

Members in attendance: Ellie Greaves, Chair (EG); Charlie Palmer, External Trustee (CP); Uri Sharell, Student Trustee (US); Tony Strike, External Trustee (TS); Daniele Cotton, Student Trustee (DC); Shreya Dua, VP Graduates (SD); Anna-Tina Jashapara, VP Charities & Community (AJ); Michael-Akolade Ayodeji, President (MA); India Jordan, External Trustee (IJ); Serene Singh, Student Trustee (SS).

Non-members in attendance: Alan Roberts, Interim CEO (AR); Hanne Clark, Head of Student Advice & Representation (HC); Dom Anderson, Incoming CEO (DA).

Minutes: Melanie Duncan, People, Governance & Office Manager (MD).

	Item	Actions
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Omorinre Olusola, VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities - Nick Entwistle, External Trustee - Jade Calder, VP Access & Academic Affairs 	
2.	<p>Minutes from previous meeting</p> <p>Minutes are approved by the Board.</p>	
3.	<p>Conflicts of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AR partner in Counter Culture who carried out the Board Effectiveness. Review to be discussed in Item 10. - CP to leave the meeting for Item 5. 	
4.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>No matters arising were presented.</p>	
5.	<p>Approval of Charlie Palmer, External Trustee</p> <p>Charlie Palmer was approved by the Board as an External Trustee.</p>	
6.	<p>Subcommittee Updates</p> <p>Finance & Risk Committee: (TS) A more thorough Finance Update will be given Item 8. It is not the job of the Committee to tell Trustee Board what they should do, but to take a position or view from a finance perspective. Freshers Fair made a loss this year, and the Committee believes that we cannot run this risk again. The event has to break even or contribute. Trustee Board needs to decide today on whether the Fair remains at University Parks or moves back to the Exam Schools. There is a specific request from the University that the SU runs down its reserves. Oxford SU has been running down reserves and we now have</p>	

