

ULSTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION TRUSTEE BOARD

Minutes of meeting held on 14th September 2018 in Room 12G07,
Jordanstown

PRESENT

Mr Kevin McStravock, President, (KMcS), Mr Andrew McAnallen, Vice President Campaigns & Communications, (AMcA), Mr Conor Keenan Vice President, Jordanstown, (CKeen), Ms Collette Cassidy, Vice President, Magee, (CCas), Ms Nicole Parkinson-Kelly (NPK), Student Trustee, Ms Rhonda Burns, Student Trustee, Ms Ashley Neill, External Trustee, (AN)

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr David Longstaff, Chief Executive, (DL), Ms Clodagh Kennedy, Finance Director, (CK), Mr Colin Campbell, Operations Director, (CC), Ms Avril Honan, Membership Services Director, (AH), Ms Meghan Downey, Vice President, Belfast, (MD), Mr Owen McCloskey, Vice President, Coleraine, (OMcC), Ms Jackie Taggart, Minute Taker.

18.01

WELCOME

KMcS welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending, particularly on a Friday afternoon. He hoped everyone had found training to be enlightening and noted that this is the first meeting of the new Trustee Board this academic year. He asked everyone to introduce themselves which they did and advised that Trustee Board has been restructured slightly with four Officer Trustees, four Lay Trustees and four student Trustees. The three Officers who are not on the Board are welcome to join meetings.

18.02

APOLOGIES

Mr Thomas Logue, Student Trustee, Ms Kirsten Hewitt, External Trustee.

18.03

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The Chair explained this for the benefit of the new Board members and asked if anyone wanted to declare an interest in any of the items for discussion. He advised that interest can still be declared when the relevant Agenda item arises.

18.04

STARRED ITEMS

KMcS asked if there were any items which had not been starred for approval or discussion that anyone would like to star and noted there were no requests.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

18.05

MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting of 22nd May 2018 were approved by those who had attended.

18.06 MATTERS ARISING

17.84 Bye Laws

AH advised that Bye Law 1, Section 2, Point 5 had been updated.

17.86 SUSS Pension Scheme

CK asked for clarity on this as she was to procure a Pensions Advisor to meet with staff with no indication as to what information the Advisor should give. KMcS suggested this item should be moved to Agenda Item 14.

17.89 Budgets

KMcS asked that this be moved to Item 17 as there is a more substantive discussion.

17.92 Executive Trustee Brief

CC advised that the process was complete, and KH is now in post. There is a second candidate that we may take on board later.

17.93 Operating Plan

KMcS asked that this point is deferred as it will be covered later by DL.

17.95 Any Other Business

CK gave an update on discussions with Manchester Students' Union, who are in the same Pension Scheme, and advised that NUS are meeting next Tuesday regarding pension liability. This will be followed by a face-to-face meeting in October. Information should be available for the next Board meeting. KMcS explained this historical issue for the benefit of the new Board members.

ACTION CK to give an update of the outcome of NUS pensions meeting at the next Board meeting.

18.07 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATION

KMcS extended a welcome to NPK and RB and informed that KH is the new Lay Trustee. He also welcomed the new Officer Trustees, CKeen and CCas and explained OMcC is in attendance at the meeting. The new team is in place and has set plans and objectives. He gave a summary of events lined up for Freshers over the next couple of weeks and informed the Committee of the new members of staff, together with those existing staff who have taken up new positions. There has been a lot of work done on space on campus and efforts made to improve facilities with extensive improvement on Magee Campus over the summer. MD is finalising discussions on Level 5 on the Belfast Campus and there is a new global lounge at the front of Coleraine Campus, with OMcC pushing for discussions on it, and DL and KMcS are talking to the University about upgrading in Jordanstown, hoping to start in 2019.

