

Trustee Board meeting
03.11.2017 (Michaelmas Term)
Oxford SU Offices

In attendance: Farheen Ahmed, VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities (FA), Samuel Banks, Student Trustee (SB), Thomas Barringer, VP Charities & Community (TB), Catherine Canning, VP Access & Academic Affairs (CC), Kathryn Cole, Chair (KC), Tom Flynn, External Trustee (TF), Katy Haigh, VP Women (KH), James Hunt, External Trustee (JH), Richard Jackson, External Trustee (RJ), Marianne Melsen, VP Graduates (MM), Oliver Rice, Student Trustee (OR).

Also in attendance: Ryan Bird, Oxford SU Chief Executive (RB), Melanie Richardson, Oxford SU People and Compliance Manager (MR).

1. Apologies

- Apologies received from Harini Iyengar, Tarak Gorai and Alex Curtis.

2. Minutes from previous meeting

- Minutes approved by the Board.

3. Conflicts of interest

- No conflicts of interest declared.

KC & RB to create policy regarding conflicts of interest of the Trustee Board.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

KC gives overview of actions from last meeting:

- Campaign numbers. This is ongoing, Matt Tennant has now left the organisation and this work will be picked up by the Sabbs and Emily Beardsmore (Membership Services and Communications Manager). The project is taking a slightly different format, and KC will feed progress back to the Board after the Christmas break. (TB) The community campaigns are under review; they seem to be working well, but the over-arching committees are empty or almost empty. (RJ) We need to know what we mean by 'campaign'. (TB) Some of the campaigns have very specific aims, some are associations with shared interest; a distinction needs to be made but we also need to be aware that there can be a cross over. (TF) Issue around risk management for different campaigns and there needs to be clarity for staff support. (KC) Emily Beardsmore brought a paper to leadership team this week about this and we will feedback to the campaigns in 8th week. (TF) this will help the campaigns to distinguish roles.

KC will feed back to board via email in the new year.

- The RO position has been added to the Risk Register.
- Bye-laws have been passed by the Board already via email and the appointment of an External Appeals Officer will be discussed later in the meeting.
- Finance Committee Terms of Reference have been updated.
- Work around bank accounts is ongoing.
- Sabb induction to be picked up in Hilary term.
- Equality and Diversity will be discussed later in the meeting.
- Sabbatical pay has increased as agreed at the last board.

5. CEO Report

RB gives an overview of the CEO Report.

Key Points:

- The strategy document which is included in the CEO Report is the final draft. Internally we have done as much as we can and we would like to formalise this with the Board today.
- (TF) Really happy with the strategy. Really pleased to see communities as one of the three objectives. The idea of 'success through others' is more relevant for Oxford SU than for other student unions.
- (SB) We need to be conscious of the language we use when speaking to students, this document sounds a bit 'management'. Regarding communities; what resource is in place to be able to gather students here and facilitate interactions – we need to create a space that is worth-while them coming to (food, work space etc.). (CC) This is something we are trying to do, campaign socials are happening more.
- (OR) Is this the student facing version? (KH) This document is going to the communications team. It will have the same purpose but different language. (RJ) Would caution against using different language in the student facing document, would only have one version. (OR) The language doesn't connect with students. (KC) The Sabbs rewrote the document and came to a compromise. It is less wordy than 6 months ago but we will take the points around language and consider. Students may never see the manifesto in the way it appears here. (OR) That is reassuring. KC will follow up with RB regarding this feedback.
- (TF) Well done on the rebrand, website, language, and social media. It feels like the SU are actually doing stuff for students, open and outward facing.
- (OR) what are the KPI's? (KC) KPI's have been taken out and are going to be developed as a separate piece of work.
- (KH) Can we confirm that we are going to implement this version of the strategy going forward. (KC) Yes.
- (RJ) The management accounts are missing from the report?

Ryan to circulate Management Accounts to the Board after the meeting.

