

Oxford SU Trustee Board (online meeting)  
**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 13:00pm (Michaelmas Term)**  
 Oxford SU, 4 Worcester Street, Oxford OX1 2BX.  
 Charity number: 1140687  
 Company number: 07314850



Members of the Board in attendance: Nikita Ma, President & Chair (NM)  
 Lauren Bolz, VP Graduates (LB); Tucker Drew, VP Access & Academic Affairs (TD); Nick Entwistle, External Trustee (NE); Ben Farmer, VP Charity & Community (BF); Alex Foley, VP Women (AF); Amelia Holt, VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities (AH), India Jordan, External Trustee (IJ); Asif Khan, Student Trustee (AK); James Nevett, Student Trustee (JN); Sarah Owen, External Trustee (SO); Charlotte Potter, External Trustee (CP).

Also in attendance: Kate Dawson, Chief Executive (KD); Sarah Bradley, Deputy CEO, for Item 5 only (SB).

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

	Item	Actions
1.	Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CP arriving at 14:00pm</li> <li>- Marcin Pisanski, Student Trustee, not present.</li> </ul>	
2.	Minutes from previous meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minutes were approved by the Board.</li> </ul>	
3.	Conflicts of Interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No conflicts of interest declared.</li> </ul>	
4.	Matters arising from previous meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update on RTOSW in Item 8.</li> </ul>	
5.	Impact Report 19/20 SB gives an overview of the Impact Report from academic year 19/20 and the key achievements. SB invites comments/questions from the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (NE) Why did the Remote Teaching Feedback survey not get the same engagement as other similar projects? (SB) Potentially survey fatigue, when the survey was released, not a full or larger team effort on the project. This needs more scrutiny. (TD) This was also a very different survey with just 3 open response questions. Not set up to gather specific data but to provide a space for students to log complaints in a more regulated way.</li> <li>- (LB) Why aren't the number of Committees the Sabbs sit on included in these reports? Not including these, or the wins from them, makes it look like we do less than we do. (SB) Will take this onboard for the next report.</li> <li>- (BF) What are we doing with the responses we do get? We need to be showing the impact these surveys have and how we are shaping policy.</li> </ul> SB leaves the meeting	<b>Impact Report noted by the Board.</b>  <b>KD to coordinate previous Sabbs being sent a copy of the report.</b>

6.	<p><b>CEO Report</b></p> <p>KD gives an overview of the report which details the progress of the CEO objectives.</p> <p>NM invites questions and comments from the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (SO) Credit for how much you have moved things on since taking up post in the current circumstances. You've made a great impact already.</li> <li>- (NM) Good to see managers and senior managers getting training and development. This will help to retain institutional memory.</li> </ul>	<p><b>KD to continue to work on objectives.</b></p>
7.	<p><b>Subcommittee Reports</b></p> <p>Update from CP for Finance &amp; Risk Committee will be given in AOB, Item 12.</p> <p>LB gives an overview of People &amp; Culture Committee held on 29.10.2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sabb induction and handover discussion. Sabbs actioned to assess implications of moving the start date of the Sabb term of office.</li> <li>- Staffing updates included a conversation around the annual inflationary salary increase.</li> <li>- People &amp; Culture Plan &amp; EDI Plan. Sabbs are to be more integrated in both of these. Also discussed external scrutiny of the EDI plan.</li> <li>- Approved the PDP Framework.</li> <li>- Approved Behaviours Framework.</li> </ul> <p>KD gives an overview of OSSL Board held on the 27.10.2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussed plans for commercial income.</li> <li>- Our commercial approach is on track, but we need to be managing this closely. We are at 47% of the full year target so far.</li> <li>- There has been a review of the OSSL partnership terms and conditions, the media pack has been updated and there is a new area of the website for advertising sales.</li> <li>- Discussed our partnership with SU Networks.</li> <li>- Recruiting external member of the OSSL board.</li> <li>- Freshers' Fair Report will come to the Hilary Term Board meeting.</li> </ul> <p>BF gives an overview of Media Board held on the 28.10.2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media is still a very new Board and there are new students involved in the publications.</li> <li>- Discussed the strategic direction for the coming year, Coronavirus challenges and how we can support them through this, and operational procedure – complaints, budget setting etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>KD to bring Freshers' Report to the Hilary Term Board meeting.</b></p>
8.	<p><b>Return to Onsite Working Update</b></p> <p>KD gives an overview of the report focusing on the changes which have been made since the report was last presented to the Board. Further changes which were not included in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change in circumstances of the furlough scheme since writing this report.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Board approves remaining in Phase 2 of RTOSW Plan.</b></p> <p><b>KD to coordinate discussions on business critical</b></p>

