

Goldsmiths Students' Union
 Trustee Board Meeting
 RHB 141
 5 June 2018

Trustees in attendance	Eva Crossan Jory (Chair), Taylor McGraa, Tara Mariwany, Joe Leam, Theresa Kanneh, Patrick Moule
Apologies	Andy Gilroy, JT, Toby Peacock, Tiia Meuronen
Trustees in attendance who come into role from 1 August 2018 onwards	Hamza Taouzzale Sophie Leighton & Louisa Christofidou (Agenda Items 5 onwards)
Staff in attendance	Dave Lewis, Ed Nedjari, Peter Greaney & Lisa Ronson (Finance Team for items), Leah Kurta (Minutes)

Minutes:

Item	Summary points	Action	Role / deadline
1. Welcome and introductions			
2. Declarations and to note any possible conflicts of interest	None declared		
3. Minutes from last meeting	Timeframe adjustment to the action point regarding the HR role. This is still awaiting formal approval from the college but is in progress.	Minutes Approved	
4. Trustee Recruitment: Receive report from Appointments Committee and approve new trustees	<i>Recruitment document provided</i> Additional information and comments: ECJ: Recruitment process for new trustees has taken place. Three new external trustees needed to be recruited. Interviews and selection process was carried out. Further to this two candidates were selected and the subcommittee sought full board approval for these new appointments. ECJ highlighted the last position has not yet been recruited but that it was important to consider the diversity of the full	Both recommendations were approved by the board.	

	board and that including a member of the local community would be beneficial, as well as someone with a finance background.		
5. Officer Update	<p><i>Written updates provided by all officers. This update is based on activities up until April 2018.</i></p> <p>Additional comments and questions:</p> <p>All officers helped to get the block grant from the university increased this year.</p>		.
6. Chief Executive Report Dave Lewis	<p><i>Full CEO report document provided</i></p> <p>Additional comments and discussion points:</p> <p>Incorporation The board discussed incorporation. DL stated that the College suggested incorporation could be a delayed activity considering the Unions' ambition to meet the proposed budget for this year. DL suggested that perhaps some more information may still be required such as advantages and disadvantages of becoming incorporated.</p> <p>TMa: Questioned whether the college would pay for the incorporation in 2019/2020.</p> <p>ECJ: clarified that this year the college are funding a lot of new activity and so might be more receptive to this idea in the following year.</p> <p>DL: stated that the SU's more immediate priorities were best served by consolidating existing activity and making this the best it can be. He confirmed the costs of incorporation are estimated to be around £17K.</p> <p>LC: suggested exploring if the work could be carried out pro bono.</p> <p>The board considered that this was a good suggestion.</p> <p>Memorandum of understanding: TMa: asked when a final MoU would be agreed. ECJ: suggested that the full detail needed in the document would be completed by the end of summer 2018. She emphasized that the new officers would need to take up this work. DL: stated that this detailed work included discussion around things such as the Union's IT equipment. He said that this year the Collage</p>	<p>DL to bring further information to Sept TB</p> <p>DL liaise with LC about pro bono incorporation process</p>	

	<p>had accepted responsibility to pay for the Union's IT equipment. However, this was only via verbal agreement rather than formal contract. Therefore, further discussions on issues such as these needs to take place and be included in the MoU.</p> <p>ECJ: Highlighted that completing the MoU should also help any officer handovers.</p> <p>Staff pay PM: asked DL about the feedback from the college about payment for staff. DL said that there has been a working group to set up to address questions around performance and pay. The feedback from this group has clarified some of the issues and is included in the written document provided.</p> <p>DL: anticipated that work regarding staff remuneration would include the re-writing of staff job descriptions.</p> <p>PM: asked about salary bands and highlighted some of the benefits of using salary bands such as greater staff loyalty and competitive recruiting process.</p> <p>DL: stated that another round of consultation on staff payment was due and changes to the resulting strategy will be made once this consultation is completed.</p> <p>ECJ: commented that issues regarding payment included staff's uncertainty regarding how pay is decided.</p> <p>TK: commented that a formal process for deciding pay had previously existed.</p> <p>DL: stated that this previous process hadn't been used and that a new clear process was needed.</p> <p>LC: suggested that looking at similar sized Unions would be a good way of benchmarking.</p> <p>ECJ: stated that benchmarking had been used some of the time but that it had been inconsistent and that this process needed improvement.</p>	<p>DL to provide update at next TB including benchmark data</p>	
<p>7. Finance Update on current year</p>	<p><i>Paper update is provided.</i> PG gave a presentation to the board.</p> <p>Additional comments and questions</p>		