KC to follow up with TF regarding 360 and probation sign off for RB.

6. Sabbatical Officer updates

KC gives verbal update:

- Would encourage the trustees to get in touch to ask about our progress bars on the website. The President fortnightly update to now be in council week so that a council update can be included. Intended to keep trustees up to date with what we're doing.
- KC's time has been mainly taken by meetings in an effort to reach out more and spend less time behind a desk, such as meeting the Gardens Libraries and Museums function, the Foundry and the Playhouse, alongside university committees, meeting MCR Presidents with MM, and the one-on-one mentoring to JCR Presidents. Also spent a lot of time preparing for This Girl Can Week in 7th, which is a whole week of free activities, aiming to get more women engaged in sport at Oxford.
- FA has been busy organising two Equality and Diversity conferences, one aimed at JCRs in collaboration with KH and one aimed at MCRs with MM, which are being held later this term. Also been working on community and campaign strategies with the relevant sabbs and staff. For the rest of term, priorities are planning a Feminism in Theory and Action Conference in Hilary, and inputting into welfare reviews (e.g. peer supporters).
- KH has been doing a lot of training, including consent workshops in colleges, first respondent training sessions, and EDComm is happening on the 15th November. Also launched the period project, assisted a revitalized WomCam with their projects for the year, and a number of committees. Priorities for rest of term include: getting students engaged in the period project, collaborating with good lad – an organisation that promotes positive masculinity, sorting out It happens here, which currently has one committee member.
- TB has been working on Veggie Pledge, which has been launched this week (alongside a big social media campaign and Instagram takeover). Been working on the Cycle safety; creating cycle safety media resources and the SU has endorsed the Claudia Charter via Council. Also attended various committee meetings and coordinated with student groups to deliver their own projects.
- MM has been busy with a lot of committees - some of the issues discussed are graduate suspensions and merit awards for PGTs. Involved in the process of recruiting new divisional representatives and has been interviewing students for these roles. Also working with Emily Beardsmore to restart two campaigns; StudentsPlus and International Students Campaign. The first Grad PresCom of term took place last night.
- CC has been continuing to represent students on committees relating to access and education. Also been liaising with the central university and students regarding access press coverage and have been making steady progress on projects as well as addressing new pieces of work such as the NUS poverty commission, which is the headline manifesto pledge of NUS President Shakira Martin, and the HERA Consultations.

KC invites feedback/questions from the Board.

- (TF) Would be really interested in the work with Good Lad, this is an issue Royal Hollway are also working on. Could you share materials?
- (JH) Regarding David Lammy; is there anything we can offer to progress the matter? (CC) Our Class Act campaign appeared on the Radio 4 Today programme and the co-chair of CRAE wrote an article in the Huffington post. Students are engaged with the issue and we are working with the central university to ensure that the message is clear. (FA) We are doing a lot of work to make sure numbers are achieved in regards to the race equality charter mark. (CC) There are positive numbers coming through, doing better than we ever expected. (TF) Interesting that it is all focussed on the undergrad intake, what is the information for Grads? (MM) Aware of and working on this, trying to get as many people involved in this project.
- (SB) Well done. These are really great projects and, even though you can't achieve everything, you do a huge amount. In regards to attending committees; if there is nothing on the agenda for students, don't go. (RB) Echoes this comment.

FA and KH to provide materials and contacts to TF regarding Good Lad.

7. Welcome week report

KC gives a general summary of the Welcome Week report:

Key Points:

- Welcome week went well, better than in previous years. Freshers' Fair was a great success. KC took a number of VIP's through the Fair and received a lot of great comments. The plan is to look at again next year, its good but not exactly where we want to be.
- (TF) The commercial element, how does this compare to last year? (RB) Costs were down this year and sales up. The next management accounts will show this. (TF) The figure for commercial sales is extremely high, double what most Union's would take. (RB) This is true but the costs are much higher here. (TF) Could we get the space for free? (SB) This would be greatly appreciated by student groups, the charges can be a source of frustration and difficulty, especially for smaller groups. (TF) Could we write to Exam Schools as a Board of Trustees, explaining that we are not comfortable with charging student groups and that the university should be playing a role in enhancing these groups? Use evidence from other unions. (OR) We are putting out a lot of money for societies that we don't even own.
- (RJ) A strategic point; we should go back to square one and look at welcome week; should we be doing Freshers' Fair etc.? Will come back to this point in item 9.

