>LG joined the meeting at 17:30.</p> <p>LG presented the Democracy Review paper for the Board's approval, and updated the Board on progress on the first year of implementation Guild's new democratic structures.</p> <p>LG noted feedback received via surveys on focus groups, noting the value of role models for students in the Officer team and democratic structures which represented them.</p> <p>LG noted work over the last 12 months to improve communications and engagement work in collaboration with the University.</p> <p>LG noted recommendations in the paper for further development of a communications plan for year two of the new structure, and continued work to review appropriate levels of staffing support and other workload requirements within the Student Voice and Representation team.</p> <p>RS asked about the achievability of increased engagement in the democratic structures within the existing resource envelope. LG noted continual work to reduce duplication of work, however the new structures had increased resource requirements in the democratic structures.</p> <p>MB noted concerns about the benefits of engagement within the new structure compared to the additional resource required. LG noted the difficulties of the roll out of year one of the new structure during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had prevented holding in-person meetings for the last 15 months. LG noted the significant sector research conducted prior to the changes to the democratic processes.</p> <p>EC noted the expansion of 'touch-points' for democracy in the new structure, however the quality and depth of engagement may not currently be sufficient. DM noted increased student awareness of the Guild's democratic structures run online during the COVID-19 pandemic. DM noted the difficulty of achieving an</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>accurate picture of the new structure during numerous lockdowns.</p> <p>SW noted the new processes and structures of the reformed democratic model required additional promotion and development of awareness within the student body.</p> <p>The AEO noted the increased engagement opportunities for sports and societies committee members in the new structure. The PGO noted the hard work of the Student Voice team over the last year.</p> <p>The Board approved the Democracy Review.</p> <p>LG left the meeting at 17:50.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
10	Black Voices Campaign Report	<p>The President presented the Black Voices Campaign Report for the Board's information.</p> <p>The President update the Board on the progress to date of the Black Voices campaign.</p> <p>The President noted the proposal for additional staff support and financial resource moving forwards. The Board discussed the progress of the Black Voices campaign over the last year.</p> <p>The Board noted the Black Voices Campaign Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
11	Trustee Board Effectiveness Survey	<p>JT presented the Trustee Board Effectiveness Survey report, for the Board's information.</p> <p>JT noted that unfortunately, only 9 of the Board's 18 members (50%) had completed the survey, which limited comparison's which could be made with data from previous years.</p> <p>JT noted a consistent theme across the Board and Committee effectiveness surveys in relation to diversity within the Guild's governance structures, which was being addressed through such initiatives as the recent EDI away day.</p> <p>The Board noted the Trustee Board Effectiveness Survey.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
12	CEO Report	<p>JT presented the CEO report, for the Board's Information.</p> <p>EW asked about the Guild's consideration of the proposed Freedom of Speech bill currently under review in Parliament. RS noted the significant implications for the Guild and the wider HE sector from the bill.</p> <p>The Board noted the CEO report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
13	Liberation Associations	<p>The AEO presented the Liberation Associations paper, for the Board's discussion.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

		<p>The AEO noted the suggested change for the Guild's Liberation Associations. The AEO noted a range of consultation with student stakeholders on options for next steps.</p> <p>The AEO noted a recommendation in the paper for the proposed changes to be made during summer 2021 as a 12 month pilot, with an additional cost of circa £4.5k for training and a re-prioritisation of other elements of work and the reduction of student's campaigns support from bespoke campaigns to a sign-posting model.</p> <p>RS asked about the resource requirements for funding and staff resource. SW noted the possibility to source circa £5k from elsewhere in the Guild. SW noted the requirement to 'turn off' other elements of the Guild's campaigning support if approved.</p> <p>EW asked about the potential relationship between the existing student liberation societies, and new Guild liberation committees. The AEO noted plans for facilitating collaboration between the groups, which may not overlap in membership. SW noted the distinction to draw between social and peer-support activity, and campaigning activity, which had not been present before.</p> <p>MB asked about the relationship between the newly formed Guild Committees and the existing Welfare & Liberation Committee, which may not fully represent their views and may lead to 'outing'. The AEO noted the new committees would be held under a cross-campus ballot. The AEO noted that a range of stakeholders had been consulted on the proposed structure. MB noted their concerns about 'outing' individual students and additional consultation may be required. MB noted the preference for further review prior to approval of a new structure.</p> <p>The AEO noted the oversight of the proposed bodies by the Welfare & Liberation committee. DM noted their concern about the role of liberation officers in overseeing the proposed groups. TG noted the difficulty in resource pressures, which would require re-allocation.</p> <p>The EO noted their preference for a model which separated the social and campaigning aspects of liberation associations. The WCO noted their preference for 'option 1' from the paper. The President noted concern that momentum developed over the last 12 months could be lost.</p> <p>EW noted that the change of structures may require a democratic approval. EW noted their preference for 'option 2' from the paper, allowing additional time for consultation and assessment of resource.</p> <p>The Board agreed to move forwards with the process, passing to the incoming Full-Time Officer team and the Director of Support & Representation with a view to finalise before Autumn Elections 2021 if possible, within the current resource envelope.</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>
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		The PGO noted the hard work of the AEO in developing the new model. JD left the meeting at 18:20.	Noted Noted
14	Democracy Operations Update	LG presented the Democracy Operations Update for the Board's information. Paper was taken as read, with no questions asked. The Board noted the Democracy Operations Update.	Noted Noted
15	AOB	RS noted the very hard work of the 2020-2021 Officer team over a difficult year, and their commitment to the Trustee Board and organisation. The Board noted that this was the last meeting for RA and MD. The Board thanked RA and MD for the contributions to the Guild and wished them all the best for the future.	Noted Noted Noted
16	Meeting Reflection	No items noted.	Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 18:30.

Signed

Date

DRAFT