

OUSU Trustee Board Meeting

11am - 1pm
27th May 2011
2 Worcester Street
Oxford, OX1 2BX

PRESENT:

David Barclay (Chair), Alice Thornton, Richard Jackson, Tom Perry, Paul Silk, David J Townsend, Jonny Medland, Sarah Walker, Beth Evans, Alex Bulfin

APOLOGIES:

Daniel Lowe, Phillip Harvey, Katharine Terrell

IN ATTENDANCE:

Brona O'Toole (CEO), Karen Irving (minutes);
Jacob Diggle (Clubs and Societies) for item 9.

1. **Apologies** were received from Daniel Lowe, Phillip Harvey, Katharine Terrell
2. **Minutes from the last meeting:** The following amendment was suggested and agreed:
On page 1 should change from Tara Jewell to Tara Prayag.
The following amendment to section 6 Finance, the lease for the new building will be attached to the Operating Agreement.
The following amendment Under Section 6 Finance, the amount of £631,000 should be amended to £361,000.
3. **Matters Arising not covered elsewhere:**
 - a. **Minutes Policy**
In the previous meeting the Board agreed that it needed to have a minutes policy to enable it to fulfil the requirement for its minutes to be open and available to students, while preserving the ability to record confidential business where appropriate. BO'T spoke to the proposal outlined in Paper 2 for having two sets of minutes: one which is open and published on the website and one which is Confidential and available only to Trustees. The confidential version would be substantially the same as the open one but would have confidential additions. Items would be deemed confidential when they deal with the sort of matters which would be exempt from any requirement to disclose under the Freedom of Information act, for example business dealing with individuals, commercial information etc.

THE BOARD AGREED this policy and the minutes from the last meeting.

4. Reports from the Sabbatical Officers

The Trustees noted the reports from Sabbatical Officers in Paper 3. DB highlighted the success of the work towards a 'no confidence' vote in the Higher Education Minister

and how it was gaining ground, with a focus on the debate in Congregation in 6th week. DB reported that 167 academics had signed the motion and a website had been launched. It was reported that DL would be raising the same issue at the Aldwych Conference (The SUs for the Russell Group Universities) that afternoon and asking for their support.

5. Chief Executive Report:

a. Building move: BO'T reported that the move had gone well, the new premises were a vast improvement and had already a very positive impact on the team and the way the organisation works.

It was noted that the move was well publicised and has not had a noticeable negative impact on student visits.

b. Staffing:

Some staffing matters were discussed

6. Finance

a. Management Accounts:

The Board received and noted the Year to Date expenditure and Year End reforecast in Paper 4. BO'T reported that stringent financial controls within OUSU coupled with an unbudgeted new one-off commercial project and extremely effective sales activity by the Sales Manager in OSSL (targets were exceeded by 18 percent) meant that a year-end surplus was being forecast. BO'T also highlighted that OUSU was currently in a good cash position as the OSSL profit for 10-11 had also been paid over.

It was agreed that the Board would like to see OSSL figures in the next set of management accounts.

ACTION POINT: BO'T to circulate OSSL figures

b. BSC - PRAC Budget submission for 2011/12:

The Board received and noted Paper 5 and 5a as OUSU's final submission to the University's central PRAC (Planning and Resource allocation) budget committee for 2011-12. It was noted that this was in a different format from the previous submission as OUSU was complying with the standard headings that University departments. BO'T reported that all financial information for the University would be reported in this format for consistency.

BO'T also reminded the Board that a thorough Accounting Review was underway to look at how OUSU's accounts were reported, as OUSU will need to prepare Charity SORP accounts at the end of the current financial year. As a result, with the new budget in the next financial year, Headings would be grouped differently to show more clearly direct charitable expenditure and support costs.

7. Strategic Planning

The Board received and noted Paper 6. BO'T talked to the paper, which detailed OUSU's Transition Plan for the next twelve months and shows all work in progress towards the development of a Strategic Plan. It was highlighted how all the work flows detailed were essential building blocks in the process towards a Strategic Plan, and also indicated where Trustees were involved.

BO'T highlighted Policies under the Governance section and reported that it was planned to start this work over the summer, with some of the work connected to the byelaws review.

It was also reported that the Organisational Review was underway (and would possibly be followed by an Officer Review to pick up from the work done in the previous year) and would be essential groundwork for a strategic plan. BO'T reported that this review would look at organisational functions and identify the gaps and pressures, providing evidence and business case for any plans; and out of this work would flow review and harmonisation of job descriptions and contracts. The outgoing Sabbatical team would be consulted before their departure to contribute to this process.