KC will follow up on the possibility of sending a letter to the Exam Schools on behalf of the Board.

8. E&D discussion

KC gives an introduction to the discussion session:

- We want to open up this space for big strategic conversations like this one. The discussion on equality and diversity was proposed by Ryan in response to the action from last Trustee Board meeting.
- (FA) We want to set a strategic direction as to how we approach equality and diversity internally. This discussion is not focussed on the Sabbs or trustee board. We want to say that E&D is at the heart of the organisation. KH and FA are looking at the liberation vision, and a policy book for this, but how do we do this internally?
- (TF) We don't currently have an E&D policy? (KC) We do for students but not internally.

Feedback from groups after 20 minutes break-out discussion:

1st Group SB, CC, RJ. SB feeds back:

- Headline point - 'We want people to be able to bring their whole selves to what we do'. Identify and eliminate the barriers that prevent this, i.e. what creates the gender imbalances in particular groups. Offer support and training – creating development in opportunities. Blogs from a range of students, once a week. Recognising students and student groups and encouraging them. (CC) Re. the blogs, to clarify, we're talking about students who may have limited engagement with Oxford SU.

2nd Group, KH, TF, MM. KH feeds back:

- A) Constantly moving and working to improve. We shouldn't rely on 'token' people. Need to recognise how complex E&D can be. B) Splitting what we have to do vs. what we can choose to do to go above and beyond. Creating an inclusive workspace; hearing aid loops, lighting for visual impairments, job shares (maternity), parent Sabbs – how do we make this possible? What is a reasonable adjustment? We can go above and beyond in this area. C) Clear guidance for staff for following the vision; how to respond to events/partnerships that do not fit, e.g. student groups. There should be clear policy and guidance in place for staff. (TF) We talked a lot about distinction between what we are required to do and the areas where we choose to go above and beyond.

3rd Group TB, FA, JH, OR. TB feeds back:

- A) We need to make sure we comply to the law and whatever strategy we do have, needs to be clear and communicated well. Create a clear 'champion' in the office for this – VP WEO and VP Women? Offer support and training so everyone knows their rights and responsibilities, support them when interacting with external organisations. When you think of Oxford SU, you think of E&D. (FA) We are inclusive as an environment, encouraging certain behaviours, we need the ability to evolve this document. This should be part of what we do, but not in a tokenistic way.
- (SB) I am actively excited about this – we can be easily tied down to just our obligations.

- (TF) Only one caution regarding the 'bringing whole self to work' point. This should be 'subject to our values'. (SB) We don't want to exclude people who do not agree with our policy, but when a policy is in place they will need to adhere to it.
- (RJ) Don't repeat legal obligations in the policy. It should be reflective of where we are going above and beyond.
- (OR) People beyond the SU need to take ownership of this policy too.
- (KC) We want to champion this and be a role model that the University can look up.

Ryan and Kate to collate discussion notes into a document and decide the next steps. Will feed back to the Board.

9. Future discussion items

KC asks for the Board suggestions for future discussion items.

