

MEETING MINUTES

Description:	Trustee Board Meeting		
Dates:	Wednesday 07 October 2020	Time:	16:00 – 18:00
Chair:	Lauren Corelli (President)	Location:	Zoom teleconference
Trustees Present	Fowsia Kadiye (Education Officer) Niquella Simpson-West (Campaigns and Activities Officer) Sara Bafo (Welfare and Liberation Officer) Pradeep Thatai (External Trustee) Emily Collinsbeare (External Trustee) Stephen Norton (External Trustee) Eireann Attridge (External Trustee)		
Staff Present	Ed Nedjari (Interim Chief Executive) Lisa Ronson (Finance Manager) Denisa Turturea (minutes)		
Apologies	N/A		

Minutes

Ref.	Item	Summary Points	Action
1	Welcome and Introductions	<p>The Chair stated that the Trustee Board (TB) meetings had to be rescheduled due to last minute asbestos work from College.</p> <p>Chair and an External Trustee requested for the agenda and accompanying paper circulation to happen a week prior to TB meetings.</p>	
2	Declarations and to note any possible conflict of interest	Nothing to note.	

3	<p>Minutes from last meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approval ● Actions update 	<p>Minutes were received late from the previous temporary minute-taker.</p> <p><u>Action Item 1</u> Action deferred. Sabbs to share their priorities with Trustees.</p> <p><u>Action Item 2</u> Completed</p> <p><u>Action Item 3</u> CEO stated that restructure timeline would need to be looked at and based on conversations had later in the meeting, it would be revised. UNISON would need to be approached and conversations to be had with staff that would be affected by the restructure. It was noted that an operating plan relating to the restructure was still due to be created. Action deferred 3 weeks.</p> <p><u>Action Item 4</u> BAME Staff Network was responded to.</p> <p><u>Action Item 5</u> Action deferred - Email to be sent by Welfare and Liberation Officer to Trustees regarding the BAME Staff Report.</p> <p><u>Action Item 6</u> Chair to send as soon as possible – “context about different groups.”</p> <p><u>Action Item 7</u> Completed. The Chair noted that face to face meetings were offered with the BAME Staff Network.</p> <p><u>Action Item 8</u> Completed.</p>	<p>Share priorities. (AI 1)</p> <p>Create restructure operating plan. (AI 2).</p> <p>Share BAME Staff Report. (AI 3)</p> <p>Share context. (AI 4)</p>
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4	Declarations for any other business items	Nothing to note.	
5	Calendar of Business	Nothing to note.	
Organisational Updates			
6	Finance Updates	<p>Finance Manager discussed this agenda item and accompanying agenda documents.</p> <p>Finance Manager stated they were working on yearend figures that would be received once audit would be conducted. It was estimated that GSU would be finishing the year at around a £40k deficit, which meant it basically used up all its reserves.</p> <p>New budget was discussed.</p> <p>Overall, GSU managers were asked to complete their budget with Sabb priorities in mind as well as provide a narrative and justify why they were asking for the amounts they were asking for while anticipating the potentiality of needing to make cuts to the budget.</p> <p>Budget included staff vacancies at the time of minuting.</p> <p>It was noted that cuts would be needed to be made.</p> <p>Furlough costs were listed as a sundry expense.</p>	