8. Governance

a. Byelaws update:

RJ spoke to Paper 7, a scoping paper for the project, which sets out how the task will be undertaken. He reported that progress was being made and things were running currently to timetable. The key to the task is providing for those byelaws required by the Mem and Arts but also an opportunity to streamline and rationalise existing governing documents such as Standing Orders, so that they are fit for purpose in the new structure. RJ reported that the 'Teach-In' Day had been very instructive and recorded thanks to those who attended. A note of the day had been produced and might be useful for Trustees to see. The next step would be for a draft set of Byelaws to be presented to Trustees at the end of June.

Action: BO'T to circulate note from Bye-laws Session.

b. Appointments to the Board:

DB noted that the Mem and Arts has provision for Deputy Chair who would take the place of the Chair when absent. It was considered important by many on the Board that this position should be filled by a Student Trustee. IT was also noted that the Mem and Arts does not mention a Treasurer but that this role would provide longer term support for the Chief Executive in terms of budget strategy etc., providing a sounding board and check on the financial processes.

THE BOARD AGREED to appoint Sarah Walker as Treasurer and David J Townsend as Deputy Chair. Both accepted their nominations.

c. Safeguarding Policy: AB spoke to Paper 8 & 8a, amending the cover paper, reporting that this policy didn't in fact require immediate Board approval. It was noted that it was a first draft and should be scrutinised by AB and BO'T a bit further before being presented for adoption by the Board.

ACTION POINT: Policy to be brought to future meeting of Trustees when ready.

- d. **Risk Register** PS spoke to this item. Reported that he and BO'T had had a useful discussion regarding how to approach this work. He highlighted the fact that the completion of a risk register is a practical management tool to assist in the identification and management of risks facing the organisation, and should be approached as such and not as a empty bureaucratic exercise. BO'T added that the process of producing a risk register would directly contribute to the work on the strategic plan.

All Trustees were asked to think about risks facing the organisation and to send a bullet list of their own view of the key ones facing OUSU.

ACTION POINT: All Trustees to send through bullet list of key risks to BO'T.

9. **Clubs & Societies:** AB spoke to Paper 9. The Board was joined by JD, Part-time officer for Clubs and Societies. AB introduced the concept of Key Information Sets (KIS) within HE evaluation and how those developments may affect OUSU in the future. One of the items under discussion is a measurement of student satisfaction with their student union, with one of the key indicators under this heading being how many clubs and societies the SU ran. Discussion focused on how OUSU and Oxford is at a disadvantage if this measure is used as it looks at breadth rather than depth of impact. It was noted that OUSU performs highly in terms of depth of impact but less well on breadth, due to the collegiate system. Discussion centred on how OUSU might be able to work strategically with the University to improve how Clubs and Societies might feature as part of OUSU's work, as it will be to mutual interest to work together if this measure is introduced.

AB stressed that there was work to be done in scoping out what is available to clubs and societies and what could be done for them going forward. AB proposed that it might feed into OUSU's organisational review and the shape of the sabbatical team going forward.

ACTION: Work to continue on scoping. AB/BOT/JD and others to liaise to continue work with new team.

10. **NUS Charitable:** The Board noted that the NUS has established a new charity designed to support all those student unions that have registered as charities, offering support and resources to SU Trustee Boards.

11. **AOB:**

JM mentioned the OUSU Annual report that needs to be prepared and asked for input from Sabbatical Officers. He emphasised that it provided a good opportunity to explain

coherently all the changes to OUSU in the last year, what has happened within the year to the student union.

It was noted that DB would draft a Trustee Report for Council and send around

ACTION: DB to draft Trustee Report to Council

The question of how OUSU Trustee Board interacts with both the Joint committee of the University and perhaps more informally and strategically with other key officers within the University was discussed. It was agreed to invite the Head of Student Services and the Chair of the Joint Committee to the next Trustee meeting to facilitate the development of both formal and informal relationships. The possibility that they might make a presentation on how they saw the SU developing in the next 5 years was discussed. It was also noted that developing a relationship with the Conference of Colleges was important in this regard, and that the Chief Executive and President-Elect could perhaps give a presentation to the Steering committee of Conference.

ACTION: DB to invite Keith Zimmerman and Sally Mapstone to next Trustee Meeting.

ACTION: JM/BO'T and President -elect to arrange to attend Steering Committee of Conference.

12. Date of Next Meeting: Friday 24th June 2011

It was noted that this will be large meeting as all new Sabbatical Officers will be in attendance.