Key Points:

- (RJ) We should carve out 30 mins to 1 hour at each Board meeting to add value to these types of discussions. We have a constitutional review in 2020; what are the things we will want to look at in a few years? Remits and numbers of Sabbs; we have the option in our current constitution to have Sabbs who are not Trustees, we have the option of full time and part time, and to keep remits fluid. Oxford SU engagement through media; why do we have a radio, why do we have a printed newspaper, print vs. online, why we do FF, why we do the careers guide. Campaigns and community might be a good discussion for the next meeting. Student opportunities; where are they? How do we engage? Are we selling these opportunities in the right way?
- (KC) Would like to discuss student housing; what do we do in the private rental market? One of the biggest things brought to the Advice Service.
- (TF) Post grads, do we do enough, do we know enough. Plan of how we support JCR's and MCR's. This is so fundamental to what we do, what limits our impact? Clubs and Societies, let's have a 3-year plan.
- (SB) We're getting better at getting information out, but how are we hearing back?
- (CC) What does the SU do for access? We have an officer, we have a campaign. Are the SU doing anything or just supporting?
- (TB) How we ask students to fundraise.
- (RJ) Stats are very useful for the preparation of these kind of discussions.

KC to take suggestions and plan strategic discussions for upcoming Board meetings.

10. Council and Board

SB gives an overview of the paper:

- This has not yet been discussed in Council. The main thing to pick up on is communication between the Board and Council, this is something we need to work on. Have started including the Trustee Board mailing list when circulating the Council

agenda. (TF) Seeing this is useful. (KC) My fortnightly email will also include key subjects from Council.

- (OR) Is there a mechanism for the Board to refer agenda items to Council for discussion? (RJ) We would action a student representative to bring an item or motion to council. (RJ) There is a standing invitation for the Chair of Council to attend Board meetings and we have been obliged since 2010 to send a report for Council. (OR) It would help with the element of transparency if the Chair can see into this process.
- (KC) Who is going to take this forward? (SB) The Student Trustees are the right people to take this forward, very happy to be involved but I am the current Chair of Council. (RJ) In the past, this has always been done through the chair of the Board. I am uncomfortable about a Trustee also being the Chair of Council – there are distinct risks with confidentiality.
- (KC) More work to be done. Is the Chair of the Board the right person to bring items or motions to Council?

SB and Alex Curtis to continue to work on this.

11. Update from the Charity Commission

KC gives a summary of the paper.

Board approved the implementation of KC's recommendations. KC to follow up at a later date.

12. Changes to the Bye-Laws

- (RB) The changes to the Bye-Laws have been approved by the Board, Council and JSECSUM. Appointing an External Appeals Officer (EAO), suggest we take a shortlist to board, board reviews and makes an appointment. RB to take forward to work with staff.
- (RJ) The EAO replaces the Junior Tribunal. Complaints will go straight to the EAO.
- (RJ) Why is the NUS not on the shortlist? (RB) They haven't responded yet. Ian Robinson would be RB's recommendation. (RJ) There is risk around NUS doing this role, one is perception, and they may misunderstand the position as it is not the RO.
- (KC) The Board will make a decision and Council then ratifies it at the 7th week meeting. Online resolution by the Board by next week. (RJ) Josh needs to be advised that the Elections Committee shouldn't be issued until Council ratifies the decision.
- (KC) Know there are still issues with the current process. Everything has been noted and will come back at the quinquennial.

Final approval of the External Appeals Officer by the Board, via email, by next week (w/c 6th November).

13. Finance Committee minutes

KC invites any comments relating to the Finance Committee minutes.

Key Points:

- (RJ) Do we have a lease? (RB) We have an Heads of Terms, not lease. We are actively following up.
- (RJ) Kate's comment in the minutes about risk falling on externals, is this true? (JH) Yes. (KC) This comment came after seeing the Risk Register for the first time.
- (TF) Not comfortable with confirming the audited accounts over the phone. (RB) All Board members will be invited to the next Finance Committee meeting with the auditors present. (JH) We need to agree the accounts but the can be brought to the next meeting in the new year?

Audited accounts to be included on the agenda for Hilary Term meeting.

14. AOB

- Lunch.
- (TF) Brilliantly chaired meeting.

15. Date of next meeting

- 9th February 2018.