**Lancaster University Students’ Union Trustee Board**

Minutes of the meeting held **Friday 3 April 2020**

**Officer Trustees present**: George Nuttall | SU President | Chair of Board

Grishma Bijukumar | VP Welfare & Community

Bethan Morgan | VP Education

Lewis Marriott | VP Campaigns & Communications

Victoria Hatch | VP Activities

**Trustees present** Graeme Osborn | External Trustee | Vice Chair of Board

Amanda Chetwynd | External Trustee

Mark Alexander | External Trustee Kathy New | Student Trustee

Sam Maesschalck | Student Trustee

Eloise Frost | Student Trustee

**In Attendance:** Misbah Ashraf | Interim Chief Executive

Jane Morgan Jones | Financial Controller | Company Secretary

Veronica Longmire | Executive Administrator | Minutes

**Observers** Atree Ghosh | VP Union Development-elect

Amy Merchant | VP Welfare & Community-elect

Paul McCarthy | VP Sport-elect

Shannon McCaul | VP Societies & Media-elect

The meeting took place via video conference due to the restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

The Chair congratulated the new Officer Trustees on their successful election and continuing Officer Trustees on their re-election. The officers-elect were thanked for joining the meeting.

The Chair thanked Hannah Prydderch was thanked for her work as VP Union Development, following her recent resignation.

New Student Trustees, Sam Maesschalck and Eloise Frost were formally welcomed as members of Board.

**[A] Opening Business**

**A1. Declaration of Interests** | None raised.

**A2. Apologies** | no apologies to note.

**A3. Minutes of previous meeting |** held 5 February 2020 accepted as accurate

**A4. Matters arising from the minutes**

**Actions from the minutes:**

B2 - Finance & Risk Sub-Committee | meeting held 20 March.

B4 - Livestreaming of Board meetings. Action to explore other ways of making the work of the Board more accessible. Other Unions had been approached and it was noted that some held an open meeting once per year. Going forward, a brief video summary would happen immediately after meetings.

B5 - FTO induction review. Reported that a review had not yet commenced due to more recent challenges and workload pressures. It was noted the aim was to utilise more staff to deliver training.

B6 - FTO Role restructure. **Action ongoing**.

C3 – Confidential

C5 - Trustees Away Day. The first of the agreed annual event had not yet been arranged. **Action ongoing**.

**[B] Matters for Discussion requiring Formal Approval / Consent**

**B1. Cash-flow : Forecasts / Mitigations / Next Steps**

Brief update from the pre-circulated document. Noted that discussion and Board agreement on matters were required.

B1.1 Housing | noted that all property owners had been contacted encouraging them to waive term 3 rents | the fact the University was currently reviewing its position around term 3 rent.

**Board agreed that property owners should be given every encouragement to waive term 3 rent**

B1.2 Recruitment of roles agreed at previous meeting | noted that the Advice Caseworker role was already in progress | the Governance & Democracy role had been delayed by the HERA evaluation process | potentially pausing PG role until new academic year to maximise benefit from 1 year funding.

**Board agreed that the recruitment of the Advice Caseworker and the Democracy & Governance role should continue and to pause the PG role until September / beginning of the new academic year in order to get the maximum benefit from the funding.**

Concern expressed regarding the impact of furloughing, on students and officers, and the need to be careful around appointing to new roles. It was noted that a review of furloughing would happen every three weeks and clarified that 80% salary would be reclaimed from the government and 20% salary would be met by the Union. Staff who had been furloughed would continue to receive 100% salary as normal.

**ACTION agreed | Full-time Officers to meet to ascertain potential for activities / campaigns etc in term 3 thus enabling the impact of furloughing on students and officers to be determined.**

**Board agreed that all capital expenditure would be frozen until the cash flow position was clearer | suggestions list and potential implications to be forwarded to Board for comment.**

**B2. Students’ Union Financial Strategy**

It was noted that: the strategy had been discussed by Finance & Risk Sub-Committee | agreement from Board was required around overall objectives | strategic projections required revision | key risk was funding for sport [50% received from University and 50% from the Union with a total in excess of £100k] could not continue long term | the Sport Review | the overall objective being to achieve a small surplus year on year / reach a point to prove financial sustainability.

It was believed that whilst some other Unions only had financial delegations Lancaster should have a financial strategy. Comments raised around whether Lancaster was unusual, the timing due to the commercial services review and a potential Working Group.

**ACTION | Matter to be discussed by Finance & Risk Sub-Committee**

**B3. Financial Regulations**

Draft document was noted. Final version would be submitted for approval.

**ACTION | Final version to be circulated digitally for approval**

**B4. Risk Registers**

Board noted the new risk register for Covid-19. Comments included student numbers growth | the need to be mindful of the University’s loss of revenue from the international sector | student recruitment and potential numbers cap.

It was believed SU Living contracts were already signed for the majority of undergraduates but not as yet for postgraduates. It was agreed to commence medium-term considerations, eg Living and potential impacts if returning in September.

**ACTIONS| Strategic register to be amended | Matter to be referred back to Management Team | Updated document to be circulated via Teams**

**B5. CEO Recruitment** | Board was asked to take the submitted paper and the annexes as read, noting that the dates towards the end were fixed to avoid delays | the process should not be further delayed | a January 2021 start date to allow for notice periods | the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on interviews | the salary was indicative and final salary would require agreement from Board | the salary would be discussed with the University Director of HR and Organisational Development | CEO salary at other Unions would be obtained where possible.

