

**Trustee Board Summary Minutes**

**Held on Thursday 30th November 2023 in Room BC 03 120**

**Present: In Attendance:**

Rebecca Allen President (Chair) David Longstaff, Chief Executive Officer

Finola Quigg, Vice President, Education Colin Campbell, Director of HR & Campus Operations

Oscar Kelly, Vice President Equality & Belonging Clodagh Kennedy, Director of Finance & Business

Dónall Hegarty, Vice President Magee Support

Andrea Probets Lay Trustee Gavin Boyd, Director of Membership & Comms

Antoinette Bradley, Lay Trustee Oluwaseyi Kushimo, Vice President Belfast

Darren Fowler, Lay Trustee Philip Maguire, Vice President Coleraine

Eoin Millar, Student Trustee Nigel Moore, GMcG Auditors

Cohen Taylor, Student Trustee Lucia O’Connor, Director of Finance, UU

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| **Meeting Notes** | **Action** | **Update** |
| **Agenda Item 1:** Welcome by Chair:  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 2**: Presentation of the Audited Accounts 2022-23 by GMcG, Auditors:  The Auditor gave a brief presentation concluding that in his Company’s opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the charitable companies’ affairs as at 31 July 2023.  The Board approved the Accounts, and the University Director of Finance thanked the Board for inviting her. She and the Auditor left the meeting. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 3:** Apologies/Quorum Count: RA, AN and BA |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 4:** Declaration of Interest:  The Chair noted that there were no declarations but advised that due to a potential conflict the Officers don’t have a vote in the Reserved Item. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 5:** Minutes  Minutes of the previous meeting of 28th September 2023 were approved. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 6:** Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes were:  Agenda Item 11: Strategic Plan Update: Web and Content Manager to look at QR Codes and Hyperlink: The DM&C advised that these will be added when it goes to print. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 7:** Chair’s Remarks:  The Chair informed the Board as follows:-  It has been a busy period since Freshers Week when one event broke the record for attendance on all 3 campuses. Hopefully we can replicate this in our sexual health and guidance week in February.  The representation elections have been held and 4 Faculty, 26 School and 775 Course Representatives have been appointed. There were over 800 last year, but the January intake has still to come. 41 seats have been filled at the Student Council elections plus 1 Part-Time Postgraduate Researcher. A number of Policies have arisen from the Student Council meetings such as UUSU’s Provision of Inclusive, Protection & Sexual Health Education; Fossil Free Careers Policy and Policy involving Students in Wider Society, and we hope to have these ready for next Student Council meeting.  Student Council has agreed to change our charity partner for the year to the International Committee of the Red Cross and are fundraising to provide aid for civilian casualties caught up in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. We have just released a statement giving our stance, which was approved by Student Council. We will continue to work with Friends of the Cancer Centre and remain to be a part of their events.  We have attended Doctoral College Inductions and coupled this with our PGR Connect Session where we are trying to capture PG Researcher voices. This has improved with coffee mornings and induction sessions, and we feel that they have recognised that we run events that they can attend.  The UUC Ballot didn’t reach the threshold for a mandate, and it has been confirmed that there are no plans for industrial action, although we are continuing to monitor the situation.  Officers, led by the VPE&B attended Pink Training in Galway, with a couple of LGBT Society members.  The VC is keen to fund a Sexual Health Clinic on Magee Campus. There is one in Belfast.  The VPE and VPC led on the Academic Integrity Campaign which was launched this week and covers authentic assessments and AI. The VPE sits on the AI Working Group.  The Climate Crisis Campaign led by VPB and VPS&W will start next week, partnered with Hazaar and the University and there will be a pop-up marketplace on campus selling second-hand and hand-made goods.  Sexual Health & Guidance Week will be held on 12-16 February and is led by VPM, VPE&B and P.  Mental Health work is ongoing, and we are running brew days as part of UBelong. This campaign is led by the VPS&W.  Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Campaign is ongoing with EDI Forums being set up, again led by VPE&B.  The Human Resources Advisor post has been filled and the Chair thanked AP and the DHR&CO for time spent in recruitment of this post.  Officer Team Updates:  VPS&W has been working hard fund-raising for Clubs and ensuring that the University keeps Wednesday afternoons free, which is University policy also.  VPM has been working on student consultation around the way that the University is marketing Magee, and on tri-lingual signage on campus.  VPE has been leading on academic integrity, assisted by the VPC. She is also training representatives and is keen for provision of diagnosis on campus for ADHD and ASD.  