	<p>We have made the decision to part-time furlough every person in the organisation as part of the flexible furlough scheme. We need to future proof and protect our financial position – furloughing all staff at this point enables us to use the furlough scheme fully in the future. We need to be financially prudent and cost effective where we can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was an incident in 4 Worcester Street where a member of staff from another department tested positive for COVID after being in the building at the same time as some of our staff. We were given incorrect information at the time on how to respond to this by Estates Services, but this has now been rectified.</li> </ul> <p>KD is asking the Board to approve remaining in Phase 2 of the RTOSW plan.</p> <p>KD invites comments/questions from the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (NM) Board to note that although we are using the flexible furlough scheme, we will be topping salaries up to 100%.</li> <li>- (NE) Risk mitigation should be done regarding activities which may or may not be possible based on workload and staff resource. (KD) Business critical assessment meeting to discuss this is scheduled for next week.</li> <li>(BF) Important to make clear to the team what activities will continue/take place and how these have been decided.</li> </ul>	<p><b>service delivery and communicate this to staff.</b></p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>Risk Management Policy &amp; Risk Register</b></p> <p>KD gives an overview of the Risk Management Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The policy has been recommended for approval by Finance and Risk Committee. Board is being asked to approve the policy.</li> <li>- Board is being asked to approve the assessment by Finance and Risk Committee that our risk appetite is low.</li> <li>- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.</li> </ul> <p>KD invites comments/questions from the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (NE) It is worth comparing our Risk Register with that of other student unions to make sure our assessment of risk is correct.</li> <li>- (NM) The Risk Management Policy and Risk Register will next come to Board in Michaelmas Term 2021.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Board approves the Risk Management Policy.</b></p> <p><b>Board approves the risk appetite as low.</b></p> <p><b>KD to share Risk Register with SU contacts to ensure our assessment of risk is in line with other student unions.</b></p>
<p>10.</p>	<p><b>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Plan</b></p> <p>KD gives an introduction to the paper. This plan is a draft.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The steer from People &amp; Culture Committee was that this plan needs external scrutiny. This will happen in addition to any comments from the Board.</li> </ul> <p>KD invites comments from the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (SO) There are many points of action in this plan with a lot of overlap. Is</li> </ul>	<p><b>SO to share work on improving representation on Boards.</b></p> <p><b>KD to link EDI plan to policy and process list.</b></p> <p><b>KD to continue work on the EDI plan,</b></p>

	<p>there a way of synthesising this to make it a simpler set of objectives/actions? (KD) The plan needs to be robust, but the format could certainly be looked at.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (SO) Happy to share work on improving representation on Boards.</li> <li>- (NM) Would be good to link this plan to the policy and process list so these can be looked at together.</li> </ul>	<p><b>including organising external scrutiny.</b></p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Oxford SU Strategy Development</p> <p>KD gives an overview of the paper and the three suggested scenarios for future strategy development.</p> <p>KD invites to Board to discuss the scenarios and the direction the strategy development should take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (BF) We need strategic direction around our major projects. Steer from Board on our priorities would be helpful.</li> <li>- (TD) We have needed to change and adapt over the last few months and this is an exciting opportunity to do a full strategy revamp.</li> <li>- (LB) Focus strategy on what Board discussed at the away day – what can we offer that others don't. Setting ourselves apart from the University and colleges and make it clear what our role is.</li> <li>- (SO) Initial instinct is to lean toward option 1, but maybe there is a compromise position. Main direction can be based on the existing strategy but work needs to be done to create clear objectives for the next year. Look to do a bigger strategic review once we have clarity on what the world looks like.</li> <li>- (JN) The strategic plan was set in 2017 and we are now dealing with very different circumstances. It will be a risk to create a new strategic plan during the pandemic, but we can incorporate learnings into it. Because of this, leaning towards option 3. Opportunity for the Sabbs to contribute to long term planning is limited at the moment, this would allow them to do that.</li> <li>- (CP) The organisation is stretched; we could do a tactical review and park major strategic changes. There is an appetite for refreshing the current plan as it is out of date, but this would put strain on the organisation. (KD) There is a lack of clear priorities which is enhancing workload; if there was some form of clear strategic direction and understanding, this would support the workload of the organisation.</li> <li>- (AH) Option 3. It would be a good idea in the long term to do goal setting and look at the strategy year on year. This would allow the current Sabbs to have input on the strategy for the year they are in office. Appreciate the comments from external trustees about workload and pressure that this could put on the organisation.</li> <li>- (AK) A lot of uncertainty and we will be operating in a virtual world for at least the next year. The best option is option 3, this is what I would support.</li> <li>- (NE) Leaning towards option 1. We don't want to make mission drift worse and we need to be aware of the capacity of the SU staff and focus on the projects that matter. Not worth the time it will take to create a strategy for the next 3 years.</li> <li>- (AF) Is now the right time to create a strategy? We should accept that this year will be very reactive and instead do year on year planning. Perhaps</li> </ul>	<p><b>KD to organise activity analysis with SLT and Sabbs before the Christmas break.</b></p> <p><b>KD to present activity analysis to Board at the Hilary Term meeting and will ask for a decision on next steps.</b></p>

