

## Lancaster University Students' Union Trustee Board

### Minutes of formal meeting held Friday 15 October 2021

Present		
Oliver Robinson	SU President & Chair of Trustee Board	He/Him
India Ellis	SU VP Union Development	She/Her
Dom Casoria	SU VP Societies & Media	He/Him
Amy Merchant	SU VP Welfare	She/Her
Paul McCarthy	SU VP Sport	He/Him
Amanda Chetwynd	External Trustee   Vice Chair of Board   Chair of Finance & Risk Sub-Committee	She/Her
Richard Soper	External Trustee   Chair of Governance Sub-Committee	He/Him
Dave Morris	External Trustee	He/Him
Tony Camp	External Trustee   FRSC expert member	He/Him
Sam Maesschalck	Student Trustee	He/Him
Rhys Peplow	Student Trustee	He/Him
Callum Slater	Student Trustee	He/Him
In attendance		
Misbah Ashraf	SU Chief Executive	She/Her
Veronica Longmire	Executive Administrator   Minutes	She/Her
Michael Jayson	Auditor   Crowe UK LLP   Agenda Item 2.1	He/Him
Chris Cottam	Advocacy & Governance Manager   Agenda Item 3.3	He/Him

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first in-person meeting of Board since the pandemic and thanked external trustees for making the journey. Thanks were passed to the SU Auditors for being in attendance.

#### Opening Business

**Apologies** | received from the VP Education and the Financial Controller / Company Secretary.

**Declarations of Interests** | No declarations of interest.

**Minutes of previous meeting** | Minutes of meeting held 10 June 2021 taken as a true representation of the meeting.

**Matters / Actions arising from the minutes** | outstanding/ongoing actions highlighted and noted.

#### Matters requiring Formal Approval / Consent

**Formal approval of the Annual Report and Accounts for year ending 31 July 2021** | the Union's Auditor from Crowe UK LLP, presented the statutory accounts for LUSU Housing Ltd and Services Co Ltd. Key points were highlighted and from discussion general agreement reached that the net asset position should be reviewed regularly [monthly] and pro-active considerations be given to a potential recovery plan and feasibility study via a third party. Board expressed its appreciation to the Chief Executive for maintaining the operations of SU Living and the staff team for continued support. A clean audit report was given and the approach of Board re clubs and societies that they did not have control noted. The intended outcome to approve the annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31 July 2021 was achieved and the report and accounts signed by the Directors / Trustees in the presence of the Auditor and the meeting.

**Budget 21-22 and Forecasts 22-24** | Board acknowledged the request to approve the updated budget, forecasts and identified actions and observed that the papers had been approved by FRSC in August | the request from the Chief Executive that it was important to mention the he anticipated position had not been reached | the significantly higher deficit than the original aim | the amendment to the forecast figures to remove the Deed of Covenant from Housing | the holding position re sport with the University indicating its intention to take full liability for costs in 21-22 | 50% of sport payroll costs included in the budget but no non-payroll costs | the need to further discuss Board's appetite to return to 50% funding | continued reduction in the level of activity and significant loss of bed spaces and properties | the overall net profit being reliant on the operations of the nightclub | that despite best efforts to 'live within the block grant and not rely on commercial income' a deficit position remained | [housing] competitor active marketing for 2022-23 | rent increase concerns | the position around Sugar House buses and current lack of drivers | with additional costs for support staff a bus service at this point could not be offered.

Board agreed to research taking place for a potential third party Housing feasibility study to take place and the 2021-22 Budget and 2022-24 Forecasts were formally approved.

**Formal approval of Deputy Returning Officer and Chief Returning Officer for 2021-22** | Board approved the appointment of the National Union of Students, using the NUS Electoral Services Team, to act as Chief Returning Officer for College, Part-Time Officer, Full-Time officer and NUS delegate elections in the Students' Union for a period of one year and the appointment of Chris Cottam, from the Students' Union, to act as Deputy Returning Officer for a period of one year. Board acknowledged that the matter had been through the correct governance

structure and approved by the Governance Sub-Committee. Clarification was given that all due mechanisms had been followed in the Presidential by-election and the disqualification of RON.

