

**Trustee Board Summary Minutes**

**Held at 4pm on Thursday 25 July 2024**

**Held in Room BA-02-012 (Belfast) & H113A (Coleraine) & by Microsoft Teams**

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| **In Attendance:** | **Present:** | | | |
| Ethan Davies, President (Chair) | David Longstaff, Chief Executive Officer | | | |
| Emily Roberts, Vice President, Education | Clodagh Kennedy, Director of Finance & Business Support | | | |
| Reece Armstrong, Vice President Magee | Colin Campbell, Director of HR & Campus Operations | | | |
| Ashley Neill, Lay Trustee | Gavin Boyd, Director of Membership & Communications | | | |
| Andrea Probets, Lay Trustee | Connor O’Hagan, Vice President Sport & Wellbeing | | | |
| Antoinette Bradley, Lay Trustee | Daniel Sanusi, Vice President Equality & Belonging | | | |
| Darren Fowler, Lay Trustee | Favour Okpohs, Vice President Belfast | | | |
| Christopher Murray, Vice President Coleraine |  | | | |
| Cohen Taylor, Student Trustee |  | | | |
| **Apologies:** |  | | | |
| Eoin Millar, Student Trustee  Bill Atkinson, Lay Trustee |  | | | |
| **Meeting Notes** | | **Action** | **Update** |
| **Agenda Item 1:** Welcome by Chair  The Chair welcomed the group to the meeting. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 2:** Apologies/ Quorum  The Chair noted that were no apologies received and meeting was deemed quorate. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 3:** Declaration of Interest  The group agreed that there were no declarations. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 4**: Minutes of Last Meeting  The minutes from the last meeting on Thursday 30 May 2024 were approved. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 5:** Matters Arising  There were no matters arising. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 6:** New Officer Introduction  The Chair made introductions and welcomed the new officer team for academic year 2024/ 25. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 7:** Chairperson’s Remarks  Ther Chair provided an update on the following:  SUT:The Chair advised that SUT took place in Tralee; President, VPS&W, VPE. VPM. VPC attended and received training from USI. VPB and VPE&B unable to attend due to UKVI visa restrictions however they are both going to Birmingham to attend NUS Lead & Change. This is to ensure that all officers receive the same amount of training.  First Student Executive meeting: The Chair explained that the elected Trustee Members, along with themselves, are VPM, VPE and VPC.  Creches*;* The Chair highlighted the promising news that the University will be proceeding with creches and hope to get these set up as early as November. Locations on campus are still to be decided. University is very enthusiastic about the programme but also that they want to take the lead on the programme. A lot of work went into this last year by previous officers so this year’s Officer team will endeavour to make it a bit more equal/ fair in terms of UUSU representation and marketing.  Officer Training: The Chair advised that there is not a lot to update the group about and the priority at present is to train up the new officer team.  Farewell to DM&C: The Chair advised that Gavin will be missed as he is leaving UUSU at start of August and thanked Gavin for the work that he has done for the Student Officer Team. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 8:** Chief Executive’s Report  The CEO provided an update on the following:  Block Grant Funding:The CEO explained that it has been a long process getting agreementfrom the University. The CEO explained that UUSU have managed to receive 5% increase on last year which is favourable.. The CEO advised that UUSU could not manage with only the standard 3% increase this year in light of inflation and additional costs.  CEO explained that we have agreed for two new project strands that will go alongside the block grant; firstly, a new staff resource which will sit in Student Voice and will help us manage the amalgamation of sports with UU and ensure that clubs have a strong voice moving forward and secondly a payment for us to deliver the continued administration around clubs. CEO noted that we had to push quite hard for this and it is quite important because it covers around 50% of the time of some of the Finance/ Business Support Team to make sure we can continue to administer sport.CEO advised that we also retained the staff salaries for those Sports Staff that will eventually be transferred across to UU employment until the transfer comes into effect. If that funding had been removednow, we inevitably knew as we got closer to the turn of the year that TUPE was not going to be realised on time. Therefore, it means there is a little bit of bandwidth for us to be able to continue to pay those staff and then not have to go back to the university and try to recover that money*.*  The CEO explained that we’re also trying to bring in an additional £18,000 which will cover the uplift in the awards that the VC committed to last year, however UU Finance would not agree to that without the VC giving it as a consolidated award. We have a paper drafted and CEO to meet with UUSU President where we will review and fine tune this for President to present to the VC and hopefully that will be some further additional budget on top of the block grant. In summary what that means is that we have a block grant allocation of about £2.19million, an increase of £80,000 and that should allow us to return a small surplus based on our projections of around £10k/ £11k for 2024/25. The DF&BS asked whether they should present the new budget but we are just holding back on that to present it to Board because it is quite complicated with this pro-rata’d sports staff salary being incorporated in it. CEO keen to get a date in stone where the sports staff will TUPE across and then we’ll have a lot more understanding of what that returned figure to the University to cover those salaries will look like and then the budget will make more sense when we come to the Board to present.  