



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

UWLSU Trustee Board

Meeting of 11 December 2019, 5pm, St Mary's Road, Ealing

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

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

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

APOLOGIES: Andrea Miller (AM)

Minutes of Trustee Board

1 Declarations of interest

1.1 There were no declarations of interest noted.

2 Minutes from last meeting

2.1 The board **approved** the minutes from the last meeting.

3 Matters arising from previous minutes

3.1 There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

4 Actions from previous minutes

4.1 All actions from the previous minutes were completed with the exception of the following:

- TM – To produce a report that includes various operating scenarios for the bar. Date of presentation to be scheduled.

4.2 The following actions from the previous minutes have are ongoing and have been updated:

- MMB - to continue liaising with Marion Lowe regarding the Code of Practice and report back to Trustees at the next meeting.

4.3 The action regarding the creation of a measure to gage the effectiveness of the relationship between UWL and UWLSU has been updated as follows:

- JPe & TM to continue to liaise with relevant UWL staff to develop a measure regarding the effectiveness of the relationship between UWL and UWLSU.

Patrick Fuller entered meeting at 17:22

5 CEO Update – Strategic Context (Confidential)

- 5.1 The Board **noted** the CEO Update.
- 5.2 The CEO Update gives an overview of the strategic context of the SU's work.
- 5.3 The group discussed the continuing work that UWL and UWLSU are undertaking to prevent the negative impact being a victim of sexual violence has on their studies.
- 5.4 'Ask Angela' has been fully implemented in the Commercial areas of the Student's Union. An audit was conducted to assess the knowledge of Commercial student staff members with regards to this. The results were positive. The audit also identified that the processes in place to deal with a sexual violence incident are robust therefore the risks of an incident being handled incorrectly has been assessed as low.
- 5.5 SW raised the point that as a student at the university, she has been unaware of the 'Ask Angela' scheme therefore, better advertising of the scheme needs to be implemented.
- 5.6 The CEO report provided an update on the NUS reforms which included the objectives set by NUS for the turnaround period. AC raised concern that the set of objectives is lengthy and seemed to lack focus. TM agreed but advised that one of the issues identified at NUS was the large number of different areas they were trying to have an impact in which has been caused by a number of layers of bureaucracy, a large number of elected officers and executive groups with differing priorities, and an embedded culture which did not allow for strategic focus. Therefore, whilst the list of objectives is longer than typical for a dynamic organisation, the extent to which the original set of objectives has been streamlined is significant and it is hoped that the work to focus in further will continue.
- 5.7 The group congratulated AJ and SW on their election as NUS delegates and JPe advised that it is through the SU's NUS delegates that UWLSU are best placed to provide influence on the reforms and direction of NUS.
- 5.8 The report outlined student mental health as an area of strategic focus as this topic is at the forefront of agenda for higher education institutions. In the last decade there has been a fivefold increase in the rate of students presenting with mental health issues. Universities are stepping in to help students with these issues in the absence of the NHS being able to support all the students who require help.
- 5.9 Research into the issues specifically for students have identified that peer mentoring could of benefit which has been included as part of the new UWL mental health strategy. AC asked what other initiatives the university has in place to support students. PF advised that the SU has recently developed a telephone support line for students residing in halls, and the university has an outreach team who work with schools and colleges to provide support to help with the transition into university. The outreach team have recently won a Times Higher Education award.
- 5.10 JPe advised the group that in addition to the outreach team, UWL Finance also won the 'Outstanding Financial Performance' Award at the Times Higher Education Awards 2019 and the group congratulated MB and PF for this achievement.

5.11 Actions

MMB - Liaise with JPo in regard to promoting 'Ask Angela' around the institution.
MMB - Send all Trustees information on the work the UWL Outreach team do in regard to mental health.

6 **Quarterly Report: Quarter 1 2019/2020**

- 6.1 The Board **noted** the Quarterly Report and highlighted an error in the Table of KPIs which states Q2 instead of Q4 when referring to reserves. JB highlighted a factual inaccuracy in section 2.2 of the quarterly report, regarding welcome talks during the fresher's period. This should be amended to state that all Sabbs took part in this activity, rather than the SU President alone.
- 6.2 The Report listed the opening of the new Sports centre as a significant highlight of Q1. The group were interested to know the progress on the sales of external memberships. There has been a delay in opening these memberships up due to some administrative issues around access cards and Direct Debit systems, however, it is likely that memberships will be live in the new year. The team have a sales target for external members of twenty-five for the year and they are on track to meet this as the majority of these are forecast to be sold in 2020.
- 6.3 The board noted the summary of the organisational risk register summary and raised a point around the risk of civil action being taken against the SU. AE explained that threat of civil action is considered as part of the compliance management plan, however this may not include some of the more recent updates in legislation and noted that it would be best practice to include a full review of this in the annual risk register review tabled for discussion later in the academic year.
- 6.4 Actions:

AE - To include a full review of the areas which may result in civil action as part of the compliance management plan review and include in the organisational risk register.

