



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

UWLSU Trustee Board

Meeting of 6th October 2020, 16:00, 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 majority of SU staff are working from home. Maintaining the quality of education for students remains paramount to UWLSU.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1. No declarations of interest were stated.

3. Minutes and matters arising from 19/08/2020

3.1. The group were keen to be assured that the air quality in university buildings is safe for students. AE had previously confirmed with David Barnes that the air circulated around SMR is fresh air from outside. However, the group would like to be assured that the air quality in all UWL campus' is being tested regularly.

3.2. Enrolment and Induction activities went well. AJ, SW and AD did the majority of Welcome talks. New students seemed receptive to the Welcome talks.

3.3. The Trustees had previously asked if it was possible for them to join the Welcome Talks. This was not possible because they do not have access to Blackboard. Blackboard is a system that all students and UWL staff have access to.

3.4. AC stated that he would like to sample some online lectures. It would be beneficial for the Trustees to experience the lectures students have access to. Students access lectures via Blackboard. For the Trustees to access lectures they will need to be able to access blackboard.

- 3.5. As AE is leaving the organisation RF will be writing the paper in 2021 about student staff pay. Previously UWLSU had to make the difficult decision to pay students different wages based on their age. The group were keen to review this situation as soon as possible.
- 3.6. The Trustees found the objectives template for the SABBS which was included in the minutes useful. It is great to know what the SABBS are focusing on. The Trustees agreed that in future meetings it would be beneficial to have an update paper from the SABBS on their objectives.

4. Actions from 19/08/2020 minutes

- 4.1. The following actions were created or updated based on the discussion of the minutes:

TM – To find out from David Barnes if air quality in all our campus' is tested regularly.

TM – To contact an appropriate person to ask if AC and AM can be given access to Blackboard.

TM – To let RF know about the student staff pay paper due at a Trustee Board in 2021.

VD – To add 'SABB Objective Update' as a standing item to future Trustee Board meetings

5. CEO Update (Tye McMahon)

- 5.1. The board **noted** the CEO Update.

- 5.2. There are 6 key issues currently facing the SU that are either impacting on our work or have the potential to impact in either a positive or negative way in the coming months:

- a) Awards and League Tables
- b) Enrolment
- c) Off campus space
- d) Covid Safety
- e) UWL Flex and student experience
- f) Review into the NSS

- 5.3. Up to four thousand new students have enrolled at UWL. This figure is great considering the current economic climate.

- 5.4. Recent Award and League Table achievements might have helped UWL achieve the fantastic enrolment figures. UWL achieved a rise of 23 places to be ranked 34th in the UK. This is the highest ranking the University has ever achieved. UWL also won the prestigious Times Higher Award for the 'Best Student Experience in the UK'.

- 5.5. NSS figures have been great for the SU in recent years and the NSS scores have shown the value of UWL to new students. However, the NSS template of scoring is going to be reviewed. This review could significantly shift the metrics used to measure success and satisfaction and could potentially undermine the work we have undertaken as an SU over the last 7 years.

- 5.6. TM spoke about an Adam Smith Institute Report which challenges the value for money delivered by students' unions. It would be beneficial for the Trustees to read it.

- 5.7. AC suggested we lobby NUS to put forward an opinion piece in the press defending the important purpose of the NSS around accountability and outcomes.

5.8. Covid Safety was a keen discussion point for the group. There have been several outbreaks of Covid-19 in university halls in the North of the UK. The group were keen to be assured that if an outbreak of Covid-19 happened in UWL student halls, students would be supported. At the moment students will isolate on a case by case by basis. TM stated that UWL have plans to deal with outbreaks but it would be great to have further assurance.

Actions:

TM – Send Trustees the Adam Smith Institute report

TM – To liaise with UWL about what will happen if there is a mass outbreak of Covid-19 in halls.

6. Risk Management Policy Review (inc Risk Register & Compliance Management Plan) (Amy Eden)

6.1. The board **approved** the following items:

- UWLSU 2020-21 Risk Register
- the Risk Register Summary
- the UWLSU 2020-21 Compliance Management Plan and Action Plan
- the recommendations in 6.5 of this document

6.2. UWLSU assess overall organisational risk through a Risk Management Policy which includes a **Risk Register** and a **Compliance Management Plan**.

