Formal Trustee Board
Minutes of meeting held 24 January 2025

Present		
Cerys Evans (CE)	President and Chair of Trustee Board	She / Her
Amanda Chetwynd (AC)	External Trustee, Safeguarding Lead	She / Her
Mike Leckie (ML)	External Trustee, Chair of Finance & Risk Sub-Committee	He / Him
Dave Morris (DM)	External Trustee, Chair of HR & Renumeration Sub-Committee	He / Him
Richard Soper (RS)	External Trustee, Vice Chair of Trustee Board and Chair of Governance Sub-Committee	He / Him
Ella Smith (ES)	Wellbeing Officer	She / Her
Harrison Stewart (HS)	Education Officer	He / Him
Jack Watson (JW)	Activities Officer	He / Him
Ariana Dell (AD)	Student Trustee	She / Her
Rory O'Ceallaigh (RO)	Student Trustee	He / Him
Declan Ricketts (DR)	Student Trustee	
In attendance		
Misbah Ashraf (MA)	Chief Executive Officer	She / Her
Tony Camp (TCP)	Head of Commercial Services	He / Him
Chris Cottam (CC)	Head of Advocacy & Governance	He / Him
Jane Morgan Jones (JMJ)	Head of Finance	She / Her
Charlotte Barker (CB)	Trustee Board Secretary	She / Her
Apologies		
Paula Kinsella	Head of People	She / Her

1. Opening Business
1.1 Apologies | None received.
The Chair welcomed new student trustees to their first Trustee Board meeting.
1.2 Declarations of Interest | None.
1.3 Register of Attendance | The Trustee Board noted attending members.

2. Matters for Formal Approval
2.1 Minutes of Meeting | Last held 25 October 2024 | Approved by Trustee Board.

2.2 Health & Safety 2023-24 Report
Sue Parker-Tantush (SPT), Health & Safety Consultant, joined the meeting and informed the Trustee Board that there had been no serious incidents, and this included Roses and Summer Ball. There is to be a focus on display screen equipment in the early part of the term. The safety culture within LUSU is excellent and there is proactive approach to safety. SPT is currently refining processes and procedures to define roles and responsibilities, for example for students attending events out of hours.

Minor amendments to a graph and to correct the name of LUSU Shop were requested and completed.

Approved by Trustee Board

2.3 Risk Registers (Charity and Fraud)
Charity Risks: SLT have identified the following top 6 risks to the charity:

1. **The Union becomes financial unsustainable**

The Head of Finance informed the Trustee Board that there will not be a deed of covenant from the commercials this year. The Chief Executive explained that because of the current HE landscape, there is not a block grant guarantee and that we need to be strategic in our decision making and be able to demonstrate and document the decisions that have made. The Chair and Vice-Chair agreed that the strategic plan needs to be reassessed; objectives aligned to the strategy and that difficult choices will have to be made. Communication to the wider student body will be required.

2. **Integrity of the independence of the Union is not maintained**
3. **Working relationship with LU becomes increasingly difficult**

The Chief Executive explained that independence of the students' union is difficult as staff are on joint contracts and staffing arrangements are intertwined. The Wellbeing Officer thought that it was difficult to be a political officer when there is a good behaviour clause in the block grant. The Trustee Board thought that this was not a priority now, however the Chief Executive said that we needed to be careful that we don't swing the other way, as having an independent students' union is an advantage to students and is something that they expect e.g. Advice Service is non-judgemental and independent.

4. **Noncompliance with statutory regulations**

The Head of Advocacy & Governance and the Head of Finance explained that there are areas where there are legal rules and regulations that must be complied with and that they both keep abreast of changes via sector updates from bodies such as the NUS or Wonkhe and our auditors. The Vice-Chair thanked the Head of Advocacy & Governance for their work on the compliance matrix.

5. **Failure to recruit, retain and develop high quality staff/officers and failure to deal effectively with poor performance**

The Trustee Board discussed the difficulty of a small catchment area, level of pay, joint contracts that cannot be adjusted to suit a smaller organisation, lack of training and development for staff in the current financial climate and lack of career progression with the organisation. The Chief Executive said that the students' union is a springboard organisation for junior staff to join the team, learn and develop and progress out.

6. **Union is unable to deliver key objectives within its new strategy**

The current financial climate means that the students' union has the staff but not the financial resources to deliver strategy objectives. The Vice-Chair requested that a LUSU Futures team is organised to address the priorities of the strategic plan.

The Trustee Board agreed that the top 6 charity risks should be reduced to 5, as items 2 and 3 are similar and linked together.

<u>Fraud Risks:</u> The Head of Finance highlighted that the main fraud risks identified were those relating to cyber technology; misappropriation of stock or cash shortfalls, and procedures needing to be reviewed.

Action: LUSU Futures meeting to address strategic plan priorities.

Approved by Trustee Board

2.4 Social Media Policy

Scheduled to go to Union Assembly.

3. Items for Discussion

3.1 Moneypennys' Report: LUSU Shop

The Head of Commercial reported that LUSU Shop is currently 11% ahead of budget, gross margins are at 28% but this is decreasing because of profit and loss. Research into alternative procurement providers, promotions, processes and security, job roles, structure, working practices and student staff is currently in progress.

Anne Whittingham (AW), Head of Commercial Development, joined the meeting and reported that they are meeting weekly with the LUSU Shop manager to discuss weekly sales, monthly outturn, promotions and the target to reduce student staff wages.

The Trustee Board discussed LUSU Shop including different supplier options, review of internal space, opening hours and seasonal demand, the requirement that the shop must provide value for money and be of benefit to students. Loyalty promotions for students using our commercial services was discussed, including the possible return of the voucher book that was promoted during Welcome Week.

The Activities Officer asked if our NUS membership would mean that we bound to them for procurement? The Head of Commercial Services explained that we would lose their deals but would benefit from the grocery prices offered by a supplier such as Nisa.

3.2 LUSU Living

The Head of Commercial Services updated the Trustee Board about the Bailrigg proposal.

The Trustee Board were not prepared to undertake the full risk. They noted the proposal and would wait to see the final contract once negotiations had been completed.

4. Items for Information

4.1 Chair's Report

Taken as read.

4.2 Trustee Board Sub-Committee Chair Reports

GSC report taken as read.

4.3 Management Accounts

Taken as read.

4.4 Students' Union NSS Report

The Lancaster University report does not contain the full data, and it is their analysis of the data. The Trustee Board agreed that it was great to see an increase in the score and the Vice-Chair thanked the teams involved that helped to improve the score. AC informed the Trustee Board that the University can choose which optional questions are put in and asked if we knew what questions were going in for the current survey. The Head of Advocacy & Governance explained that negative rather than positive comments were more likely to be added to open text questions.

4.5 Martyn's Law

Taken as read.

4.6 FTO Training January Report

The Education Officer informed the Trustee Board that the training provided by Stephen Dowson was transformative and that this year's officers all fully engaged with it.

The Student Trustee (RO) commented that Stephen Dowson was not the provider this year for the JCR training and the Chief Executive Officer explained that the LUSU team had the skill set to deliver the training.

5. Electronic Decisions Since Previous Meeting

None.

6. Additional and Future Business

The Vice-Chair informed the Trustee Board that a letter had been received from the Charity Commission regarding a complaint. However, the letter does not give any details about the complaint, having consulted our solicitors, the Vice-Chair is going to write to the Charity Commission to ask for further details and once received they will be shared with you.

7. Meeting Closed