CEO explained that he has asked Ulster University for some ability to impact forward planning, and they are working on the assumption that everyone will get 3% across the board as inflation eases over the next three years.CEO explained that what this allows us to do is to start thinking about what 3% looks like on our top line in terms of the block grant and where we might need some additional project funding from the university in future years, similar to how we requested the £34k and £14k to cover the staff resource and the administrative costs this year. If we do need to plug some gaps in future years we’ll just have to think about it in that context as that’s the direction the University’s finance are moving in.  Sports Transition: CEO explained that we would hope this would happen on 1st August 2024 to make it nice and clean in terms of the new financial year.We still have not received any correspondence regarding this transition from Universityand DHR&C has pushed on this, however it seems to be stuck with the Universities legal representatives in terms of analysing the terms and conditions and whether there will be any detriment to staff moving across. CEO advised that UUSU cannot move forward untilUlster University return the initial letter detailing any terms and conditions variances to DHR&COand then we can meet with the relevant Sports Staff to start the consultation with them and again we do not expect any issues with the consultation.CEO anticipates that it will be relatively smooth once the process starts, and we hope that this will be completed before the new semester starts. CEO anticipates that the transition will become effective from 1 September 2024.  Operations Plan:The CEO explained that planning started aroundthatand one or two of elements might have just have to be paused slightly just while we look to recruit for DM&C’s role because they’re quite reliant on that level of comms expertise, but planning has already startedin earnest just on how they’ll be delivered over the course of the next 12 months.  Organisational Risks: CEO advised that we have changed some of the risks; by slightly reducing the risks associated with sports services. This will likely reduce further once TUPE process is completed however it may become a new risk in terms of how the university are taking onboard the feedback on that representational side of clubs and sport*.* CEO explained there are a couple of risks we are closely monitoring, including a staff resource risk*.* CEO advisedwe should have two new staff members in place for the new semester which we think will ease this and potentially mitigate it and push it back down to the central register, but just with a couple of recruitment processes in flow and abreak in senior staff member around comms, there is an additional pressure on internal communications to ensure that all the great work over past 12-24 months does not lose pace as a result of not having someone dedicated from a strategic point of view on communications.  Articles of Association: CEO explains that our AoA document has not been reviewed in five years and we are currently reviewing these. It includes updating some of the language and adding in anything that enhances the document positively. The CEO highlighted that there is one clause that we want to get the view of the board on just in terms of disqualification*,* resignation and removal of trustees*.* There is a clause in this document whereby if a Trustee fails to attend two consecutive meetings the trustees can vote to remove that Trustee and obviously there’s times when that can happen i.e. Long term illness which is totally understandable. CEO wanted to use this meeting just to see whether Board felt that was still an accurate perception of attendance at meetings. CEO explained that we used to have four meetings per year and now we have six meetings per year. CEO asked the group if they were happy with the trigger point of missing two consecutive meetings. External Trustees suggested that it may be a trigger point to reach out to relevant individual for a conversation rather than automatic removal. They also highlighted that if a Trustee is missing two consecutive meetings and following investigation there is not a reasonable explanation why Trustee is not in attendance then the clause seems proportional and they did not think the clause needs to change. ACTION: CEO & President: amend phrasing ‘Without prior agreement’ in relation to missing two consecutive meetings. CEO confirmed that the two consecutive meetings in articles is solely relating to Trustee Board meetings and does not refer to Sub Meetings or other staff meetings Trustees may be involved in.  