18.08 UUSU STRATEGIC PLANNING

DL presented a paper and gave a summary that we are currently half

way through the Strategic Plan which is a strong, solid document and the Students' Union should be commended for having it in place. However, the breadth and focuses were wide which made it hard to deliver on objectives and had a lack of true measure in terms of KPIs which made it hard for us to present ourselves as a team when we ask for an uplift of the block grant in the coming years. There were cross-overs and repetitions that did not distinguish what was non-negotiable for the Students' Union. The paper looks at identifying measured targets and resources and he explained the scoring of each facet out of five points in terms of what it means to the Union and how easy it would be to deliver. He referred to pages 3 to 12 as to how the points were scored and what areas were considered the most important. The higher the score, the more critical the priority. There were 24 green, which should be taken forward and refocused, with specific KPIs added. The 13 amber and 26 red were due to repetition and cross-over and needed further thought, particularly in the enterprise section. There will be a new re-focused priority on objective delivery detail and ownership with an Officer and senior staff member working to deliver this, with a link to 5 and 50 which the Board should discuss and see if we are delivering the core links and narratives in question. It was agreed that this was a lot to take in but was a lot simpler than the original document. KMcS explained the document history, and CK commented that we now have our funding approved for three years meaning we can make a more specific plan. The Officer Trustees agreed it was clear and concise and will work smoothly. AN underlined that the original needed to be distilled and ownership set, and the new document met these requirements, adding that it shows what areas we are struggling in and gives a good basis for the Risk Register. KMcS agreed and added that the Operational Plan was vast for Directors to have clarity and there was general approval from the room. However, it will be reviewed over the next two weeks and other external members will be asked for their approval. AN gave a caution that the document should be checked to ensure that nothing was missed out that students might feel is important.

ACTION KMcS to seek approval of the new Strategic Plan from other Board members

18.09

UUSU TRUSTEE/SUB-COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE

DL gave a summary that each Sub-Committee should be given a clear purpose, clear objectives and clear levels of authority, together with feedback as to what support they will get from the organisation. He presented Terms of Reference and asked for comments. Management Board Sub Committee is set and gives the opportunity for Officers to hold Managers to account between Trustee Board meetings. Frequency of other meetings would be held in accordance with demand, i.e. Staffing Committee could have any number of issues at any given time, whereas Finance & General Purposes could meet quarterly when the accounts are prepared. All are in draft form. Trustee Board is substantive and previously was made up of a register of attendees and frequency of meetings. What it did not do was give Trustee Board guidance on types

of issues they will be reviewing at meetings. The real core has been added and now shows what Trustee Board does and what authority it has. The question arose as to Student Trustees having one or two-year terms. Quorum and support for the Chair was discussed with AN suggesting 1 Lay Trustee, 1 Student Trustee, 1 Officer Trustee and 3 others. KMcS will check articles. CC informed that quorum for Trustee Board is 6, without any specific make-up required. The suggestion from AN was provisionally approved. KMcS spoke on Staffing Sub Committee explaining that historically Staffing, Finance & General Purposes Committee was held for human resources issues and to discuss the financial requirements of the Union, but this processed to more of a financial undertone involving procurement, external auditors etc. Responsibility has been halved to make meetings a little more focused. Trustees may nominate someone to give a steer on membership, with a sub-section of Trustee Board to review whether five Officers are required to sit on both of those Sub-Committees. A Lay Trustee could chair both Committees. There are no Student Trustee members and we may discuss as to whether they should be included. KMcS to discuss with RS and give update at the next meeting. DL will make changes to the draft copy and send this onwards for discussion by KMcS and RS

ACTION KMcS to investigate term of office for Student Trustees and check articles for quorum. KMcS to discuss with RS and give update at the next meeting. DL will make changes to the draft copy and send it onwards for discussion by KMcS and RS

18.10

MANAGEMENT BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

KMcS summarised that the idea of a Management Board Sub-Committee came about as a catch up between Trustee Board meetings and Officers were being reduced from seven to four. Management Board has been running for six months now and focuses on ongoing events, acts as delegated authority on tracking progress of strategic priorities, and has a certain degree of financial approval of up to £2,000 although it still has to be formally ratified within the articles. AH confirmed that it has been ratified in the Bye Laws as a Sub-Committee of Trustee Board. This was approved.