It was further noted that an Executive search partner needed to be in place as soon as possible

**Board approved the proposals on the recruitment of CEO**

**ACTION | Vice-Chair to submit proposal for salary for digital approval | Chair to share this paper with University Deputy Chief Executive [Operations], Nicola Owen**

**[C] Matters for Discussion**

**C1. Chair’s Report** | report included information on University decisions | discussions around grades | exams | term 3 rents | officers working long hours to help students | Don’t Lose Your Cool activity | contact made with the local Council around engagement in the community | food parcels delivered to 1600 - 1800 students on campus | cancellation of Roses.

Board was informed about the recent petition following the decision made at the previous meeting, noting that the petition was the most signed in history | called for both the Union and University to restore of funding for College and Recreational Sport | that an open letter had been sent to the Interim Vice-Chancellor | the number of signatures was sufficient to call a referendum and take to the next AGM.

In the interest of transparency, the full-time officers confirmed their involvement related to the C and D leagues only.

The VP Sport-elect confirmed involvement in the setting up of the petition stating the protest was more about the reinstatement of the C and D leagues.

**ACTION | Interim Chief Executive to hold further discussions regarding the C and D leagues and include the VP Sport-elect in those discussions**

The VP Education gave further information regarding exams / students calling for a no detriment position / students opting in to take exams with the possibility of their grade going down / July graduations postponed to December / the University advising students not to take exams unless required for national accreditation purposes.

**C2. Chief Executive’s Report** | further to the pre-circulated report the Interim Chief Executive listed further priorities to include Housing cash flow / budget-setting / people and culture / the governance of the organisation / managing external contacts.

Board was asked to note how hard every person in the organisation was working with the resources they had at home | preliminary discussion had taken place regarding the Interim Chief Executive’s objectives,

The Interim Chief Executive asked Board to agree that staff furloughing was the correct option and that consideration be given to the cash-flow impact being over at least 12 to 18 months.

A note of thanks to all staff was given, and especially to the Interim Chief Executive, the Financial Controller and the Education & Support Manager, for their hard work and energy dealing with an extraordinary workload.

**C3. Recruitment of External and Student Trustees** | noted the recruitment of a Student Trustee, to serve a one-year term, was already live with interview date booked | recruitment of 2 External Trustees was on schedule, using both local and national resources. An external committee member was also being recruited for FRSC through the same process.

**C4. Management Accounts | 29 February 2020 YTD** | reported that: the accounts had been to FRSC | the finance team were currently working on March accounts | that the accuracy of the March accounts and revised projections should be the focus.

In response to a question raised around impact and mitigations, and what support could be given in the absence of a trustee with financial expertise, it was stated a high-level estimate would be attempted and that financial support was already available.

**[D] Matters for Information**

**D1. Trustee Board Register of attendance** |Noted.

**D2. Decisions approved electronically since previous meeting** | TB minutes of 5 February 2020.

**D3. Sugar House update** | paper delayed due to the resource pressures from Covid-19 response.

**ACTION | paper to be submitted to June Board meeting**

**D4. Minutes to Note** | Executive Committee [unapproved] minutes of 10 and 25 February | Governance Sub-Group meeting held 6 March [currently being amended] | Finance & Risk Sub-Committee meeting held 20 March [minutes not yet available].

**D5. Health & Safety / Wellbeing Group minutes** | meeting held 17 December 2019 [approved] | minutes of 3 March [minutes not yet available].

The concern raised around minutes being circulated for approval in a timely manner was noted.

**D6. Safeguarding Update** | pre-circulated document noted as was the fact there was one ongoing safeguarding matter requiring much work from the Advice team.

**D7. Complaints and Feedback** | no report to note.

**D8. External Speakers Update** | no update to previous report.

**D9. Strategy / Pulse Update** | matter on hold due to resource pressures currently although Student Pulse surveys were still being sent out.

**D10. Commercial Services Review update** | pre-circulated document to be read and questions / comments raised with the Interim Chief Executive.

**D11. Elections Debrief** **: Complaints and Turnout**

Debrief / turnout / Returning Officer’s report were noted.

Concern expressed that turnout was low and the number of candidates for certain positions was significantly lower than previous years. It was felt that engagement with the Union was an issue which went further than just uncontested positions and staffing capacity was down on the previous year.

It was also noted the most heavily contested position was for VP Societies & Media, followed by VP Sport.

**ACTION | Vice Chair to follow up on lack of candidates for some FTO positions with election staff**

**D12. Draft Budget 20-21 & Forecasts 21-23** | noted.

**D13. Sugar House: Separate Limited Company** | information received from Crowe [auditors] to be discussed at the next meeting of Finance & Risk Sub-Committee.

**ACTION | Written advice from Auditors to be obtained and circulated**

**[E] Additional and Future Business**

**E1. Forward Schedule of Business** | noted.

**E2. Date and Time of Next Meeting** | noted as Thursday 25 June 2020.

**E3. Any Other Business**

Trustees were thanked for their help and messages of support since Covid-19 had occurred.

The meeting closed at 5:00pm with a debrief to follow.

The Chair was thanked for efficient chairing and members thanked for their attendance.