Business Support Placement Student: CEO explained that SMT were hesitant around the amount of work would be required of a Business Development Professional would have to do to solely set up the relevant networks. Through this placement opportunity will pre-load a prioritised assessment of what external funding through our partnerships are available and what are most appropriate. CEO anticipates that an individual will be recruited next year to hit the ground running for generating some external income for UUSU. There was a full recruitment & selection process for this placement student and SMT are excited based on the feedback provided by the panel on what this Placement student will bring to this role.  Financial Memorandum: CEO advised that UU are reviewing our Financial Memorandum, in conjunction with us. It has not been reviewed in a while and is probably a bit outdated in terms of terminology and should be more of a partnership agreement with the University. We aim to bring these changes to Trustee Board for comment and approval.  SUTB Meeting Schedule: CEO advised that there is a meeting schedule for the next 12 months and he hopes that this schedule suits all Board Members however if there is any date(s) that do not suit to let CEO or DHR&CO know so they can have another look at the dates. CEO aims that these will be sent to Group’s diaries over the next couple of weeks. | |  | CEO & UUSU President to amend wording in AoA |
| **Agenda Item 9:** Director of Finance & Business Support’s Report  DF&BS advised that there are 2 papers for discussion:  **Management Accounts:**  Firstly DF&BS discussed the Management Accounts at 31st May 2024 which is the ten months report. Actual spend was £1.7 million and budget *was* £1.724 million.Main variances are in admin salaries and wages. £1.253million against a budget of £1.290 million*.* 2 main reasons included that the Business Development Assistant was to be recruited at the end of last year and then that position wasn’t recruited for until later and then HR Advisor was recruited for mid-year so there were some savings there.  Sports was our second biggest spend at the end of May, we spent £286,000 when the budget is only £206,000 so that’s a significant overspend. The only difference between sports union and comparison to all other categories is it is a ringfenced amount and at the year end it is only allowed to spend £206,000 so the overspend will actually come out of next year’s budget and the university is aware of that because obviously sport will be managed by them albeit we’re going to administer sport but the actual budget will essentially be their budget when they take over sport.  The other significant figure that has really changed since May is the legal and consultancy fees. At the end of May, the actual was £85k and we had budgeted £21k. However, we did have 2 cases going on this year but both cases have now been concluded; while there are still legal fees outstanding, but DF&BS has included a provision for the legal fees so hopefully we shouldn’t be too far off the mark. Net profit loss almost a deficit of £150k at the end of May but that is because we haven’t received 2 months block grant for June and July whenever that’s a lot lower spending for us.  Projection for end of the year; likely to end the year around £40,000 deficit which while not ideal but considering the legal costs for this year that is not too bad and then just to highlight in the balance sheet; despite that loss our reserves are still pretty healthy given the size of the organisation.  Ashley Neill had a query re: Sport budget overspend AN queried when Sport transfers over; what happens then were they have spent that you’re saying it comes out of next year’s budget how does that then reflect on UUSU accounts? CK responded saying it is a kind of learning process at the moment but when CEO & DF&BS met with the Director of Sport, he is aware that essentially with £200k circa, £100k already spent so they basically have £100k so they will have to find the difference. Unsure how it’s going to work in all honesty and even the timing of it. CK advises that it will be University’s responsibility to manage Sports Finances. CEO explained that there are representations being made to the VC around the underfunding of participation sport. CEO advised there is strongstats; i.e. sport membership has increased by around 50% over the last 5 years and the block grant has increased by about 5% for sports. CK advised that insurance for sport expires in October.  **2. Life Insurance:**  CK advised that the staff who were a part of former scheme are in a closed policy therefore no one else can join that policy therefore we would have to take out a new policy for any of the new staff that we have been putting into the scheme. This would offer the new entrance four times their salary as life cover and the current cost quotes are roughly about £5,000 per annum. CK highlighted that the Board had broadly supported it; so was just bringing it from 1 October 2024 that we would offer everyone life cover of four times their salary at a cost of £5,000.  The Group approved Life insurance proposition. | |  | Item approved: Life insurance. |
