

Lancaster University Students' Union Formal Trustee Board

Minutes of the meeting held **Monday 24th April 2023**

Officer Trustees present:

India Ellis | President of Students Union | Chair of Trustee Board (she/her)
Noah Katz | VP Education (they/them)
Danny Godwin | VP Societies & Media (he/him)
Callum Slater | VP Union Development (he/him)
Megan Homburg | VP Sport (she/her)
Victoria Phillips | VP Welfare (she/her)

Student Trustees present:

Nabil Hussain Tul Kubra | Student Trustee (he/him)
Harrison Stewart | Student Trustee (he/him)
Andrew Millington | Student Trustee (he / him)
Nathan Mooney | Student Trustee (he/him)

External Trustees present:

Richard Soper | External Trustee | Governance Sub-Committee Chair (he/him)
Dave Morris | External Trustee | HR & Remuneration Sub-Committee Chair (he/him)
Amanda Chetwynd | External Trustee (she/her)

In attendance:

Misbah Ashraf | Chief Executive (she/her)
Jane Morgan Jones | Financial Controller (she/her)
Chris Cottam | Advocacy and Governance Manager (he/him)
Michael Fleming | H&S Manager (he/him)
Jennifer Cloran | Trustee Board Secretary (she/her)

Agenda Item 1 | Opening Business

Chairs' Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and noted thanks to the Secretary who had served for 44 years in her role as Secretary to the Board and wished her well for her retirement.

The new Trustee Board Secretary was welcomed along with a new Student Trustee and a current Student Trustee who is due to take up their role as a Full Time Officer in the Union was wished well.

The President acknowledged the upcoming Roses event and offered congratulations to athletes who have already competed with a special mention to the Lancaster University Rowing Team. SU VP Sports was thanked along with the sports team for their huge efforts towards the event.

1.1 | Apologies

Formal apologies were received from Mike Leckie and Tony Camp

1.2 | Declarations of Interest

There was nothing to declare | It was noted that the Trustee Board Members Declarations of Interest are now at the stage they should be and the Vice Chair thanked all members for making that possible.

1.3 | Register of Attendance

The Register of Attendance was checked for accuracy and approved.

Agenda Item 2 | Items for Approval

2.1 | Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved along with all the minutes that had been submitted to OnBoard for various previous meetings that now required approval.

2.2 | Charity Risk Register

The Charity Risk Register went to FRSC where it was recommended that it came to Trustee Board for approval.

2.3 | Projected out-turn for year ending 2023

Was sent out for digital approval and was approved by 10 members and potential risks noted.

Manifesto analysis - Board needs to make resources available to the Union to ensure the Officers are able to deliver their manifestos and then allow opportunity for staff to incorporate this into their workloads | Full time staff need to be aware that Board has endorsed the manifesto priorities.

Top priorities for incoming FTO's: Cost of living, Welfare, mental health services, Bus service, Student Safety, Raising profile of LUSU, Climate action.

LTO's to be acknowledged and included in the induction process | As Officers of the Union they need to be included and should be invited to some of the induction with the FTO's.

Student leaders' finances and bank accounts realistically should be a one year project aiming to launch for the next academic year | Chair of FRSC will make recommendations once seen paper to take to Board.

2.4 | CEO Appraisal

Staff left the room so this could be discussed and was approved by the committee.

Agenda Item 3 | Items for Discussion

3.1 | Items from Student Trustee's

There were no items from the Student Trustee's.

Agenda Item 4 | Items for Information

4.1 | Chairs report

The Board noted the report.

Funding bids have gone in for Graduation and Societies access fund also free tickets to turn up and play sports sessions | Now that the food side is up and running have the opportunity now to focus on the broader student experience.

Breakfast and Supper Club continue to be popular feeding up to 250 students a week and LUSU pantry is launched | Thanks expressed to VP Societies and Media for being the driving force of that project.

Currently in the process of figuring out what the Marking and Assessment boycott means for our students and undergoing national work with other Students' Unions to try to push on the Maintenance loans issue ready to be handed over next term.

The President expressed her appreciation to her team for their amazing efforts in their Officer roles and the team mirrored the compliments back to her for her leadership.

4.2 | Report from Chief Executive Officer

The CEO gave the Trustee Board an update on recent work and prioritise in the organisation. The key elements covered staff training, handing over responsibilities to the new H&S Manager and governance work.

4.3 | Strategy update

The CEO gave an update on strategy planning. It was noted the internal survey conducted saw high levels of student engagement and we are currently in the process of analysing the large amount of free-text data collected | The aim is to produce an initial report and recommendations for a second stage research with students in two to three weeks. | Once analysis and data is back this will come to the next meeting of the Governance Sub-Committee.

