



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

UWLSU Trustee Board

Meeting of 19 August 2020, 10:00am, Zoom meeting

MEMBERSHIP: Alessio Di Vito (AD), Ancha Joof (Chair)(AJ), Andrea Miller (AM), Anthony Coad (AC), Helen Dawit (HD), Stella Webb (SW)

SMT: Amy Eden (AE), Matthew Myles-Brown (MMB), Tye McMahon (TM)

IN ATTENDANCE: Patrick Fuller (PF), Vanessa Dankyi (VD)

APOLOGIES: Helen Dawit (HD)

Minutes of Trustee Board

1. Introduction

1.1. The Covid-19 pandemic is ongoing and the group were keen to discuss how UWLSU will maintain its position in the current climate. Finances for all organisations are uncertain as it is difficult to plan when it is possible a second lockdown will be enforced and organisations may struggle if too many people get sick at the same time. UWLSU is currently the number one SU amongst modern university's and is striving to maintain its position by helping students engage with the SU and helping students get better outcomes.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1. No declarations of interest were stated.

3. Minutes and matters arising from 05/05/2020

3.1. AC stated that he was really interested in finding out more about the cyber security of third party software that UWLSU uses. He stated that he didn't seem to have received the information and would be keen to read more about the subject.

3.2. The group were eager to hear an updated figure on UWL helping students out of their tenancy agreements.

3.3. In this current climate where students have to access online teaching resources the group were keen to get an update on the standard of teaching online. MMB stated that he is confident that the standard of online learning is improving as he attends a Weekly UWLFlex Project meeting where the standards of teaching are discussed.

3.4. The board **approved** the previous minutes and there were no matters arising.

4. Actions from 05/05/2020 minutes

4.1. The following actions has been updated:

VD – attach an amendment of the cyber security of third-party software information that UWLSU uses to these minutes when they get sent out to Trustees.

5. CEO Report (Tye McMahon)

5.1. There are 10 key issues currently facing the SU that are either impacting the SU's work or have the potential to impact in either a positive or negative way in the coming months:

- NSS Results
- Enrolment
- Ealing Fields Site
- Return to campus
- End of financial year position
- Audit
- Insurance claim
- Furlough
- Return to work and reopening of the café, bar and gym
- Enrolment and induction

5.2. The great NSS result is a testament to the hard work and dedication SU staff put into ensuring students are satisfied with the organisation. UWLSU got a score of 83%. This represents a rise of 5% year on year and positions UWLSU as the top Student Union in London by 20%. Achieving this NSS result illustrates that the SU's strategy is working.

5.3. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic universities were worried that applications for university places would be less than expected. So far it seems that applications to UWL are good.

5.4. UWLSU and UWL are always interested in acquiring more space for teaching and activities. So to assist with socially distanced learning UWL has secured in principle the Ealing Fields site. The site is near Boston Manor tube station. Once the site is secured SU staff will go to the site to inspect it.

5.5. Return to campus of staff and students is at the forefront of everyone's minds. Plans are going well. AE has been to the Ealing campus to view the preparations. AE has also been liaising with David Barnes who is the head of Health and Safety at UWL The plans include a one-way system, limited amount of students and staff to be allowed in the building at one time, etc.

5.6. Due to diligent financial planning, UWLSU anticipates that the organisation will end the year with a surplus of £40k-£50K.

5.7. The Finance Audit is scheduled to go ahead as planned in September 2020 with our current auditors Goodman Jones.

5.8. Due to the loss of trade as a result of the shutdown of the university the SU put in a claim to Zurich. It is likely that this claim will be upheld. The claim is for £36K and if the claim is awarded it would ideally be used for supporting activity in year or to assist with depreciation costs to enable the organisation to limit the use of reserves.

5.9. The governments generous furlough scheme has enabled UWLSU to retain all its staff. No redundancies have been made during this difficult time. The furlough scheme will be used until October 2020 to protect jobs.

- 5.10. Detailed planning is currently underway for the planned reopening of the café, gym and the SU office. SU staff will return to the offices in Ealing, Brentford and Reading on a rota based system that is currently being developed. Before any SU staff return to work they will need to fill in a risk assessment and their personal circumstances will be assessed.
- 5.11. Enrolment and Induction is fast approaching! Students will have a streamed online Welcome Talk on either 21/09/2020 or 22/09/2020 from Sara Raybould and Ancha Joof. AC stated that he would be eager to join one of the welcome talks.

Actions:

AE – Contact David Barnes about the use of air conditioning.

TM – Contact Sara Raybould to arrange for the Trustees to be sent a link to the Welcome Talks.

