



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

UWLSU Trustee Board

Meeting of 05 May 2020, 10:00am, Zoom meeting

MEMBERSHIP: Jacob Pepper (Chair) (JPe), Janine Braithwaite (JB), Ancha Joof (AJ), Andrea Miller (AM), Anthony Coad (AC), Helen Dawit (HD) Stella Webb (SW)

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

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

APOLOGIES: Helen Dawit (HD)

Minutes of Trustee Board

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Covid-19 pandemic and the change of working lifestyles in the UK is ongoing and it seems that our way of life will not go back to what is deemed normal until at least early 2021. The current government guidance is for employees to work from home if they can so this meeting happened via Zoom. UWLSU are focused on helping students achieve the best possible outcomes during this difficult time.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 JPe informed the board of a conflict of interest regarding a personal relationship with a staff member. In accordance with the Union's Articles of Association, the board noted the conflict determined that JPe could continue to participate in the meetings discussions.

3. Minutes and matters arising from 11/12/2020

- 3.1 The Trustee Board on 18/03/2020 got cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic so the minutes were reviewed in this meeting.
- 3.2 The board **approved** the previous minutes and there were no matters arising.

4. Actions from 11/12/2019 minutes

- 4.1 The following actions are ongoing and have been updated:

JB – Verbal update to the board outlining the work she has undertaken on access for student parents/carers and how this should be continued after her term in office.

5. Minutes and matters arising from 08/04/2020

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

6. Actions from 08/04/2020 minutes

6.1 The following actions are ongoing and have been updated:

VD/TM – To send Trustees information regarding the cyber security of third-party software the UWLSU uses.

7. Update on UWL position in the higher education sector and Finance (Patrick Fuller)

7.1 PF gave an overview of the announced support that the government will give universities and financial state of play of UWL.

7.2 On 4th May 2020 the government announced a range of measures to protect students and the higher education sector from the impact of coronavirus. But the support package announced for universities falls far short of what would be required to genuinely safeguard the sector and students and catalyse their contribution to future economic recovery. There is no new money for universities. This is disappointing as this is a tough period for universities and students.

7.3 In this difficult time some students are struggling to pay their monthly rent. UWL is working on a student to student basis to support students. UWL have a £3,000,000 bill so far in regard to helping students get out of their tenancy agreements.

7.4 The group were concerned with students being able to access the hardship fund. PF stated that the UWL Student Services team deal with this and that students need to fulfil certain criteria to access the fund.

7.5 UWL appear to be in a much stronger position financially than other institutions. UWL have done scenario planning to account for a 20% drop in income.

7.6 PF assured the board that UWL will endeavour to give UWLSU a robust grant for the next academic year. The grant would also depend on the number of students that UWL obtained for the upcoming academic year. There is expected to be less overseas students so universities will need to compete for UK students

Actions:

PF – Send TM reports/articles/resources regarding the higher education sector. TM will then send this info to Trustees.

8. CEO Report (Tye McMahon)

8.1 In these trying times there are 6 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:

- a) Financial Impacts of COVID19 on the University sector
- b) NUS Campaigns
- c) Students in UWL supported accommodation
- d) Student Experience
- e) Staff engagement
- f) Return to Campus

- 8.2 Our staff have been great with dealing with the current national situation. The SMT team are striving to keep the team engaged by refocusing the team on the new academic year.
- 8.3 Online learning was a key area of interest. As online learning will be the only form of teaching available in the near future the group discussed if the university can enhance their online offer. The group were keen to know if lecturers are adapting to the online learning environment as it was previously stated that some lecturers were reluctant to participate in online teaching/learning. MMB has been in numerous discussions about this. Lecturers seem to be adapting well to the current environment.
- 8.4 PF stated that UWL are taking online learning very seriously. The UWL IT team are liaising with Microsoft. The investment in the system could be substantial.
- 8.5 In the higher education sector dropout rates are higher for online courses compared to classroom-based courses. The SU will need to work with UWL to minimise the impact.
- 8.6 AM suggested that UWL might need to employ more teaching assistants. In a previous institution she was involved in, the extra staff helped retain students. More staff means there is more human contact for students.
- 8.7 In regard to students returning to campus the UWL estates team are modelling social distancing for the university for when the government says that universities can reopen their buildings.
- 8.8 The SMT team are monitoring the sector to keep up to date with developments. NUS are sharing policy with Students Unions.

Actions:

MMB – To liaise with AM about her experience with online learning.

Patrick Fuller left the meeting at 11:00am.

9. NSS (Matthew Myles-Brown)

- 9.1 The whole sector is likely to see a fall in satisfaction scores. UWL and UWLSU will have to review how NSS completion is conducted between January 2021-March 2021.
- 9.2 Usually in February students are taken in groups to complete the NSS survey in Weston Hall. This might not be possible because social distancing protocols might still be in force.
- 9.3 UWLSU/UWL usually ask students to complete the NSS Survey in February because exams tend to be in January and then IPSOS Mori start calling people in March.
- 9.4 The group agreed that we should still focus on getting a good NSS score as a poor score could take years for the institution to recover from. Students also take great pride in their institution getting a high NSS score.
- 9.5 UWLSU will conduct a thorough analysis of the NSS results when they become available in July. These findings will be used to inform the Student Union's work for the upcoming academic year.

10. Quarterly Report (Tye McMahan)

- 10.1 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic UWLSU are not going to hit all of their targets. UWLSU will strive to minimise the effects of this pandemic.
- 10.2 Some highlights from the quarter (Feb-April 2020) include:
- a) A highly successful NSS campaign, seeing 75% completion within the first two weeks
 - b) The highest ever Staff Engagement Survey results, with an overall score of 95%
 - c) UWLSU advice service achieved reaccreditation with the Advice Quality Standard
 - d) Over 650 members signed up to the UWL Sports and Fitness Centre
 - e) A full week of remote activity delivered through the “Spring Break” social campaign
 - f) A total of 6 student voice reports delivered, detailing 37 key students’ issues before and after lockdown

11. AOB

- 11.1 Mental health of students has previously been discussed in Trustee Board meetings. The group agreed that the mental health of students should not be neglected at this time.

Vanessa Dankyi left the meeting at 12:04pm. This was so Trustees could have a confidential conversation about the budget.

12. Financial planning for 2020/2021

- 12.1 The board considered the scenario planning document shared with them by TM. Trustees had a discussion about the predicted shortfall if the Union experiences a decrease in income from commercial trading and the University.
- 12.2 The board requested that SMT update the scenarios and report back after completing the following:
- a) Detailed analysis of commercial trading
 - b) Exploration of activity and committed spend reductions
 - c) Exploration of income generating opportunities

Actions:

SMT – To provide the board with updated budget with the points above considered

13. Summary of actions

PF – Send TM reports/articles/resources regarding the higher education sector. TM will then send this info to Trustees.

MMB – To liaise with AM about her experience with online learning.

SMT – To provide the board with updated budget with the points above considered