		<p>In deficit figure, the redundancy costs, staff recruitment costs and commercial losses were not included.</p> <p>Commercial leg of the organisation was noted to not be a separate entity so GSU was legally bound to them. It was expected for them to be self-sufficient, however, if they would suffer losses, GSU would need to cover them.</p> <p>A comparison to the previous year's budget was submitted with notes and discussed.</p> <p>There was a grant reduction of £63k from the College, increase in office equipment and stationary of £15k including a £6 per week per employee for working from home (due to the government allowing employees to receive it and it being brought up in previous staff meetings). £13k included £10k from £6/week for one year.</p> <p>Subscription costs increased due to virtualisation of tasks and events such as Welcome Week.</p> <p>Loss of marketing income due to lack of sponsored Welcome Week stalls.</p> <p>Reduction in costs in several areas was noted: union grants to sports clubs by £11k, accountancy and audit costs of £5k due to lack of external auditor, sports club mini bus travel, training development and conferences, and sports development.</p> <p>Vacancies were totalled at £289k.</p>	
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		<p>Budgets submitted per department with narratives (found in agenda papers).</p> <p>CEO flagged a last-minute document received by the TB curated by the Head of Commercial. GSU's commercial operations were needed to survive and thrive for the growth of reserves – it was clear that this was not possible in the upcoming months due to the COVID-19 situation. There were not as many students on campus. A much reduced service was put in place but there had been almost no footfall, so no income. It was safe to say that there would be no footfall on campus during term 1 and possibly term 2. Commercial operations would potentially need to be closed down. Financial burden of commercial not doing well was not viable for GSU at the time of minuting. There were conversations around what would happen to the commercial spaces if commercial would be shut down.</p> <p>The situation of SUs needing to close their commercial services was observed in other SUs across the country.</p> <p><i>The Chair asked whether budgets could be confirmed before restructuring, and what needed to come first. It was suggested that restructuring was discussed first, but in light of emergency recommendation from Head of Commercial, CEO stated that this needed to be revisited. Budgets would be determined by ongoing restructure conversations.</i></p> <p>The Finance Manager noted that after decisions around restructuring made, around £200k could be saved from the</p>	
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		<p>£228k. Other elements of the budget that could be reconsidered with hopes of reaching a £0 deficit.</p> <p>Head of Commercial would be moving to Liverpool and his salary would be cut down - conversations would need to happen around what would happen with this too.</p> <p>An External Trustee stated that after reading the Head of Commercial's report, commercial seemed to not be relayed into the restructuring but it was noted that it would be needed to be discussed more closely. The conclusion in the report was that commercial services should be shut and all staff apart from the Business Development Coordinator would be made redundant - it was important to note his recommendations too.</p> <p>The Chair stated that it would be hard to approve proposals without a restructure being agreed upon.</p> <p>Finance Manager stated that 84% of GSU costs were staff salaries. With reduced staff numbers, what GSU would be able to accomplish for students would change. Staff costs were the main area where savings could be made as other costs were pretty minimal.</p> <p>It was noted that while a £0 deficit would be ideal, it was important to consider redundancy costs and that the College had reserved the right to reduce GSU's budget mid-year if student numbers reduced.</p>	
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		<p>An External Trustee discussed the diminished student footfall in GSU. Was it because of less students registered or less students able to access campus? They noted that even if decisions would be made, if it was because of less registered students, the budget would need to be cut anyway.</p> <p>The Chair stated that it was the latter. They stated that the College was making the case that they were expecting a large fall in student numbers. However, student numbers were not down anywhere near where the College thought they would be. There were more concerns around the COVID-19 situation rather than the College not having as many registrations. The Chair added that an emergency council discussing this was organized for the upcoming week.</p> <p>The Finance Manager stated that commercial was kept separate. Previous year, £30k was made in bar only in October but the current year, there was only around £700 being made per week.</p> <p>The CEO stated that if over 20 people would be made redundant, a longer consultation period would be needed. If commercial team would be added, it was important to be prepared that the process would be drawn out longer than expected.</p> <p>A draft budget was presented.</p> <p>An External Trustee stated that the upcoming year, a fluid budget should be expected that could change on a monthly basis. It was suggested to</p>	