VPC is keen to work on the provision of on-campus food offerings with Compass. He would also like to get some Coleraine Sports Clubs together for a tournament.  The VPB is working on Climate Change Crisis Campaign and Green Week next week. She has had lots of student queries and was recently invited to speak on a panel at USI’s Empower.  VPE&B has been working with the Dean of EDI on a range of issues including the restoration of provision of creche facilities for students with children. He has been preparing for the launch of students with additional needs network which we hope to have up and running very soon along with our EDI Forums also.  The Chair has been focusing on Senate Resources Committee and University Council as there have been a lot of meetings recently with many papers to ensure that we keep the student voice at the heart of all those meetings. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 8:** Chief Executive Officer’s Report:  The CEO reported:-  Belfast SU Student Nightspot: We have been working with the University, through the VC’s Office to look to compliment the bar space with a student night spot. After liaising with students and institutions about having a nightspot on campus, it appears that we might struggle to meet the University’s expectation of their investment in that space, even if we had an expert operator. Simultaneously we have been considering other options that might be available such as the Irish News Building, and liaising with groups including the Jar Group in Belfast who acquired the Frames Building and are kitting it out. The Chair and I have had discussions and feel that the best course of action was to appeal to the VC to pause on the Academy Building until we can make an objective decision as to what is best for students. The bar space has been more popular since £100,000 investment. The building of a pathway from the University passing through CQ Social, Irish News and Frames Buildings, ending at Castle Court is at Planning Permission stage and gives a further opportunity to link our current space on campus with something off-site. It has therefore been agreed to consider this space in greater detail.  Strategic direction is going to plan and time-line and was signed off this week. The next stage will be committing to print our document. Primarily it will be a digital document with microsite and video inter-activity to be launched in January next year. Managers will meet in January and will commit to our core promises within that document, which we hope will allow us to create an organisation-wide centralised dashboard which we can share with the membership and externals in terms of how we are progressing those promises into the future. We are also planning to translate the strategy into Irish as part of a commitment that we have never been able to follow up and which was agreed 5 years ago at Council regarding Bilingual Signage and was locked in red tape. Having a bilingual policy document which people can download as they wish should be low risk, however we will monitor feedback closely.  The Wellbeing Garden at Coleraine is finally getting close to completion. The Wellbeing Garden at Belfast is likely to be a rooftop space to share with the Academy Kitchen who will be cooking the proceeds.  Member breakfasts are going well although demand is outstripping supply. We will continue to next semester and will order more of the in-demand items.  Student Fridges will be launched next semester when legislation considerations have been finalised.  The VC is supporting potential students’ events with £30,000 secured for these. The Activities Team will incorporate these into our events calendar without over-stretching our capacity.  All-student meetings were held, and quorum was attained.  NUS Consultation is live and for us the interesting element is how NUS USI may have great decision-making powers and autonomy. We are working on a response which will be delivered through the Chair.  The Sports Review is proceeding slowly and is due to go to the Senior Leadership Team which we expect will pass it, and we can then draw actions from it. Most importantly, putting the governance structure in place, is to ensure that the student voice is at the core of anything in the future. We are clear that we need resource to put that in place.  The Staff Meeting will be held next Friday and Trustees are welcome to attend.  Reserved items  Risk Register – The Board can feel free to review this at their leisure and come back with any queries. There are currently 4 risks on the Central Register, with the top risk being the pension scheme which remains quite high-level. The other 3 are continuing to mitigate down, with an internal communications piece by DM&C who has introduced an interactive platform on Teams with a non-work focus which has gone down well. He thanked the DM&C. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 9:** Director of Finance & Business Support’s Report:  The DF&BS referred to the Auditor’s Report where no concerns had arisen. The Sport budget which is ring-fenced was high as transport costs were up due to lots of competitions taking place. The Pension Scheme remained a problem. |  | . |