7 **UWLSU 2018-2019 Trustees Report and Audited Financial Statements**

- 7.1 AE explained that since the papers for the board had been circulated, the Auditors had received updated paperwork from UWL relating to an outstanding issue and updated their report to reflect this. This means that some of the recommendations outlined in section 6 of the cover paper are no longer applicable and Trustee approval is not required. The board acknowledged that they had received the updated version of the Auditors report since original circulation.
- 7.2 The Auditors report was positive with no significant findings and only one minor issue of note regarding payrolls costs which are awaiting payment to the university. The board commended the finance team for an excellent performance and note that this was despite a restructure of the team, indicating that this has improved the flow of work and resulted in increased productivity.
- 7.3 The board **approved** the draft financial statements and Trustee's report for filing at Companies House.
- 7.4 The Board **considered** the draft audit findings report and **approved** the remaining recommendations based on its findings outlined in section 6 of the report.

8 Management Accounts October 2019

- 8.1 The board **noted** the monthly management accounts and reforecast budget for 2019/2020
- 8.2 Income was up on budget in October and this positive difference is predicted to continue at end of year. In particular, the sales from the newly refurbished café have exceeded expectations and are on average, 28% higher than year on year sales. SU Events have also generated higher than expected income in Q1.
- 8.3 The increase in sales for the Coffee Union is positive news, however, the cost of running a larger scale service has increased by more than expected during the business planning process. This has resulted in a forecast operating result of a deficit at end year. This is concerning news and the SMT and Commercial team are currently prioritising plans to reduce the deficit. JPo advised that this will include:
- Reducing labour costs wage
 - Analysis of individual item costs and sales
 - Targeted comms plan
- 8.4 Staff costs are currently predicted to come in under budget at year end and non-staff costs will come in slightly higher than originally budgeted. This is predicted to result in an end of year operating surplus of £26k which is on-track with estimates at the start of the year. PF indicated that the SU's financial performance in the first quarter is encouraging and the over/underspends are to be expected.
- 8.5 MR noted that the gym manager position is currently filled by a temporary worker from an agency and asked the reason for this. AE advised that a permanent appointment was made, however that person withdrew before they were due to start meaning that an agency post was the preferred option in order not to delay the opening of the gym. The permanent role will be advertised again before Christmas and it is hoped that the current temporary worker will apply.
- 8.6 HD raised a point in relation to the advertising and marketing of the SU bar and café as her experience is that many on her course are not aware of these outlets until she has taken them to visit. HD asked if more could be done to promote these services outside of social media, and perhaps more thought given to word of mouth advertising in order to boost sales. JPe noted this and requested that JPo include this in the comms plans.
- 8.7 HD also raised the issue of whether these services, along with other income generating services such as events, are accessible for inviting for student parents who have differing needs and priorities from 'traditional students'. JB advised the group about the work she has been undertaking over her term to improve the student experience for parents and carers and to ensure that they are considered in the services the SU and University offer. The group were encouraged by JB's work and support her request for this work to continue after her term of office is complete. They requested a report on this topic to be presented at a future group.
- 8.8 Actions:
- JPo – to liaise with HD and incorporate the ideas around word of mouth advertising in the comms plan for the bar and café.
- JB – Submit a report 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.

9 Reserves Policy

9.1 The report outlined a number of operating scenarios for Trustees for consideration to aid decision making on the Union's minimum reserve level the Union can realistically set. The report also identified the differing ways in which this level can be met. Plans included increasing productivity; increasing income generation, securing letter of comfort from university and increased funding from UWL.

9.2 After consideration Trustees **agreed** the to set an amount of £551,000 which is equivalent to 3 months operating costs at 100%. This leaves a current shortfall in reserve levels of £157,000. Trustees **agreed** that this should be achieved over 5 years through increased sales and productivity and letters of comfort from the university and that a measure to track this progress should be set and reviewed annually.

9.3 Actions

TM – Set a strategic KPI to measure the organisation's performance against reserves target for Trustees to sign off at next board.

10 **NUS Delegate and Trustee Elections 2019 Report**

10.1 The elections for Student trustee and NUS delegate took place in November. Both elections saw a record number of votes and both were recorded as true and fair by NUS. The results were as follows:

- NUS Delegate AJ and SW
- Student Trustee SW

AJ and SW were congratulated on winning their elections and explained their manifesto to the board.

11 **Any Other Business**

11.1 Trustees were asked what they would like to focus on during the half day scheduled for January 2020. Initial suggestions included; progress on strategic objectives; external landscape and what this means for the SU; the SU's plans for setting an agenda for the sector. AE will contact trustees to follow up on this and gather further suggestions.

11.2 Actions

AE: To liaise with Trustees to gather insight for agenda of half day in January 2020.

12 **Closed business at 18:45**

12.1 VD, AE, MMB, JPo, PF, MB, TM left the room at 18:45 so the closed business could be discussed. Notes will be provided to trustees under separate cover.

13 **Summary of Actions**

TM – To produce a report that includes various operating scenarios for the bar. Date of presentation to be scheduled

MMB - to continue liaising with Marion Lowe regarding the Code of Practice and report back to Trustees at the next meeting

MMB - Liaise with JPo in regard to promoting 'Ask Angela' around the institution.

MMB - Send all Trustees information on the work the UWL Outreach team do in regard to mental health.

AE - To include a full review of the areas which may result in civil action as part of the compliance management plan review and include in the organisational risk register

JPo – to liaise with HD and incorporate the ideas around word of mouth advertising in the comms plan for the bar and café.

JB – Submit a report 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.

TM – Set a strategic KPI to measure the organisation's performance against reserves target for Trustees to sign off at next board.

AE - To liaise with Trustees to gather insight for agenda of half day in January 2020.