6. UWLSU Annual Budget 2020-2021 (Tye McMahon)

- 6.1. The board **approved** the following recommendations:
- To approve the annual budget for the Union as set out in the table in point 6.2 with a financial review in October following the first 2 months of trading and activity, and the University's final decision on funding.
- 6.2. TM noted that in the medium term the SU will need to evaluate its salary and benefits package to ensure we can retain and attract the right staff. The two pressing elements of this are salaries, particularly at Co-ordinator level, along with pension benefits.
- 6.3. PF agreed that the SU salary and pension benefits should have closer alignment given the nature of the work
- 6.4. AC was keen to find out how clearing was going and how this could affect the block grant offered to UWLSU from UWL.
- 6.5. The group agreed that projects cost money and for the SU to be able to proactively help students we need a robust budget.

Patrick Fuller left the meeting at 11:00.

The discussion about this paper continued after he left the meeting.

Actions:

AE – present a paper towards the beginning of 2021 to Trustees about student staff pay.

7. Quarterly Report (Tye McMahon)

- 7.1. Q4 saw UWLSU implementing a series of business decisions designed to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation. These included:
- A hiring freeze affecting student staff roles and vacant support staff roles
 - A program of rolling furlough designed to lessen the financial impact COVID-19 on the organisation
 - A return to work plan based on government guidelines and staff consultation

7.2. Some highlights from quarter include:

- The UWLSU achieving a 83% satisfaction score on Q26 in the annual NSS, ranking the Students Union number one in the UK.
- UWLSU saw an additional 132 unique students using the advice service in Q4.
- The UWLSU student voice team

7.3. This report offered an end of year summary of the KPI's. Some KPI's were not achieved due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

7.4. The KPI of 73% of students engaged in SU activity was not achieved due to a lot of activities having to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Before the global shutdown the SU was on track to achieve this target.

7.5. The 2020-2021 KPI's are currently being finalised. The engagement figure for the SU is likely to be set at between 50%-60%. Students will need to be engaged in new and innovative ways. Events will be smaller but the engagement will likely be more meaningful.

7.6. Online engagement can be meaningful but at times it can be hard to track. With zoom meetings you can track student numbers. However, with activities like Netflix parties and online questions it is difficult to track engagement.

7.7. AC asked how Covid-19 has affected UWLSU's five-year strategy. TM stated that SU is still working towards it however it would be beneficial to review it in consultation with Marion Lowe and find out if UWL are reviewing their five-year strategy.

Actions:

TM – Ask Marion Lowe if UWL are reviewing their five-year strategy.

8. Welcome new SABB team (Matthew Myles-Brown)

8.1. MMB introduced the new SABB team to the group:

- Ancha Joof – SU President
- Alessio Di Vito – Vice President For Education
- Stella Webb – Vice President For Activities

8.2. MMB stated that they have made a great start to their roles already and he is very much looking forward to working with them throughout the upcoming academic year.

8.3. SABB Priorities:

Name of SABB	Priority
Alessio	Working with UWL and Wellbeing Team to organise timetabled training/workshop on resilience and mindfulness.
Alessio	Training for personal tutor on strategies to grow resilience in students.
Alessio	Counselling service on the weekend
Alessio	Zero waste shop for student / online student platform for second items.
Alessio	Safeguard biodiversity hedgehog programme.
Alessio	Timetabled lecture delivered by the career service (once every semester or year) from as early as Level 3 and 4.
Stella	Awareness & prevention of Sexual & Domestic Violence. With a better reporting system and aftercare for victims.
Stella	Creating better facilities for religious students across all 3 (potentially 4) campuses
Stella	Creating a better community within sports teams and societies with an aim to engage more students - especially in Reading
Ancha	Working on my BAME leadership network called ACE! Developing it further and establishing it.
Ancha	Working on creating more green spaces around campus (Green feature walls, community garden).
Ancha	Supporting students with learning disabilities.

9. Trustee Board Dates 2020-2021

- 9.1. The Board **approved** the proposed Trustee Board meeting dates for 2020-2021 and the Trustee Board items of business template 2020-2021.
- 9.2. The Trustee Board meet at various points throughout the year to discuss how the organisation is performing and make decisions. The dates of the proposed Trustee Board meetings were decided based on cycles of business
- 9.3. AJ asked what the Governance update is about. MMB stated that this paper involves reviewing the articles of association and bye laws. MMB stated that this paper isn't an annual item but is left over from last year.
- 9.4. AJ enquired about what will happen at the Trustee Half Day. The agenda for that day will be decided closer to the time of the meeting.