Aged debt

PG commented that a lot of work has been done on recovering aged debt from the nursesey, this may result in some changes in the presented figures before the year end. PM asked whether the situation with aged debt was improving overall. PG stated that he would need to run another report and if there are positive numbers these would not be available until the next report in June. Although a lot of work has been done to improve the position, the reflection in the actual figures of this work will not be available until year end. PG was cautiously optimistic regarding the overall picture.

Forecasting

PG: stated that forecast estimates should be including factors such as the bad weather and the negative impact of the strike on commercial revenue. He stated that these factors will be accounted for before year end so figures will change once these factors are taken into account.

Commercial activity

PG commented that the Café and bar are difficult areas to make profitable and one of the issues is generating enough footfall. PG stated that these areas are currently running at a loss. However, the budget projects that two years is needed to enable these areas to break even. PG highlighted that it would be necessary to consider the staffing of these areas to enable break even to happen.

JL: commented that in his manifesto he had included a commitment to lowering the bar prices in order to increase footfall. He asked the board whether in light of commercial losses this would be possible.

EN: stated that the bar is comparatively cheaper than other surrounding bars, he suggested that lowering the prices may not then significantly increase footfall. He stated that the dominant issue is more likely to be the access, diversity and promotion of events to different groups. He also suggested that an ambition is to increase the commercial revenue through renting the venue out in weeks when the bar is not being used by students.

LC: questioned the use of the bar outside of

	<p>term time and the licensing restrictions.</p> <p>DL: suggested that historically the Union had not advertised that it is available for hire. He commented that for many promoters it should be an attractive proposition. The venue has late licensing and trained staff to offer different types of event.</p> <p>TMa: pointed out that quite a few students are on campus over the summer, such as post-grad students and PGCE students. She suggested that this requires that the Union offer post-grad specific events.</p> <p>EN: stated that the Union needs to consider who it is targeting, whether students or locals and build this into marketing activities.</p> <p>A broader conversation regarding the competition to the venue took place. The board spoke about the regeneration of the local area, such as more venues in Peckham and Deptford with these being direct competition. The board considered the particular strengths of the Union venue suggesting that its unique offer may incorporate linking with local community events and activities like local theatre groups / dance / local festivals.</p>		
<p>7. Budget presentation</p>	<p><i>Budget document provided</i></p> <p>Additional comments and questions</p> <p>PG: In the presentation of the budget PG pointed out that the reserves are effectively zero. He highlighted that the financial position is tight. PG stated that it will be very important to work within the budget constraints and to develop reserves this coming financial year. He emphasized that the college would not fund depreciation or contingency costs which is why these are not included in the budget.</p> <p>ECJ: stated that the Union needed to build up the commercial activity and this would be the strategy for building up reserves.</p> <p>PG commented that headlines of the budget were: an increase in commercial activity and a grant budget increase. He pointed out that within the presented figures the 17/18 grant income from the college is artificially increased due to one off payments during this transitional year. Therefore, in reading the budget it should be noted that the grant is actually higher for the coming year it just may not appear as though it</p>	<p>The board approved the budget</p>	

