

OPEN MINUTES

Oxford University Student Union
Company Number: 07314850
Charity Number: 1140687

Trustee Board Meeting, 26 April 2013 at 11.00
at the Registered Office, 2 Worcester Street, Oxford OX1 2BX

MINUTES

Present:

David J Townsend (Chair) (DJT), Suzanne Holsomback (SH), Sarah Santhosham (SS), Katie Colliver (KC), Jane Cahill (JC) Oliver Gleeson (OG), James Raynor (JR), Paul Silk (PS), Richard Jackson (RJ), Philip Harvey (PH), James Hunt (JH), David Messling (DM), for AOB.

In Attendance:

Brona O'Toole (CEO) (BO'T); Karen Irving (Democratic Support Officer) (KI, minutes)

1. Apologies and welcome

Christopher Gray (CG), Jane Cahill (JC)

2. Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes from the Trustee Board meeting held on 15 March 2013 were approved.

3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

JH Moved item 8 on Statutory Accounts above the line.

KC moved item No 11 the Student Advice Service Confidentiality Policy above the line.

4. OUSU Funding and the University Block Grant 2013-2014

The Board noted the letter from the Vice-Chancellor dated 27 March 2013 detailing the uplift of £100k to the Block Grant. It noted that this uplift was £50k less than OUSU had originally requested to stabilise infrastructure.

The Board noted that it was proposed that future discussions or uplifts in funding for OUSU would come through the joint committee JS(EC)SM rather than financial side (PRAC) side of the University. In this way OUSU activity would be considered by the Educational Committee of University to ensure buy in, scrutiny and endorsement.

It was agreed any updates on the progression of these recommendations that they should be circulated to the Board to ensure that they don't get stuck in University Committees. **Action: DJT to circulate the JS (EC) SM recommendations.**

BO'T presented the draft 2013-14 Budget to Board, which shows the January reforecast. The Board noted the following key points regarding the budget:

- The forecast was draft and needs more work to firm up some figures
- Work needed doing on OSSL forecast as new products are being added for 2013.
- The forecast contains figures for two new posts: Operations/Events role and a Communications officer, which will take approximately £87,000 of the new funding. These roles will start from the beginning of the new academic year.
- The forecast also includes £5,000 for Officer-led projects and engagements and £12,000 for the Safety Bus. Next year will produce Alternative Prospectus,

OPEN MINUTES

therefore part of the funding from the website will have to be reallocated there.

- More clarification from the University is required to identify whether this uplift will change whether OUSU retains the £23,000 they gained from a facilities charge being waived.
- The uplift of £100,000 has not yet been confirmed as an ongoing commitment to the Student Union. Noted that this should be clarified before OUSU commits to staff recruitment.

The following comments were made:

- PH requested that the principles of funding are signed off by the University in case changes of Personnel take place.
- It was noted that SS has been in negotiation with Oxford Brookes regarding contract for Safety Bus to identify when the next commitment to this is required.
- DJT advised that students might be concerned if OUSU had an uplift and then ran a deficit. JH suggested that OUSU may wish to look at our reserves policy, as OUSU is currently fairly stable financially, and advised if OUSU has a sensible reserves policy then it can occasionally have a deficit without it causing a problem.
- It was agreed that the final Budget proposal would be circulated via email for sign-off. **ACTION: BOT**
- The Board recorded that the new funding is a notable achievement by the Sabbatical Officers and BO'T.

5. Multi-Year Funding Agreements with the University

The Board agreed that multi-year funding agreements are preferable from a budgetary point of view. One recommendation is that discussions occur between the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Education and Resources and Keith Zimmerman and BO'T and DJT enter into discussions regarding multi-year agreements.

It was noted that these are likely to be 3 year agreements rather than 5-year. It was noted that BOT and DJT would move forward with these discussions this term, in order to try to make as much progress as possible before the new sabbatical officers team come in.

BO'T advised that her priorities over the next few months were the strategy and budget negotiations, the recruitment of vacant and new posts, and operational delivery for the new term including Induction for the new Sabbatical team. This was endorsed by the Board.

6. Governance

RJ reported to the Board on plans for ongoing Governance work. It was noted that 5-year review was due in July 2015 and there was a good deal of work to be done in preparation for that. It was noted that this would be covered in handover and induction for the new Sabbatical team.

Other Key points noted were:

- **Byelaws:** It was agreed that the Bye-laws would not be amended unless there was something critical that needed attention.
- **Election Regulations:** The outgoing Returning Officer had written a report advising that the new regulation worked very well and should only be amended slightly for MT 2013 elections.