| **Agenda Item10:** Director of Membership & Communication’s Report:  The DM&C informed that he had provided an overview of activities in his report that were happening since the last Board meeting.  There had been a problem with using MS Teams to drive some of the internal comms which will hopefully be resolved soon.  We have responded to key government consultations. the main one being relationship and sexuality education in schools. This is a big priority for UUSU when we are engaging with the University on having better sexual health education in schools and the Department of Justice Strategy to end violence against women and girls.  Student Voice are very busy getting Course Reps in place and Student Council is up and running. We had the first meeting of the Postgraduate Researcher Connect Forum of the year which is good as the PGR population of the membership has often felt apart from UUSU so being able to create that space where we are able to get feedback on issues is important. There is further work in getting the Doctoral College to respond fully to some of the issues that are continually being raised which are a barrier for PGRs and their work.  Student Council’s second meeting was held last night, proving the strategic direction and affirming the decision of the Student Executive to pass a statement on the conflict in Gaza. The text will be added to the Chat for the Board, and it is already on our social media. He gave credit to the Officers for taking a measured and informed response.  The Advice Bureau has had a very busy start to the semester with a number of appeals, with some particularly challenging issues raised by international students, particularly in Magee and Belfast around compliance and fees. The VPM deserves credit for dealing with a lot of distressed students and attaining a solid resolution to some of the issues they were experiencing. This was a coordinated effort between VPM, the Chair and VPE in terms of working with the Advice Bureau, and the PVC, OH, Assistant Deans and Global and Student Wellbeing were able to address some, if not all, of the issues that the students were experiencing.  The completion of the upgrade to AdvicePro case management system is a good investment with staff experiencing the benefits.  The Sport Raffle is ongoing at a cost of £10 to win a £1,500 holiday voucher and the link is in the report.  There is also an Instagram link to a video of students doing a sunrise swim at Helen’s Bay.  The first piece of silverware of the year was won by Magee Camogie Team in the All-Ireland Division 4 league.  Analytics on success of events during Freshers have been included on social media, with Guide Dogs on campus always popular. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 11:** Director of Human Resources & Campus Operation’s Report:  The DHR&CO reported that a lot of work is being done by the Student Engagement Team around various Christmas activities taking place on campus. There are quite a lot of initiatives going on.  Hazaar held a pop-up market which seemed to go well, and they are looking for a few more student staff.  We have a new member of staff who has taken up post as Human Resources Advisor on 13th November and will meet all the staff next week at the staff meeting. External Investigation Training will be arranged for her in January. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 12**: Safeguarding Policy:  The CEO reported that this Policy covers not only those who are under 18, but also vulnerable and at-risk adults, and is complex due to a lot of information, so 3 appendices are included for speedy reference which cover disclosure, escalation, and information on the role of our designated Safeguarding Officer, and consent. There can be a concern in disclosing anything due to data legislation, although there is a legitimate reason if someone presents and is at risk, with detail on the core information that is required at that stage and how it is recorded in the appendices. We have a session with staff next week which will provide an introduction to the policy and an interactive run-through. This will be followed by break-out table-top sessions and talk through how we would get to the right decision and apply the right principles in accordance with the policy. The Policy has been brought to the Board for approval.  This was approved. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 13: Reserved Item.** |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 14:** Any Other Business:  The Chair raised that she wanted to produce an ethical partnerships framework with companies that we would work with as an SU to ensure that they align quite closely with our own values of putting students first and making sure student experience is front and centre of everything that we do. This will feed into the Honours Degree Committee that she sits on and ensures that the representations we make on Committees represent the views of what we aim to achieve as an organisation and covers who we put forward and who we oppose for those Degrees. Other work needs to be done around external partnerships and she asked External Trustees to contact her if they are interested so a group can be compiled to meet on 4 occasions, then bring outcomes back to the Board. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 15:** Date of Next Meeting: 25th January 2024. |  |  |