	<p>is due to the one-off financial assistance provided by the college.</p> <p>HT: queried the bank charges. PG confirmed that these were credit card charges rather than the banking charges for the account.</p> <p>A full board conversation around commercial losses took place: In the past underspent activities have helped to cover these commercial losses. The board emphasized the ambition to develop commercial activities so that underspent activities could instead go towards reserves.</p> <p>TK asked about the budget for student staff wages. She questioned whether they had been brought under control without needing to offer zero hours contracts.</p> <p>EN: stated that there are now commercial managers to help allocate the student staff and so now the staffing can reflect the needs required by the area rather than simply staffing the venue without assessing the staffing needs. He suggested that this has improved the student staffing costs.</p> <p>DL: confirmed that there are no student staff on a zero hours contract and the practice would continue that any students employed would be guaranteed minimum number of hours</p> <p>HT: asked if it's more important to have a reserves plan or to break even.</p> <p>PG: confirmed that the Union is planning to stick to the budget it has set and breakeven rather than build up reserves.</p> <p>The board also discussed the financial health of the nursery.</p>		
<p>8. The Plan</p>	<p><i>Paper report provided</i></p> <p>Additional comments and questions DL stated that he was looking for agreement on the plan provided. He confirmed that the paper included was the result of workshops which have happened over the last year. He suggested that following approval of the plan there would need to be more discussion around how the plan would be best implemented with the wider staff team.</p> <p>The board engaged in a discussion around the final aims of the Union as well as how they are</p>	<p>The plan was approved by the board.</p> <p>Performance indicators and operational plan to come to next Trustee Board</p>	<p>DL Sept 2018</p>

	<p>ordered. They considered the wording of the aims and agreed the following</p> <p>Mission - Make students lives better Vision – A representative and empowering Union Values – Empowering students to make change Proactive on liberation, equality & social justice Accessible activities for all Democratic & Open</p> <p>Ambitions Shaped by the voice of all Goldsmiths students An accountable organisation reinvesting in its members & staff Represent & support students Enabling students as co-creators The leading SU for liberation Education & growth beyond the classroom Creating opportunities beyond the classroom</p>		
<p>9. Staff Survey</p>	<p><i>Report provided</i></p> <p>Additional Questions and comments</p> <p>EN provided additional context, confirming the staff survey was provided by the NUS and that all staff were given the opportunity to fill it in. This is the second staff survey that the Union has undertaken. This year 51% of people filled it in. This year the results were not as promising as the leadership team had hoped. This has led to an action plan which the board were provided with.</p> <p>ECJ commented that some of the factors which may have contributed to the disappointing report could be the staff turnover preceding DL's appointment as CEO.</p> <p>EN also commented that the number of new staff joining may have exacerbated an initial burst of enthusiasm but staff satisfaction is hard to sustain over time. EN commented that the action plan was being presented to indicate the structure that was being suggested in how to respond. He emphasised the document was the beginnings of the process.</p> <p>ECJ: suggested that this plan be taken up by the new Appointments & Staffing sub-committee for a more detailed discussion for how the plan could be best put into place.</p> <p>LC: asked whether the issues raised by staff were different depending on the departments. EN: confirmed that most of the issues were</p>	<p>EN to update on the action plan and the reception of the results by the wider staff team</p>	

	<p>universal rather than different between departments. LC stated that this was encouraging in terms of having a cohesive strategy which could address these broad issues.</p> <p>TMa: highlighted that one issue was around ownership within the staff team of the plan and making sure the survey results were taken seriously.</p> <p>EN: Agreed that staff should have sight of the action plan and approve its direction at the early stages rather than the leadership team appointing a plan and asking the staff team to adopt it.</p> <p>ECJ: highlighted that transparency of decision making in the team was a key theme which needed addressing.</p> <p>DL: stated that the results and the action plan would be discussed and developed at the team away day this June.</p>		
10. Membership survey	This will be presented at the September board meeting due to time constraints.		
11. Sub-committees	<p>There is a proposal to set up subcommittees to facilitate the process of the trustee board</p> <p>ECJ: commented that the appointments and staffing committee should also liaise with trade union representatives to attend as appropriate. This group would also be administered by the HR officer once they are in post.</p> <p>HT asked if there were only going to be 2 sub-committees.</p> <p>ECJ: confirmed that before this there were no sub-committees and that two would initially be implemented.</p> <p>ECJ Informed the board that applications to join the subcommittees should be via email to JT.</p>	Trustees to email JT about their interest in subcommittees	
Any other business	<p>ECJ: expressed her thanks to all the outgoing trustees for their hard work.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 7.42pm</p>	DL to email about dates for 2018/19	