OPEN MINUTES

- **OUSU Complaints Procedure:** The draft complaints procedure was introduced by KC. It was noted that it was a fairly complex procedure that could potentially deter students and concerns were raised about its accessibility. It was agreed that it was perhaps not as straightforward as it could be either in its structures or in its language. The Advice Service Complaints procedure was cited as a good example of a straightforward procedure expressed simply and in a student-friendly manner. It was queried why there were two separate procedures and noted that the byelaws require a separate procedure as it was deemed inappropriate to have the same procedure for confidential service users and general complaints. It was also noted that there would be a separate complaints procedure for permanent staff. It was agreed that further discussion would take place via email.
- **Student Trustees:** The Board discussed the structural problem with student trustees ceasing to be Trustees when they cease to be student members and thus only being in place for 2 terms. This created a legal problem in that at some points in the year there is a majority of paid Trustees on the Board. The possibility of a co-option procedure was discussed, to bridge that gap for the Michaelmas Term. It was agreed that more could be done to make students aware when standing that they would need to be a student for a full calendar year. Attracting graduate students could also be a way of ensuring this. OG agreed to write a paper exploring options and send to RJ to progress this discussion. **ACTION: OG**
- **Comms strategy:** RJ reported discussion with OUSU Sales Manager regarding clarity of communications. It was agreed that some key messages regarding OUSU's mission would help with negotiations with University.

7. Report on Oxford-Burma Exchange

The Board received a verbal update from DJT on the Burma Exchange. The key points noted were:

- It was a 2-week trip involving 6 students and 3 organisers. Participating students were chosen using established criteria through a University-wide process.
- Oxford delegates met with Burmese student union groups and charitable groups with the aim of setting up links between them and the Student Union.
- DJT discussed possibility with British Council about a return delegation and are hoping that this will occur in June 2013 although this will not take place solely in Oxford. Any long-term strategy will depend on return delegations
- A written report would become available within a few weeks and would be followed by a presentation.
- It was requested that the report contained information about the work hours that this Trip required. **ACTION DJT**
- It was requested that press information and the Report were circulated to the Board when available. **ACTION DJT**

8. Statutory Accounts 2011-12 (Paper 3a and Paper 3b)

JH reported that these Accounts had been considered at last meeting but some minor changes should be noted. The Risk Management section had been updated and a there was a restatement of figures on the reserves policy included.

The following comment and Actions were noted:

OPEN MINUTES

- Page 5 to be updated **ACTION RD**
- Investigation into whether the term 'junior members' could be removed and replaced by 'students'. **ACTION RD**
- Page 2 dates need to be changed to Sunday of 9th Week. **ACTION RD**
- Are asked to Approve two letters: one regarding OUSU and one regarding OSSL Ltd. Paragraph 14 in the OUSU note which talks about the deficit in OSSL Ltd. If approve these are approving this.
- 'Dear Sirs' would be changed to 'To Whom it May Concern'. **ACTION RD**
- The Board agreed that these were approved and would be signed by Monday 29th April 2013. **ACTION RD**
- JH will investigate problems with timings for next year to ensure runs more smoothly next year. **ACTION JH**
- A query was raised about Pensions Costs, will need to show our share of the deficit that sits on the scheme. A conversation with the University will need to take place as to what our share is and how we account it. **ACTION RD**

11. **Student Advice Service Confidentiality Policy**

KC presented the draft Policy. A question was raised about the treatment of holding records. It was noted that BO'T is the registered Data Controller for OUSU, and that Data Protection compliance requires that "We will only hold data for as long as is necessary". It was agreed that this wording would replace the existing clause about storing records. It was noted that KC planned to present the policy to OUSU Council for information.

The Following items were noted without comment:

9. **Management Accounts for March 2013 (Paper 4)**

10. **Draft General Regulations 2013**

12. **Termly Reports from the Executive Officers to OUSU Council (Paper 6)**

13. **Any Other Business**

SS reported that Oxford University has signed up to a commitment to pay its directly employed staff the Living Wage. A query was raised about whether OUSU cleaning staff were paid the Living Wage. It was noted that OUSU does not contract its cleaning staff directly, as cleaning provision was part of the Facilities management provided by University central administration, and it is contracted out. The Board noted that proposals to ensure that University-contracted staff working in OUSU could be paid the living wage would be presented to Finance Committee in the first instance.

It was noted that PS going to a Charity Commission workshop for Trustees.

DJT recorded thanked the Board, in particular for the expertise and positive support that the external Trustees bring to OUSU, and wished it luck going forward

14. **Date of next meeting: Friday 28 June 2013 (1st Week Trinity Term)**

There was a discussion as to whether this meeting will take place or will be moved to the July date. This will be confirmed via email.

Meeting closed at 12.55pm