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		<p>review the budget every board meeting and as needed.</p> <p>In terms of the commercial paper, not sure how or what would change within the next weeks. For example, Scotland had banned the sale of alcohol due to the COVID-19 situation. There was a preference of halting commercial operations instead of closing commercial completely.</p> <p>The Education Officer asked what would happen with staff if commercial operations would be halted? The CEO replied that staff would probably be asked to be made redundant or to resign with a contractual obligation to bring them back once commercial operations would reopen. An External Trustee stated that staff could be told that the notice was given to only mothball commercial services to try and avoid direct staff redundancy.</p> <p>The Finance Manager discussed finance training with new Sabbs, and question asked around what would happen if GSU ran out of money. It was stated that universities legally need to have an SU but not this SU. Unsure if Goldsmiths College would have to bail GSU out or not. GSU also not incorporated so could put Trustees in a precarious position. CEO unsure if university would save GSU. External Trustee stated that university would probably not help GSU as they would have different priorities.</p> <p>The Chair stated that while GSU would butt head with university politically, GSU was providing a service to students in</p>	
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		<p>terms of advice service, communities, societies and sports teams among others. The Chair was working on highlighting the importance of GSU on student life in upcoming council meeting.</p> <p>NSS (survey to capture student experience) results were received by the College. One of the main issues raised was the community at Goldsmiths. Therefore, it was important to note that GSU provided a community aspect for students. If GSU not aided by university, university would need to do a lot of extra work. For example, Welcome Week 2020 was hosted fully by GSU and the College did nothing relating to organizing it. University does have a legal requirement to support a Students' Union and not having one would result in many more problems. External Trustee stated that on that basis, the College should be put on notice – the College would need to bail GSU out no matter what. There was a general agreement that the College would need to be put on notice and be shown that GSU was doing its best to work with the grant that was given.</p> <p>CEO to reach out to NUS to find out the legal position that the College would have in relation to GSU.</p> <p>Putting the College on notice related to holding the College to a certain set of terms based on GSU's financial position as well as keeping them informed.</p> <p>External Trustee asked that since GSU was in a severe financial position, was work being done to ensure £0 spend in</p>	<p>Reach out to NUS. (AI ref. 5)</p>
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		<p>all areas aside from just staffing? CEO stated that in terms of development, training and things that money would usually be spent on were being more thoroughly scrutinised. Things would need to be halted.</p> <p>External Trustee suggested that everything over £25 would need a sign off alongside the creation of other policies to ensure spending stays at a minimum. This would need to be communicated with staff so that they would be made aware that GSU was doing everything possible to save their jobs. The Chair stated that staff cost policies would need to be discussed. It was suggested for this to be discussed over email.</p> <p>The Finance Manager stated that if anybody wished to discuss budgets, they were available and happy to meet.</p>	<p>Discuss staff costs policy. (AI ref. 6)</p>
7	HR Policies	<p>The CEO discussed policies that were created and reviewed by HR Consultant and UNISON. The policies were included in the agenda accompanying documents for Trustee review.</p> <p>TB asked to approve policies.</p> <p>Redundancy policy was noted to be the highest priority.</p> <p>All HR policies were approved by all Trustees.</p>	
8	<p>Racial Justice Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAME Network Recommendations 	<p>The CEO stated that the BAME Network Recommendations document included recommendations and ways of moving forward relating to serious and sensitive things for GSU to attend to.</p>	<p>Read through BAME Network</p>