<p>create a 'holding' strategy for this time. The University are not thinking long term and this affects our work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (BF) Could we look at a hybrid of option 1 and option 3 – redefine our goals from the old strategy for the coming year. We also need to look at how would we implement this - how much have we actually worked off the current strategy? We need to make sure that this piece of work will actually solve the problem of mission drift and highlight the key projects.</li> <li>- (KD) Looking for something which clearly outlines our focus for the staff. This would enable us to direct staff to priority projects. The current strategy is live until 2021, so a new strategy wouldn't be launched until then.</li> <li>- (NM) Sabbs don't really sit inside the strategic plan due to acting on our manifestos.</li> <li>- (IJ) I would agree with the opinion of the other External Trustees and lean towards option 1.</li> <li>- (TD) We don't have a clear understanding of what the staff capacity is and who would be working on this project; it is hard to say if we have capacity without knowing this? I also have concerns over a 'stop-gap' strategy – would it be relevant by the time it was implemented? If we focused more long term, it wouldn't stop us being reactive to situations along the way. (KD) The CEO would be main person developing the strategy along with the Sabbs. Staff time would be spent gathering views/opinions of members and pulling the document together. We would have to make capacity to enable this and it would have to be top of the CEO objectives after my probation. Are the staff in the right frame of mind for this at the moment?</li> <li>- (NE) Building on the discussion around capacity for this project; this isn't just an organisational piece of work, it will require a long conversation with our membership. It is really important that these conversations happen, but is now the time and do we have capacity?</li> <li>- (LB) Will developing a new strategy benefit the staff and the membership? It would be good for morale to have a plan which doesn't focus on COVID.</li> <li>- (AF) Staff are currently drowning under work which isn't a priority. We need to put our resources into where they can make the most difference right now. Everyone's focus is on COVID – we need our focus to be on this and supporting students through it. This would put us in a good position with the membership for future strategy work. Would suggest a hybrid model of option 1 and 3 with the view of developing a full strategy in the future. (AH) COVID has been an opportunity for engagement in terms of highlighting what we do and what we can do for students. This should be our priority right now. What we did for them throughout COVID is what students will focus on. (NM) A lot of students have seen us as more relevant due to our work during this time.</li> <li>- (SO) It sounds as though you want to develop a strategy to help refocus the team. Is this the right reason to do it? A long, drawn out process without also having a short-term conversation about prioritisation, won't solve the problem.</li> <li>- (TD) Leaning towards option 3 – it would be good to have the opportunity to think about things which aren't COVID related, and students would like this too. We need to look beyond what is happening now and how we are going to adapt in the future.</li> <li>- (NE) To make a decision you need to look at the practical implications of option 1 and option 3.</li> </ul> <p>KD suggests a two-step process of laying out the current SU projects and prioritising these. Once this piece of work is done, would then move forward with strategic development.</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (AF) This would be a sensible option. Look at everything we are doing, cut things we shouldn't be, and get our priorities clear.</li> <li>- (TD) This seems like extra work if you are going to do option 3 afterwards.</li> <li>- (AH) Worthwhile doing this as a piece of work irrespective of the strategy development. We need a clear refocusing of what we should be working on.</li> </ul> <p>KD suggests creating an analysis of activities with support from SLT and Sabbs. This will be reviewed at the Hilary Term Board meeting with a decision as to whether to move to option 3.</p>	
12.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Finance &amp; Risk Committee Update:</p> <p>CP gives an update from Finance &amp; Risk Committee held on 27.10.2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Committee made the decision to remain with the university payroll and the 0% inflationary pay increase. A paper will come to Board in Hilary term which outlines the implications of going independent from university payroll.</li> <li>- Risk Management Policy was recommended for approval and risk appetite was decided to be low. This will be regularly reviewed.</li> <li>- We are on track in terms of spend, there is promising income from OSSL, and we are showing prudence around costs.</li> </ul> <p>External Appeals Officer:</p> <p>KD gives an overview of the External Appeals Officer paper which was circulated on the morning of the meeting. Board agrees that a decision can take place at this meeting. Board are being asked to recommend a candidate to Student Council for approval.</p> <p>NM asks Board to declare if they know any of the candidates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NE knows both Ryan Bird and Emilie Tapping</li> <li>- SO knows Ryan Bird</li> <li>- NM knows Ryan Bird</li> <li>- BF knows both Ryan Bird and Emilie Tapping</li> </ul> <p>After discussion, Board recommends Emilie Tapping for the position of External Appeals Officer.</p>	<p><b>NM to take External Appeals Officer recommendation to Student Council for approval.</b></p>
13.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 1pm.</li> </ul>	
<b>Below the line</b>		
14.	<p>Advice Report</p>	<p><b>Noted by the Board.</b></p>