18.11

STAFF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

DL gave an overview. There currently is no formal process in place whereby we manage performance of staff and give staff an environment where they can decide their development inside the Union. This proposal would see managers evaluate the performance of staff with two review meetings per year, mid-year and end of year, ascertaining how that individual is dealing with objectives. Staff can self-evaluate, and Managers can appraise the performance. We are not going to rank or score staff and will train Managers so that if someone is not meeting their requirements they will be told at the meeting and we would hope an improvement is made in time for the next review meeting. Having a scoring system or ranking staff could end up demoralising them.

Between reviews, we will establish one to one meetings. Staff should understand the strategy of the organisation and how they fit in. Part of that will be set as a personal development plan so this will allow the individual to work with their Manager and write their own plan. Managers can show them what is achievable in terms of work and linking with their role and offer support as they are developing. This does not need to be about training or paid courses, although we might want to send someone on a course to give them educational development. A process can be placed where staff can apply to their manager stating how it will benefit them and the organisation. It is unusual for someone to be supported and then leave the next day, but a payback system will be put in place to safeguard the organisation. We will work towards introduction of this in 2019. KMcS and DL will send communication about staff process for a 2019/20 full cycle implementation once approved. KMcS raised the question of a formal recognition agreement by the Trade Union, but AN felt that this was not a pay-related issue, but some staff members may be reluctant to list their weaknesses, so all staff will need education on this and there should be variations for different levels of staff. It was felt that the Trade Union should be approached for information and feedback and DL agreed. This was approved.

ACTION KMcS and DL will send communication about staff process for a 2019/20 full cycle implementation once agreed. DL to approach Trade Union about performance management.

18.12

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES ON TO SUB-COMMITTEES

This was deferred until the next meeting, in consultation with other members of the Board.

ACTION KMcS to consult with other Board members on selection of Trustees to Sub Committees.

18.13

INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROPOSAL – STUDENT WAGES

CC summarised that AB had recommended that student staff should be on our pay spine and not national minimum wage and his paper had been brought to Trustee Board. Other Students' Unions had been consulted on student pay rates. Some student staff are paid £8.45 per hour and we are paying £8.12. Queens pay student staff a starting point of £7.38. Trustee Board had been asked to approve AB's paper. Our finances for this year have knock on implications for commercial services as Catering Assistants who are Grade 1 would move to Grade 2. KMcS added that everyone was in agreement that we would like to pay student staff as generously as we could. CC gave examples of student wages and said that we have a £20,000 budget for student wages and if we increase them, there will be less hours available.

NPK expressed a declaration of interest and she is employed by UUSU.

AH commented on the hours already used for Welcome Week and that the University paid £8.44 to student staff doing the same work. We struggle to recruit at key times of the year because of that.

This item was deferred to Agenda Item 17 which is Reserved Business.

KMcS reminded the Board of the confidential nature of its business, particularly Reserved matters, and said that if we were to have an agreement on the Reserved item, it would have a bearing on this item, and it should be deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION Interim Chief Executive's Proposal to be brought to the next Board meeting.

18.14

IMPACT OF INCREASING PENSION PROVISION

CK gave a summary that the Union has three pension schemes, SUSS which was set up many years ago and closed in 2011 with a substantial deficit payment of £200,000 per year. When SUSS closed, we gave staff the option of joining NUSPS, with 6% being paid by the employer and employee. In 2014 it became a legal requirement to have everyone in a scheme and NUSPS had closed to new members. NEST government scheme came into effect and staff were enrolled from 2014 with 1% minimum from employer and employees, therefore staff in NUSPS are getting 6% and NEST just 1%. She presented a paper and explained that the figures relate to costs to the Union for a tiered scheme for staff. She felt that staff would not agree to 6% as some had opted out when it rose to 3% which is why a tiered scheme is being examined. DL reiterated that pensions are being taken into consideration by people entering employment, although this is more industry practiced, and some offer better pensions with affordability as to how much they want to contribute being taken into consideration. I think it is really important that we offer two ends of the scale to increase attractiveness and quality of staff but have something at the other end that is affordable for staff on a lower salary. The option is desirable if we feel we can absorb the extra financial commitment. CK reminded that we don't have a significant amount of money, so we would have to make savings elsewhere. AN felt that the commercial services wages increase might have a pension impact although we want to be a good employer and give staff a good pension although it is not the best financial decision. Long term employees are more favourably treated. KMcS felt that more lay voices were needed and therefore this should be brought to the next meeting, but decision to be deferred to November.