Actions:

VD – Move the Governance update from the Annual Items to the Other Items section of the October 2020 meeting agenda list.

10. NSS Update (Matthew Myles-Brown)

- 10.1. The group were ecstatic about the great NSS result of 83%.
- 10.2. The table below shows a summary of the overall scores for UWL and UWLSU against NSS 2019 and the sector average:

	2019	2020
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Question	UWL	Sector Average	UWL	Sector Average
27: Overall Satisfaction	87%	84%	86%	83%
26: The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests.	78%	56%	83%	56%

10.3. The SU need to focus on maintaining this score. Detailed planning for NSS will start after enrolment.

Actions:

MMB: Investigate a number of schools which have a substantial difference in score between Q26 and Q27 – If question 26 is lower.

11. AOB

Black Lives Matter and reducing the attainment gap

11.1. Black Lives Matter is a movement which has been brought to mainstream attention after the untimely death of a black American citizen called George Floyd by police on 25th May 2020. This incident received international attention. AC was keen to know what the university is doing overcome racial injustices and help black students. TM stated that the VCE are more open to discussing the reason for actively supporting black lives matter.

11.2. Social and economic data reveal vast disparities between different ethnicities in the UK. AJ stated that BAME students in the LCM school wrote a letter to the head of school stating the racial inequalities they have faced on the course. AJ spoke to some of the students, some of the stories were really upsetting. A dialogue has started about diversifying the staff team and how staff can overcome their unconscious bias.

11.3. AM reiterated that inequalities in society are leading to the attainment gap between white and black students and wanted to clarify on how UWLSU can we reduce this attainment gap. TM stated that UWLSU are continuing to liaise with VCE about the attainment gap. The facts say that black students have worse outcomes.

Actions:

TM/AJ – To have an update about Black Lives Matter in the next CEO Update.

Approval of items emailed to Trustees on 02/06/2020

11.4. The Trustees had approved or noted the following items via email previously. So it is documented, the Trustees were asked to reconfirm their approval in this meeting:

The Trustees **approved** the following documents:

- UWLSU Support Staff Handbook
- UWLSU Student Staff Handbook
- UWLSU Flexible Working Policy
- UWLSU Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

The Trustees **approved** the following recommendations:

- UWLSU to gain 'Disability Confident Leader' Status

- UWLSU to seek out an accreditation to validate the Union's EDI work

The Trustees **noted** the following documents:

- Staff Engagement Survey Results
- Election Report

Trustee Recruitment

- 11.5. Due to MR resigning, and the provision for a fourth external trustee in the recently updated bylaws, the SU needs to recruit two external Trustees.
- 11.6. As SW is now a SABB, a new Student Trustee will need to be sought. SW was a Student Trustee before she became a SABB.
- 11.7. The board agreed that UWLSU needs to try to recruit diverse candidates. The board were also in agreement that the new external Trustee should ideally have a Finance background. If not Finance, then HR.
- 11.8. AE will need help with Trustee Recruitment from a Trustee. AM volunteered to help.

Trustee Obligations – Attendance at meetings

- 11.9. The Trustees have an obligation to attend all meetings and if they cannot attend a meeting they should give appropriate apologies. Section 3 of the bye-laws state that each Trustee will follow this principle: **I will attend all appropriate meetings and other appointments at the Union or give apologies. If I cannot regularly attend meetings, I will consider whether there are other ways I can engage with the Union.**
- 11.10. The group discussed what should happen if a Trustee repeatedly misses meetings and doesn't send apologies to the chair or an appropriate person. It was stated that it would be important to find out why the Trustee was missing meetings without giving apologies as there might be unknown circumstances preventing the person from attending meetings.
- 11.11. However, the Trustee Board is the highest authority in UWLSU and if a Trustee cannot fulfil their obligations then they would need to consider if they can do the role.
- 11.12. The group agreed that the chair or an appropriate person should try multiple times to contact a Trustee before removal procedures are considered.

Action:

AE & AJ – to follow up on Trustee attendance

12. Summary of actions

AE – Contact David Barnes about the use of air conditioning.

TM – Contact Sara Raybould to arrange for the Trustees to be sent a link to the Welcome Talks.

AE – present a paper towards the beginning of 2021 to Trustees about student staff pay.

TM – Ask Marion Lowe if UWL are reviewing their five-year strategy.

VD – Move the Governance update from the Annual Items to the Other Items section of the October 2020 meeting agenda list.

MMB: Investigate a number of schools which have a substantial difference in score between Q26 and Q27 – If question 26 is lower.

TM/AJ – To have an update about Black Lives Matter in the next CEO Update.

AE & AJ – to follow up on Trustee attendance