<p>the responsibility for the sustainability of the charity and we shouldn't let the reserves run below 3-months of operational costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- (AJ) Are we deciding on the assumption that the University won't subsidise the Fair in the Parks? I don't believe this question has been asked.- (AR) Deadline to confirm Exam Schools is tomorrow, so we are on a tight deadline for the decision. <p>People & Culture Committee</p> <p>(AR) Committee discussed extending notice periods, which are currently unsustainably low for senior staff. We also approved the exceptional consolidated payment for staff, but discussed asking the University for a heads up and to consider us when decisions like these are made. Agreed to review the approach on process of approvals.</p> <p>OSSL Board</p> <p>(MA) There has been a reduction in employed staff (1FTE) in OSSL due to the current market. We are currently targeted to meet a £2k profit next year due to Freshers Fair loss. Income predominantly through adverts, but there is an issue with this model. Discussed diversifying income streams with ticketed events, socials etc, and the long-term plan needed for the business.</p> <p>In regards to Freshers Fair, the OSSL Board does not believe that we can make the required profit next year if the event remains in the Parks. However, a move back to exam schools could potentially damage relationship with commercial clients. Would need to push for additional funding or grants to keep the Fair in the Parks.</p> <p>OSSL should produce a timeline on how we will return to profit making in the next couple of years. The Board recommend that we outsource this to external parties in the short term. Indirect advice for the current market pricing and helps internal staff with workload.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- (AJ) What's going to happen in employment gap? Should this be a concern? (MA) It is a concern. Outsource to agency as an immediate action, but also employ a coordinator to focus on other activities.- (TS) There is 1FTE post which won't be replaced.- (EG) Replacement for the coordinator role is in the budget. <p>Student Engagement Committee</p> <p>(MA) Discussed the purposes of the Committee, the Terms of Reference, suggestions for definitions of student engagement and how to include the voices of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- (EG) Suggestion of JCR & MCR membership on the Committee – would a non-trustee student member cause confidentiality concerns? (AR) There would be a confidentiality agreement.	
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<p>7.</p>	<p>Freshers Report</p> <p>HC and AR present the Freshers Report.</p> <p>(HC) Freshers Fair was historically held at Exam Schools. After Covid, it moved to a marquee in Uni Parks to make it safer from a space management perspective. The first year, the wellbeing area was incredibly well attended and if we measure success as ‘popular’, then it was successful. The same theme was used for the wellbeing area in year 2, with some additions including a wellbeing raffle and more staff on hand to engage students. However, it is important to note that interest in our services at Freshers Fair doesn’t necessarily result in engagement across the year, and it is difficult to measure. SU Campaigns were all represented by a stall, and members of the campaigns were present to talk to students about the campaign, their activities and how to get involved. The engagement figures are not particularly high here, and there is the acknowledgement that many people sign up for campaigns but don’t follow through and engage further.</p> <p>In summary, holding the Fair in the Parks is a more pleasant environment for wellbeing and campaigns as they can be together, which is not always possible in Exam Schools. However, it does not significantly boost engagement.</p> <p>(AR) If you had sold every commercial stall at the Parks, the contribution would have been a £4-5k profit. Instead, we lost circa. £40k despite the team working very hard. This is not sustainable for another year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (US) There is a Park hire increase? (AR) Yes, the cost of the Parks increased this year. (AJ) Did we push back on the Parks cost increase? - (MA) We have a budget for video? (EG) Video is in production, there has been a delay getting it. - (MA) Do we have any thoughts on student staff contributing to sales for the Fair? - (SD) Any data to understand the claim that it isn’t increasing engagement when the parks attracts more people? (HC) Don’t believe there is more robust engagement with SU as a result of the Freshers Fair. - (AJ) Why did more students attend the Fair in the Parks? Were there other factors which affected this? (AR) Believe there was more engagement due to 2nd and 3rd years missing out on in-person Fairs during Covid. - (US) Accessibility in Parks was bad, Exam Schools would have more flexibility in this. (SD) Exam Schools has better accessibility in terms of elevator access and access to toilets. An outdoor Fair can be inaccessible for students with physical disabilities. - (SD) Why do we make a profit in Exam Schools? (EG) Cheaper venue and reduced staff cost. (SS) Would the commercials be 	<p>Student stall and visitor numbers. AR & KF to confirm.</p>
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	<p>charged differently? (AR) Yes. Smaller marquee and different venue space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (AJ) Important to note that feedback from societies was that the space in the marquee was busy and not accessible. A £30k profit could be made at Exam Schools and we need to think about what this money could do within the SU. It is also important to consider staff capacity during the summer. So much staff resource was put into the Fair, that other events and projects were not supported. I would also like us to consider making student society stalls free. It would cause a £16.4k difference based on the report. Also suggest that we make a distinction between the cost charged to local and national charities. Local charities struggled and have less presence. - (AJ) Concerned that we don't have all of the information that we need to make a decision today. (MA) Discussion regarding stall numbers and costs can be had at the Freshers Project Group. <p>Board approve to hold the Freshers Fair back in Exam Schools in 2023.</p>	
8.	<p>Finance Update</p> <p>(TS) Finance & Risk Committee are to receive the Annual Accounts, Trustee Report and Audit Report. There will be an additional meeting in December with the auditors, and the Committees recommendations will be brought to the next Trustee Board before being submitted to the Charity Commission.</p> <p>There is an updated financial forecast due to changes to the financial position of the SU. Staff cost increases and reductions in income have changed the forecast to a deficit of £129k. At the year end, this will come out of the existing reserves and leave the reserve position at £123k. Committee looked at liquidity forecast for 12-months ahead, and we will see this for 2-years ahead at the next Committee meeting. This is showing no liquidity problem for the next 2-years - the SU can meet it's commitments to it's creditors etc. This years budgets were approved and there is no reason to change them, but the Committee do not want to see any further extension of the deficit of £129k. The Committee will see regular updates and we will need to take action this financial year if there are any unexpected costs, but this is not likely.</p> <p>We need to allow the incoming CEO to write the new organisational strategy. The Committee discussed whether it would be possible to run our reserves down to 80k in the next budget without affecting the liquidity of the organisation – the SU financial team is working on these calculations. Running the reserves down in combination with the Fair being profitable or breaking even, could allow us to start paying back into the reserves the following year. This plan does not assume a reduction in expenditure, and it is important that this is linked to the strategy.</p>	

