

**Trustee Board Minutes**

**Held on 26th November 2020 at 4.00 p.m. by Microsoft Teams**

**Present: In Attendance:**

Collette Cassidy, President (Chair) David Longstaff, Chief Executive

Aaron Ward, Lay Trustee Colin Campbell, Operations Director

Nicole Parkinson-Kelly, Vice President Education Clodagh Kennedy, Finance Director

Kirsten Watters, Lay Trustee Conor Keenan, Vice President (J)

Chris Chambers, Vice President Sports & Wellbeing Grace Boyle, Vice President (C)

Ashley Neill, Lay Trustee Ryan Harling, Vice President (M)

Shauna Murphy, Vice President, Belfast Gayle Alexander, Boardroom Apprentice

Andrea Probets Lay Trustee Jackie Taggart, Note Taker

Darren Fowler, Lay Trustee

John Synnott, Student Trustee

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| **Meeting Notes** | **Action** | **Update** |
| **Agenda item 1: Welcome:** The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 2:** Reserved Business |  |  |
| **Agenda item 3: Apologies:** TL and AH |  |  |
| **Agenda item 4:** **Declaration of Interest:** There were no declarations. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 5: Starred Items:** There were no starred items. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 6: Minutes:**  Actions from Minutes:  AH and AW to meet – AW confirmed the meeting.  DL to circulate Operation Plan – DL confirmed the circulation.  EDI Working Group – Discussions are ongoing.  Minutes of 10th September 2020 were approved. |  |  |
| **Agenda item 7: Matters Arising:**  Task & Finish Group | Deferred until AH returns |  |
| **Agenda item 8: Chair’s Communication:** CCass reported that most of the engagement with students was online. Campus tours were held during the move-in weekend and the first week of term, and Welcome Packs were distributed. From September we have been involved with the University in Covid 19 workstreams. Modules will be on campus in Semester 2 if they need to be, and the University will send more comms out to students before the Christmas break. Engagement with students over the last couple of months involved different workstreams, with University Committees to facilitate them. The SU were involved in focus groups and surveys about what virtual celebrations for graduations would look like as 90% of students wanted this. 300-350 engaged in focus groups and surveys. We attended a meeting with the Department of Economy and are supporting the Students Deserve Better campaign run by NUS/USI. The SU has held focus groups and surveys on this about how students are studying and 50 students have engaged. A letter has been drawn up by Officers for students to sign asking the Health Minister, MLAs, and Local Councils to highlight mental health. Two Officers are leading on the Black History Month campaign and had full capacity at a recent event around this. We will focus on Disability Awareness Month and in January, 2 Officers will hold a Sustainability Campaign which they are currently working on, developing goals with public transport, particularly as to how students will access Magee Medical School and the Belfast Campus. We will keep conversations between ourselves on student issues as there is an all-party group for Further and Higher Education which started in October with 11 MLAs appointing a Chair and Deputy Chair. Information for Semester 2 when students return was discussed, together with private rented accommodation and wifi. The campuses are closing on 18th December and re-opening on 4th January. It was asked if there is a way of monitoring online engagement and CCass replied that we will be holding meetings to focus on what we have achieved and can communicate that data to the Trustees. DL also mentioned that we have access to various analytics we could provide quarterly at each meeting. Trustees agreed this would be useful but that it did not need to be overly detailed. | DL to provide an appendix in the CEO report to cover this. |  |
| **Agenda Item 9: Chief Executive Officer’s Update:** DL presented his report and drew attention to the piece on Covid-19 with mitigations continuing. The consultation for commercial services staff went as well as could be hoped in such a difficult process with a unanimous uptake of voluntary redundancy. The Job Retention scheme has been extended and we can claim for November. CC is leading on where we can dispose of non-perishable stock. There has been a Subject Access Request received and this information is being compiled. Some PR work with Societies on occasion can look like they are speaking on behalf of the organisation, so we are looking for them to develop approach to make it clear to external organisations that they are an independent entity. A company approached us with a potential benefit for members where cashback is payable when making purchases where we will get a percentage back. It is low risk and the company gets 20% of each purchase. We then get 10% of the 20%. Data protection is the sticking point as we see it as the responsibility of the company which we need to address before any progression. Officers are currently doing PDRs to ascertain strengths and potential development opportunities. These will be put into a plan which their SMT mentor will help them to deliver over the 2nd half of their term of office and Trustees might be asked to feedback and comment on some Officer PDRs. The Board inquired if there was perishable stock, it should go to foodbanks and DL replied that we have made donations previously and used some in welcome packs. He asked that the Board agreed that where this isn’t possible, we can write these off in the accounts. This was approved. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 10: Management Accounts:** Deferred to next meeting (due to current audit process). |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 11: Operating Plan Update:** DL explained the 5 tabs. Vision, mission and values are important when we are doing self-scrutiny to check that what we are doing represents, supports and engages with the student body. Comms is a core part, but we do not have the resources to fund strategic development, so we need to manage them so that relevant information is delivered. Going into Semester 2, we need to pause and reset with a number of core issues including the closure of Jordanstown, move to Belfast, stock control, ensuring our solvency, commercial tender, repurpose ourselves with commercial partners, address communications and timelines, build more activity strategy, how we take the good from Covid-19 and bank it, and the sport strategy. As we move through the plan into year three it is more about regeneration and improving contents and comms through; bringing more money in; setting a manageable reserves policy and building ourselves up, which is necessary due to commercial services consultation and the difficult year it has been. More ambition in the future can be tailored through projects such as approaching the University about investing in SU spaces; comms strategy; resources to deliver; increase engagement with students and support at events; as well as growing our income to reduce emphasis on the University funding; and forming fewer relationships/partnerships but at a higher value. There is a timeline showing when the Board can expect to get updates. Where things span for a period of years such as maintaining income from a third party, this will continue into perpetuity. The rationale behind the 4th and 5th tabs is a standard dashboard as to where we are at within each component that links back to our vision. When presenting to students, we can talk about core areas where we want to have significant achievement which leads back to our vision. The plan has been discussed at SMT and will be brought to Management Committee to attain buy-in from Officers. DL asked whether a task and finish group would be approved to look at bridging our approach to comms whilst extra resources where sought. AW agreed to chair a Task & Finish Group on comms. DL, CCass or her nominee and AW will meet in January to set ToR and a timeframe with AW chairing the group. TB thanked DL for the updated Plan and wondered whether an additional meeting would be useful to discuss where they can offer support and experience. This was approved. | DL, CCass and AW to meet to set up a Task & Finish Group.  TB to set an additional meeting date over the summer as an evaluation, progress and planning meeting. |  |
| **Agenda Item 12: Central Risk Register:** DL advised that changes since the last TB meeting are in red and that the main points added are costs relating to the commercial services process becoming unbearable for UUSU. SMT are striving to absorb some of that cost from selling stock, job retention scheme, but reserves might have to be used. We are hoping to keep as much of the reserves intact as possible. Lack of an effective means for internal communication will be discussed at the Task & Finish Group. |  |  |
| **Agenda Item 13: Any Other Business:**  CCass advised that future Minutes will be restricted in length to make them more digestible.  CCass informed that SU Policies are in the Trustee Board folder to view. |  |  |
| **Date of Next Meeting:**  25th February 2021 |  |  |