		<p>Trustees were asked to read through the BAME Network recommendations document.</p> <p>The HR Manager role would connect to recommendations: pay framework, culture review, gender and BAME pay gaps. Important to move that away from CEO.</p> <p>HR Manager interviews to take place the upcoming week. BAME representation with HR expertise would be on the interview panel. HR Manager would be working a lot on the recommendations that were raised and outstanding in the document.</p> <p>The Chair reiterated the importance of an equality impact on a restructure and who may be made redundant as it would chime with lots of the recommendations of the BAME Network.</p>	<p>Recommendations. (AI ref. 7)</p>
9	<p>CEO Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring proposal 	<p>The CEO discussed restructuring proposal document.</p> <p>The CEO stated that the restructure proposal spoke to the speed that the pandemic was hitting things - the situation was changing daily.</p> <p>Rationale behind proposal was to make cost savings in relation to staff – staffing structure was reviewed, vacancies and positions that were not essential were looked at, roles that could merge relating to GSU's direction were considered and the management layer was also reviewed.</p> <p>There were attempts to see where there were connections between departments.</p>	

		<p>It was noted that the restructure was based solely on financial savings. Sabbs had a big input, and they would continue having input, in the restructuring process.</p> <p>The Chair stated that, from the Sabb team, they met previous week to talk through proposed roles that would be put up for redundancy and working through what they felt were the most important parts of work that each role did and where roles could be modified/merged. HR Consultant was also talked to.</p> <p>What was going to be essential was to operationally understand what work would not be able to be done. There were spaces where there was ambiguity around some of the roles. It was unwanted for people staying on the same salary to have to take on half of another role hence why it was important to be clear what work was expected to not take place anymore.</p> <p>Would all managers have to reapply for roles? CEO replied yes however an External Trustee stated that only if roles were more than 20% difference then managers would need to reapply.</p> <p>The CEO noted that salaries were not proposed for the roles, however, the new managerial roles were expected to be benchmarked and be similar to other managerial positions.</p> <p>The Welfare and Liberation Officer reiterated that the main concern was to clearly state what work would need to be halted.</p>	
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		<p>When job descriptions would be created, help and input was requested from Sabbs and Trustees.</p> <p>External Trustee noted that it was important to consider what the roles would look like in the upcoming years. For example, whether the Sports Coordinator was operating the same in the context of COVID-19 - it was noted that it would also be important to review roles' responsibility in the short term.</p> <p>Campaigns and Activities Officer stated that the Sports Coordinator role was really helpful to them in relation to campaigns and activities. Even though sports teams were not particularly active, it would be important for them to have someone to liaise with.</p> <p>External Trustee agreed that it would be important to take into great consideration what services students were using most as well as address Sabb priorities. It would also be important to remember the context of COVID-19 in the upcoming months. If things would start to get better eventually, for the upcoming year new things could be planned.</p> <p>The importance of considering alternatives for activities that would need to be stopped was also noted.</p> <p>External Trustee asked if commercial issue would need to be incorporated into the restructuring as that would take GSU over the 20 people that would be made redundant. An External Trustee stated that it would be more complicated</p>	
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		<p>to start a process of 7 days and delay it rather than start a 30 day restructuring process from the beginning, no matter how many redundancies would need to be made.</p> <p>The Chair stated that in the suggested staffing, there was a concern around Sabb support as there was nothing written into the draft proposal about Sabb support.</p> <p>There were agreements to have fluid budgets.</p> <p>With the proposal and restructure, it was suggested to go away, review the restructure and include commercial. The proposal would need to be rewritten and commercial to be included if it would be decided not to halt commercial operations.</p> <p>It was agreed to review the restructure and include both scenarios - with and without commercial - that should be shared with the college. EN to write new proposal by following day, send to Trustees and receive LR's feedback by Friday 09 October 2020</p> <p>Trustees to review the new restructure proposal by Friday 09 October 2020, 5pm.</p> <p>An External Trustee stated their disagreement with halting commercial operations and was leaning more towards Head of Commercial's proposal.</p> <p>Finance Manager suggested notifying the College of commercial operations</p>	<p>Rewrite restructure proposal. (AI ref. 8)</p>
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		<p>being closed so that the College could help GSU.</p> <p>If all agree with Head of Commercial's suggestion, it would lead for restructure proposal to be reimagined.</p>	<p>Review restructure proposal. (AI ref. 9)</p>
10	<p>Sabbatical Officer Updates</p>	<p>Welfare and Liberation Officer discussed the agenda item.</p> <p>It was noted that each week presented new obstacles. The last few months were spent working on COVID-19 related issues. It was noted that there were also cases of COVID-19 on campus and in halls.</p> <p>Student numbers in accommodation had not been reduced and Sabbs were trying to navigate how to respond to that issue</p> <p>A statement was published urging the College to not reopen campus.</p> <p>Involved in racial justice work within the institution and internally.</p> <p>They attended racial justice board meetings, health and safety working group.</p> <p>The Chair added that the previous 2 months were full of activity and strategic setting of Sabb priorities as well as creating actions and team plans. Referendum on president role was also mentioned and desired.</p> <p>It was noted that another university who was testing found that 9 out of 10 positive cases were asymptomatic.</p>	