**Approval of Election Rules 2021/22** | Board **approved** the elections rules for the academic year 2021-22.

#### **Matters for Discussion**

**Strategy Proposal** | Board acknowledged the paper presented by the Chair of Board, as the SU President, noting that discussion had not been held between the full-time officers, or Board members | that comments were invited | the rationale behind the proposal | the need for wider consultation | the goals of the Union and longer-term vision of officers. Board welcomed the summary of the full-time officers' objectives and agreed that a strategy should be developed by the Chief Executive having conducted full wider consultation.

**Lancaster City Development** | Board acknowledged the position around the City, the anticipated regeneration of Lancaster and matters affecting the nightclub and agreed that a working group be established to continue with research and discussion.

**Governance & Democracy Review** | Board acknowledged the Governance Sub-Committee Chair's request to observe the areas disclosed as requiring attention and the number of recommendations outlined in the governance and democracy review report | the proposal for a working group to undertake a review of the report and for an analysis of the recommendations / set of specific proposals to be brought to the next Board meeting | the work undertaken by the SU Advocacy & Governance Manager on the new Articles of Association and bylaws, with thanks from the Chair of Board for the significant number of hours spent working on the documents | the discussion on the formulation of proposals in order to move forward, appeal to more students, gain the confidence of the University, and that Referenda was believed to be the better option. The new members of Board noted they had not been involved in the considerations of the proposed changes to the Articles and indicated their wish to be involved prior to these being re-presented to the membership.

**Report on SU NSS 2021** | Board acknowledged the report presented by the Board Vice-Chair, who thanked the SU Advocacy & Governance Manager for the help given | the key point referring to Q26, which related to the Students' Union, and it being the area that was always rated badly in comparison to the other questions | the point around collegiate Universities generally performing poorly on Q26 and Lancaster, in the past, being the best of these | the comments etc around the belief there had been a strong start to the year | the general agreement in the sector that Q26 was not fit for purpose | the positive attitude to academic representation | the opportunity to improve communication | the submission of the report, if agreed, to the University Audit Committee | the suggestion for a small group to look at the student experience and work on this over the coming twelve months. Board **agreed** the proposed actions were sensible and could feed into operating plans.

**SU Living/Housing Update** | Board acknowledged the paper presented by the Chief Executive | the thanks to the interim Housing Manager and Housing Team for keeping Housing running | background information on the compliance matrix | compliance matters requiring completion | the continuing challenges and live issues, particularly regarding the lack of resilience to conflicts of interest.

**Student Trustees Items for Discussion** | Board acknowledged the question on whether the recent motion/proposals to rename the Sugar House had been investigated | clarification that the Articles of Association had not been breached and the broad agreement for an investigation to be conducted with a view to concluding the matter.

#### **Matters for Information**

**Risk Assessments | SU Covid Position** | Board acknowledged the paper presented and its delegation to the Chief Executive of health and safety matters | the deep concern at the lack of risk assessments for Welcome Week | the significance of colleges being told not to prepare assessments | that any advice given had been followed | one incident had occurred at Freshers Fair, but there had been no serious incidents | the broad agreement to the issues being factored into the student experience group initially | the operational side being dealt with by the Chief Executive | compliance aspects being discussed by Governance Sub-Committee | the appreciation of the VP Union Development for the directive from Board.

**Chair's Report** | Board agreed to receive a written report from the Chair after the meeting.

**Report from Chief Executive** | Board acknowledged the report.

**External Trustees Recruitment Diversity Report** | Board acknowledged the report and the Chair's disappointment as regards the effort from the external provider | that it would be a discussion item in the future.

**Decisions approved electronically since previous meeting** | None.

**Board Register of Attendance** | Board acknowledged the register of attendance.

**Approved Sub-Committee Minutes** | Board acknowledged the approved minutes of Board sub-committees.

**Forward Schedule of Business** | schedule to be updated resulting from discussions.

**Date and time of next meeting** | January 2022 meeting date noted.

**Any Other Business** | Board acknowledged the Chief Executive's request to take on board the substantial involvement of the full-time officers in Welcome Week | the thanks passed to JCR Officers and operational staff for working on the lead up to and throughout the week.

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