| **Agenda Item 10:** Director of Membership & Communication’s Report  DM&C provided an update re the summation of end of the academic year and Introduction to new academic year:  Impact Report: Student Officers 2023-24 recorded the video for the Impact Report which is now available on social media and UUSU website. DM&C noted that this was a useful exercise, and particularly helpful for staff morale because the officers and the team are generally very busy and there is much flux in the year; always preparing for the next event or activity. This Impact report captured the importance of stepping back and reflecting on what has been achieved; morale and job satisfaction comes from being able to reflect on achievements and accomplishments of UUSU not only what has been done but what has changed. DM&C explained that it is important for both managers and staff to reflect.  Officer Handover:DM&C introduced a new process for this year; previously Student officers have usually just prepared their own handover document for their successors. DM&C and VPM started a process of developing a survey to draw out kind of key information from the outgoing officers.This was a successful process and the design and concept worked well. What did help was that it helped to get it completed on time. It would be difficult to get handover off them after officer has finished. Starting that process a little bit earlier will be beneficial for next year in terms of getting really good quality and useful handovers for the new officers. DM&C explained that it was helpful to get information re; meetings/ expectations of meetings, commitment required and the key people that they need to regularly meet with and their roles.  General Election Campaign: was pulled together in short notice.Staff did a great job of engaging with NUS to establish their priorities and accessing their resources to engage with students and we were able to get some information up on our website and socials, encouraging students to register and to participate in the election themselves. DM&C highlighted a learning point for UUSU to consider for future, which were the additional barriers for international students from Commonwealth countries to register to vote. DM&C noted that one of the benefits of us having international students is their ability to participate in the democratic process in NI. DM&C suggested a longer period of election running would have given UUSU the time to be able to support students and been able to get on the register and get the information collated in time.  Induction: Officers are going through their induction period at present; it has been a busy time for them. Most of officers able to go down to Tralee last week to attend USI programme which was reported to be very useful and productive week. VPB & VPE&B were unable to attend due to UKVI visa restrictions but will be able to attend NUS Training programme in Birmingham at end of July for couple of days. This will be a great opportunity for them to learn from other colleagues and network with other Student Officers.  Training Sessions:There are a couple more sessions for Student Officers lined up ahead of freshers, welcome week and tours to engage with the incoming student population.DM&C noted that we have a great team this year; President has previous experience and VPM returning this year. This team will bring great and diverse perspectives and priorities for the year ahead. DM&C confident that they will have a huge impact for students both new and returning and for planning freshers.  Freshers; Planning for freshers and welcome week is progressing well. Some inductions for students have been organised and some of them are still outstanding, but certainly the planning for start of semester 1 is well underway.  Thanks: This was DM&C’s final Trustee Board meeting before he leaves UUSU. A mention of thanks from DM&C to Trustees for their support, guidance and oversight has been very much appreciated working with them over the past while and if there’s anything that he can do for them to support their work in the future please let them know. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 11:** Director of Human Resources & Campus Operations Report  DHR&CO provided updates on the following:  Green Impact Submission*:* UUSU received a good category this year however our best score was in 21/22 year where we scored 248. DHR&CO indicated that Green Impact & SOS UK look at is all UUSU events and campaigns and they review the impact on our students. These are evaluated by looking at a surveyi.e.if we organise a particular campaign,we would survey the students that attended/ participated just to see what sort of impact we made. For example w*e* did that for our breakfast campaign that we get the external funding for; So we received some additional points for that.  Bann View Social: The handover date was supposed to be 26 July 2024 however it is delayed until next Friday. DHR&CO advised that there is a partition wall in Bannview Social and we are putting our own UUSU wall graphic on wall and aim to get that order placed next ahead of SUT+ which is scheduled in Coleraine from 20- 22 August 2024.  Policy review:There are minor changes and some additions to our Policies. UUSU President to sign these off and Vice Chair will be the external trustee on policy sign off.The online form for near misses/ accidents is on our website and officers/ staff have to be logged in to access this; so a few lines in the policies have been added to clarify this.  Hazaar: We struggled to get a Hazaar Lead in Magee & Coleraine campus; didn’t get same traction as Belfast received. CEO advised that UUSU do not envisage to spend any more money on Hazaar as an organisation and it is for the University to decide if they want to continue with Hazaar. UUSU presenting it to UU along with Hazaar with a view to continuance. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 12: Any Other Business**  The group agreed that there were was no other business to be discussed. | |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 13:** Date of Next Meeting/ Close of Meeting  The next meeting will be held on Thursday 3 October 2024. | |  |  |