	<p>SUs up and down the country will be having this discussion. You don't have retail spaces, nightclubs etc., which has been a benefit. Most of your money comes from University and FF. Post pandemic you are doing what most SUs have to do which is rebuild reserve position. Finance team to do a benchmarking project on the reserve position of similar SUs to see whether 3 months operating costs as a reserve level is standard and we can go back to the Uni and negotiate reserves position and grant.</p> <p>(US) How does the negotiation process happen with the University?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (AR) The conversation would be started at JSECSUM. Negotiations take place every 3-years. - (TS) A significant proportion of the SUs income is through the University grant – you are an independent entity and want to remain this way. Need to get this balance right between responsiveness and independence. <p>(MA) We need to be transparent with our accounts. Risk of college disaffiliation from the SU.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (TS) Could look at reporting timeline. 	
9.	<p>Interim CEO Observations</p> <p>(AR) There are 3 observation headlines:</p> <p>Officer induction: This feels weak and has had a knock-on effect. SU needs to be laser focused on the quality of the officer induction next year. Also, team development of officers as they are coming through. Focus on a team approach.</p> <p>Manifesto into operations: When someone gets elected on a manifesto, this is led by the officer but it is the SU's responsibility to make sure it is delivered. We need operational planning and staff leads. Early tracking of manifestos, they should be looked at at the point of submission in the elections. Give an insight into that the SU will be focusing on if this person is elected.</p> <p>The university committee workload for officers: This is astonishing at Oxford. How we help the officers? How can Student Engagement assist with this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (TS) At Sheffield, the University invited officers to the committees but did not insist on the attendance (with a couple of exceptions). This allowed the the officers in a strategic way to decide which committees they can sit on based on their objectives and manifestos. Put the officers back in the driving seat and inform the University of which seats they intend to fill. - (SD) Not advertised as part of the role, don't have preparation for it. JC and I have the maximum committee load due to the focus on academic policy. We need to be in those spaces. - (MA) Could be someone other than a Sabb. 	

<p>10.</p>	<p>Board Effectiveness Review</p> <p>(MA) The position of the board was when this review was done is different to where it is now. Some positives in the review may not apply to the current board and perhaps some negatives of it too. Some key individuals when the review was done are not present now so we should consider institutional memory loss and ensure the current board has extensive contributions in some diagnosis of current issues and the implementation of solutions to them.</p> <p>I was under the impression that the Board would be implementing some recommendations for the review of the Vice Chair and/or the introduction of Co-Chairs would be considered. Surprised at the absence of “co-chair” from the full review document and our trustee away day activity – what work or progress is being done to that effect?</p> <p>(SS) There is a lack of clarity coming into the Student Trustee role. We should understand what we are taking on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (AR) Creating a pairing system between Student and External Trustees. - (DC) A Student Trustee handover document would be helpful. <p>(AR) At the phase where the SU is, I would suggest an additional Board meeting to help on-board the new CEO.</p>	<p>EG to create a circulate an action list regarding the BER. Board members to discuss and contribute ideas before next Board meeting.</p> <p>EG, MA & CEO to discuss issues surrounding vice/co-chair.</p> <p>EG to schedule additional Board meeting for discussion of BER and onboarding new CEO.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Council Report & Bye-law updates</p> <p>The Board noted the Council Report and Bye-law updates.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>(EG) Proposal to make an individual visiting student an associate member so they can gain support from us immediately. Longer-term project to look at making all visiting students associate members. Associate members cannot vote.</p> <p>Board approves individual student as associate member with immediate effect.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thursday 23rd March, 1pm. Additional Board to be arranged. 	