		<p>The Education Officer discussed the student rep system and one big obstacle was the College's heavy involvement in deciding where the student representative section would go. There were fights to keep Student Voice in representation at GSU as the rep programme was being defunded.</p> <p>Campaigns and Activities Officer added that as Sabbs, it was frustrating that the College was not being transparent with students around what was going on, what the risks were, where the virus was most prominent around campus etc. It was frustrating to have extra pressure on the Sabb team due to the College's lack of transparency.</p> <p>The Welfare and Liberation Officer noted that Sabbs were multitasking the last couple of months with all projects revolving around COVID-19.</p> <p>An External Trustee discussed communication with university and what was the feeling from students who were discussing what it felt like ie. what the feeling was from individual students during Welcome Week. The Welfare and Liberation Officer stated that they spoke to the Development and Communities Manager and received lots of positive feedback from students who were able to attend virtual events and meet each other. Platform used for Welcome Week (remo) was amazing and there were discussions around the continued use of the platform for students to continue meeting each other and not feel isolated, especially if a lockdown were to happen on campus.</p>	
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		External Trustee stated that the success of this platform alongside virtual Welcome Week shows GSU's determination and innovation.	
11	Racial Justice Subcommittee Proposal	<p>Sabbs discussed the agenda item and accompanying documents.</p> <p>There was a proposal for the creation of a new subcommittee to help strategically plan, prioritise work, advise and monitor action plans, push for tangible outcomes and provide accountability for the work.</p> <p>The Racial Justice subcommittee would differ from other subcommittees as it would meet more regularly and have a bigger membership that would include members of the BAME Staff Network.</p> <p>Trustee approval was requested for the subcommittee to be formed.</p> <p>Creation of a Trustee Board Racial Justice Subcommittee was approved by all Trustees.</p>	
12	Subcommittee Memberships	<p>When Trustees were having regular COVID-19 TB meetings during the lockdown and summer periods, what would be discussed in subcommittees was included in the regular meetings as standing items. Now that less frequent TB meetings would be taking place, subcommittees would resume.</p> <p>The discussion points of each subcommittee were discussed and reviewed before Trustees were given the opportunity to volunteer to sit on them.</p> <p>It was agreed for the Deputy Chair to chair subcommittees.</p>	

		<p>Trustees were asked to volunteer their participation to the subcommittees. Memberships are below:</p> <p><u>Appointments and Staffing Subcommittee</u> Sara Bafo Emily Collinsbeare Stephen Norton</p> <p><u>Finance and Commercial Subcommittee</u> Fowsia Kadiye Pradeep Thatai</p> <p><u>Racial Justice Subcommittee</u> Eireann Sara Bafo Fowsia Kadiye</p>	
13	Any Other Business	It was noted that, in order for a smoother running of future TB meetings, the Office Coordinator, Chair and Campaigns and Activities officer would work on a ways of working document.	

Action Items

Ref.	Action Item	Action / Decision	Action By	Due Date
1	Share priorities	Sabbs to share their priorities with Trustees.	Sabbs	ASAP
2	Create restructure operating plan	It was noted that an operating plan was still due to be created relating to the restructure. Action deferred 3 weeks.	EN	28 October 2020
3	Share BAME staff report	Action deferred - Email to be sent by Welfare and Liberation Officer to Trustees regarding the BAME Staff Report.	SB	ASAP
4	Share context	Chair to send as soon as possible – “context about different groups.”	LC	ASAP
5	Reach out to NUS	CEO to reach out to NUS to find out the legal position that the College would have in relation to GSU.	EN	ASAP
6	Discuss staff costs policy	Policies would need to be put in place to ensure staff spending stays at a minimum. This would need to be communicated with staff so that they are aware that GSU was doing everything possible to save their jobs. Chair stated that leaving the meeting staff cost policies would need to be discussed. It was suggested for this to be discussed over email.	EN & LR & Sabbs	ASAP
7	Read through BAME Network recommendations	Trustees were asked to read through the BAME Network recommendations document.	Trustees	ASAP
8	Rewrite restructure proposal	With the proposal and restructure, important to go away, review the restructure and include both scenarios - with and without commercial included - that should be shared with the college. EN to	EN & LR	08 October 2020

		write new proposal by following day, send to Trustees and receive LR's feedback by Friday 09 October 2020.		
9	Review restructure proposal	Trustees to review new restructure proposal by Friday 09 October 2020, 5pm.	Trustees	09 October 2020