ACTION CK to bring to next meeting, but decision to be deferred until November.

18.15

RESERVES POLICY

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

ACTION Reserves Policy to be brought to the next meeting.

18.16

COLERAINE CAFÉ/BAR

DL summarised that in the context of Item 17 it will be reserved business. Coleraine Club is running at £1,300 in the red and has become insolvent, with a short-term solution being required. We can give it a letter of support to say we would support it to cover its insolvent amount, but this is going to become a much bigger issue. If we had charitable status we could not be having this conversation. We need to find a way to solve it. The best short-term solution is the letter of support and it is an undesirable situation for Trustees to consider. KMcS questioned the implications as a charity if this was in our records, but CK reminded that we are not paying any money, just providing a letter on the assumption that the club will look after itself. AMcA and OMcC as past and present Vice Presidents will try to increase revenue and customer numbers and OMcC agreed that some events had already been organised, with Bar Committee planning events throughout the year to get constant momentum for students to use the bar and space. Menus are currently being updated. KMcS and DL have had discussions with Mountcharles as to what we can offer. CK commented that the University seems to be using the bar more often, so this could help finances. AN suggested a caveat letter to say we are only liable for up to a certain amount on the off-chance that something unforeseen happens we won't see ourselves in difficulties. CK reminded that although drinks sales could fall, food sales could rise. It would be good to get a decision on this before we obtain charitable status. We have to wait on the Charity Commission for this. OMcC suggested offering non-alcohol options as student demographic shows students are driving. RB informed that the Doc is getting a big response at lunch times in getting post graduates into their space. AMcA felt that Bar Committee should have more resources, support and training. An Annual General Meeting will shortly be held. A lot of onus was put on the Vice President to organise events, but we have a leisure and events team and a lot of students who want to get involved and use the resources we have. CK reminded that the Auditor will be presenting the accounts at the next Board meeting. KMcS asked for approval for the letter of support to be provided, which was given and thanked everyone for their contributions. Information will be circulated to the Sub-Committee and an interim meeting of the Board may be called to consider Item 17.

ACTION KMcS to circulate information to the Sub-Committee and call an interim meeting of the Board if required. A letter of support will be drawn up.

Sub-Committee Reports

1. Staffing, Finance & General Purposes Committee
Minutes of 26th July 2018 were presented to the Board.

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UNRESERVED ACTION TABLE

Minute	Agenda Item	Action	
17.95	6	CK to give an update on outcome of NUS pensions meeting at the next Board meeting.	CK
18.08	8	KMcS to seek approval of the new Strategic Plan from other Board members	KMcS
18.09	9	KMcS to investigate term of office for Student Trustees and check articles for quorum.	KMcS
		KMcS to discuss with RS and give update at the next meeting	KMcS
		DL will make changes to the draft copy and send it onwards for discussion by KMcS and RS	DL
18.11	11	KMcS and DL to send communication about staff process for a 2019/20 full cycle implementation.	DL KMcS
		DL to approach Trade Union about performance management.	DL
18.12	12	KMcS to consult with other Board members on selection of Trustees to Sub Committees.	KMcS
18.13	13	Interim Chief Executive's Proposal to be brought to the next Board meeting.	CC
18.14	14	CK to bring to next meeting, but decision to be deferred until November.	CK
18.15	15	CK to bring Reserves Policy to the next Board meeting	CK
18.16	16	KMcS to circulate information to the Sub-Committee and call an interim meeting of the Board if required. A letter of support will be drawn up.	KMcS
			CK