Strategy needs to remain a priority and to make sure it gets over the line we need to prioritise it | We need to involve the incoming Officer Team in the strategy process.

4.4 | Safeguarding Annual Report

The annual report was taken as read by the Board.

The Advocacy and Governance Manager explained with trustees that there are a number of regulatory duties that the Students' Union have as a charity to adhere to with regards to safeguarding and highlighted the role of Trustee Board in having oversight over these and ensuring the duties of the charity are being met.

It was highlighted in the report that whilst there had been no reports having to be made to statutory bodies during the reporting period, the cases which presented do routinely require follow up action in the form of referrals to university and external wellbeing providers.

Discussion was had on if it would be useful to start trending the data gathered on those reports which don't meet the safeguarding threshold. The designate safeguarding lead agreed to go away and explore the feasibility of this for future updates however flagged it would require some changes to the case management system and procedures used to enable this as the system at present didn't have that level of reporting versatility.

4.5 | Elections / AGM update

The Advocacy and Governance Manager as the Deputy Returning Officer highlighted there is a requirement we have as a Students' Union under the Education Act 1994 that elections are run freely and fairly and the University have a fiduciary responsibility to check that we are meeting that obligations | It was confirmed that for the recent elections for major union office holders, the University were satisfied that this duty had been met following the submission of the Returning Officer Report from the National Union of Students who board had appointed to be the RO for our elections. We met those obligations.

It was flagged this election saw a reduction in the number of candidates we had running in elections, which mirrored what had happened across the Students' Union sector this academic year however we tracked well with total numbers of votes with a small increase on the previous year despite a sector wide decline being reported nationally by Students' Unions.

The DRO confirmed this year there were no formal complaints.

It was raised by VP Education that there has been a lack of diversity within the elections this year and urged that this needs to be a focus going forwards for recruitment processes | The Comms needs to be done early and sufficiently so it targets those minority groups | It was agreed that it is important for strategy that this is factored in.

4.6 | Health and Safety update

The CEO introduced the new Health and Safety Manager and expressed her warmest welcome to the students' union. She explained the vast, in-depth and cultural change she had already noticed in a few weeks of having this role. She formally expressed to the Trustee Board that she felt she could give firm reassurance to the members that the H&S oversight was now firmly in place and all areas were under review. She expressed that she has delegated H&S for the entire organisation to Mike but is still the accountable officer by the Trustee Board.

The new Health and Safety Manager gave an introduction and explained that the Chief Executive delegates managerial Health and Safety duties and responsibility to him.

The fire safety checks of all areas that the Students' Union is responsible for is currently underway with actions being addressed as appropriate at a local and organisational level. The Health and Safety Manager is reviewing the actions and has noted actions that fall within a different area of responsibility, for example communal areas.

The Health and Safety Manager explained that there is too much information and there is so much documentation that is out of date. We now have the opportunity to make things proportionate and fit for purpose whilst taking the opportunity to review these documents and address the main issues and provide appropriate support to those requiring it.

The Health and Safety policy and relating documentation has and will continue to be written in line with International Standards for Occupational Health, Safety, Environment and Quality.

A new risk assessment policy has been written which is available in hard copy and digitally. Those undertaking risk assessments can do so using a simplified process. The outdoor cinema event was used as a trial for the new format.

New accident and incident reporting form is complete. This has also been built as an online version to go live in May. All LUSU will be using the same version as opposed to the current process.

Training matrix has been developed showing areas where we over train and under train and identifies the statutory training requirements by role. The document is under review with training providers and some additional training has been booked for the coming months.

Defibrillator training has been delivered at Sugarhouse and the community defibrillator is now in place at the Sugarhouse main entrance.

DSE assessments are now being done and the Occupational Health referral process has been clarified.

Did a walkaround at Central and found there were actions that are nothing to do with Central | Now identifying priority actions and actions for other university services outside of LUSU.

The SU President thanked the new Health and Safety Manager for making health and safety so accessible in the organisation and interesting.

4.7 | Budgets and forecasts update

The Financial Controller explained that we are behind where we should be. The Director of Finance said that with our university grant next year to put in a 6% increase and for the following 2 years put in a 2 – 3% increase (2.5 % increase has been assumed)

| Salary costs are going up significantly and also pension costs.

We need to decide where to find this money and consider long term planning | We need to gear the businesses up for profitable growth so we are less dependent on the block grant.

4.8 | Audit and Corporation Tax Services

4 were invited to tender | 3 returned documents. Meeting after easter to go through tender documents and will know who will be providing our audit and tax services.

4.9 | Management Accounts

Commercials are tracking against projection | Had issue with Retail in February with gross margin percentage which is to be looked at | Biggest concern is on charity side - did projection and showed would have smaller deficit compared to what was budgeted - costs for projects that were planned for this term probably will not be happening so less deficit is likely.