6.3. The Risk Register and UWLSU Compliance Management Plan are used in unison to ensure the organisation is fulfilling its legal obligations.

6.4. The group stated that there were pleased that it seems that there are extensive practices and procedures in place to ensure UWLSU remains functioning in a compliant manner.

6.5. Recommendations:

- a) Incremental growth of reserves in order to meet industry standards
- b) Consideration to be given to organizational structure to meet current business needs
- c) Disaster recovery plan to be proposed and drafted
- d) Continuing development of remotely accessible services
- e) Ongoing trustee recruitment and training
- d) Appointment of a Deputy Chair of the Trustee Board

7. UWLSU Strategic Performance Update and Covid Impacts (Tye McMahon)

7.1. The group **noted** the report and agreed to the list of KPIs for the coming year.

7.2. Notable Areas of performance from AY19/20 include:

- Consistently high engagement projected to achieve 73% engagement without COVID disruption.
- All Fresher's related KPIs exceeded in Q1
- Achieved No.1 Students Union amongst comparable Higher Education Institutes for student satisfaction in the NSS. This achieves not only the KPI for the annual year, but also the 22/23 target set out in the strategy.

- 7.3. The group were keen to discuss the Communications top line KPIs – Strategic Objectives. This is because due to the Covid-19 outbreak face to face activity has greatly reduced. The SU might only be able to engage some students online. AM stated that 20% engagement increase on social channels seemed a bit low. How can this be increased?

Action:

MMB & TM – To look into the Comms engagement figures in regards to social channels.

8. Governance Update

- 8.1. The Trustee Board **noted** the governance review update.
- 8.2. Following approval to undertake work reviewing the governing documents of UWLSU in September 2019, approval has been obtained for amendments to:
- The Articles of Association
 - The Bye-Laws
 - The Code of Practice between UWL and UWLSU
 - The Financial Memorandum between UWL and UWLSU
- 8.3. The Articles and Code of Practice must next be reviewed in 2025.
- 8.4. The Bye-Laws can be amended by the Trustee Board with no fixed review period.

9. AOB

Black Lives Matter Update (Ancha Joof)

- 9.1. AJ has continued to do extensive work on ensuring that black students are heard and valued.
- 9.2. There is a 26% black attainment gap in the UK and universities need to do more to reduce this gap.
- 9.3. To highlight achievements amongst the black/BAME population Ancha has previously set up the ACE network. The ACE network is going well. The last ACE network event was on 2/10/2020 and had around 30 participants. An organisation called Bigsisterjournal was invited to talk about their enterprise. 'Bigsisterjournal' is an organisation set up by two BAME students of UWL.
- 9.4. On the UWLSU website during black history month black alumni's will be highlighted. It is important for black students to see successful alumni from our university.

Trustee Obligations – Attendance at meetings

- 9.5. The group discussed how we can ensure that all Trustees can attend meetings.
- 9.6. HD cannot attend meetings in the late afternoon/evening because of lack of access to childcare.
- 9.7. A lot of our students our parents/carers so we need a diverse board.

9.8. To enable all members of the board to attend Trustee Board meetings, the meetings for the rest of the academic year need to be rearranged.

9.9. Members of the group stated what days are best for them to attend Trustee Board meetings:

- AC – Tuesday, Thursday or Friday.
- AM – Any weekday. It would be best if meetings were at the start or end of a business day.
- PF – Fridays are best. Potentially could attend meetings on Thursday.

Actions:

VD – Look into amending Trustee Board meeting dates.

SU Budget

9.10. The Trustees were keen to know about whether the SU budget could be increased as enrolment numbers have been promising.

9.11. PF stated that as the enrolment figures look promising that UWL will be open to relooking at the budget.

Trustee Recruitment

9.12. The Trustee Board need to recruit two external Trustees and one Student Trustee.

9.13. An external company has been sourced to write up the job description and person specification for the recruitment of an external Trustee.

9.14. It is important that at least one of the new external Trustees has extensive Finance expertise.

10. Summary of actions

TM – Send Trustees the Adam Smith Institute report

TM – To liaise with UWL about what will happen if there is a mass outbreak of Covid-19 in halls.

MMB & TM – To look into the Comms engagement figures in regards to social channels.

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