

Roehampton Students' Union

Meeting held on Thursday 27th January 2022 at 5:30pm via Microsoft Teams

Present: Eleanor Wheal (Chair), Siobhan Kelly, Lee Bird, Mushtaq Ismail, Oli Ottaway
In attendance: Jonathan Chien, Mark Gillespie, Meg Mannion (Minutes), Martin Bailey (Goodman Jones)

Apologies: Farrah Black

1) Welcome and apologies

Eleanor Wheal (EW) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Farrah Black.

2) Audited accounts and financial statements

Martin Bailey from Goodman Jones joined the meeting and presented the accounts, explaining the process of signing off the accounts and trustees' report. MB noted that the auditors will be issuing a clean audit report. The board discussed management actions taken to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

The Board discussed the Going Concern statement and whether there was a need for further explanation. MD noted that the wording in Note 2.3 could go further to talk about the guarantee of block grant funding. MG noted that there were some further additions required to the strategic report and further explanation could be covered in the trustees' report.

The Board noted that the design was slightly cramped. MB agreed and was happy to amend the presentation of content.

The accounts were approved by the Board of Trustees.

There were no further questions and Martin Bailey left the meeting.

2a) Trustees' report

MG suggested that any amendments to the trustees' report were taken offline, which was agreed. The Board discussed setting a reserves policy and agreed to add this to the cycle of business for a future meeting.

Action: MG to add reserves policy to future meeting agenda

3) Conflicts of interest

No conflicts of interest were noted.

4) Chair's report

OO gave the Chair's report on FB's behalf. It was noted that the sabbatical team had been planning for student senate and focusing on the accessibility of buildings. The officers were also doing work around the return to in-person teaching and its impact on accessibility. The Board noted that there had been feedback from students in favour of a blended learning approach.

Work was also taking place on a funding application for the period products campaign, a food sustainability project and work on a drug and alcohol campaign. There was also work taking place around sexual violence awareness month and International Women's Week.

5) CEO report

The CEO report was taken as read and MG took questions. The Board discussed Plan B arrangements and that activity was starting up again as restrictions lift.

The Board noted that there had been some changes to the union's banking arrangements, removing the single point of failure around signing. The Board discussed formalising a scheme of delegation for financial sign-off levels. MG noted that there was a draft scheme of delegation, which he would bring to a future meeting.

MG gave a staffing update, noting the recruitment of a new student activities co-ordinator and some graduate roles in the Hive. The role of student voice co-ordinator had not been filled. MG noted some thinking about this role and how it might be framed around student outcomes.

The Board noted that the strategic plan had been officially launched and the officer team had presented it to University Senate, which was well received.

The Board discussed hybrid working arrangements, which had resumed due to the end of Plan B restrictions. These will be reviewed at Easter. There was a discussion about vaccinations and what stance to take. It was noted that it was difficult to understand confidence levels in attending events as many events were cancelled during Plan B restrictions but that it may be feasible to ask attendees for negative lateral flow tests ahead of attending events.

6) Trustee recruitment plan

MG noted that there was a need for new student trustees and an additional lay trustee and proposed establishing an Appointments Committee.

The Board also discussed the proposal for there to be a University-nominated attendee on the Trustee Board. The Board agreed that this role would be a liaison role with clear parameters and the Appointments Committee should be involved in drafting the advert for this role.

SK volunteered to be the lay trustee on the Appointments Committee.

Action: MG to prepare recruitment pack.

7) Spring elections plan

The paper was taken as read. MG added that there would be a blended approach to candidate engagement and that the key objectives for the elections had been reviewed, with the intention to build on turnout of 13%.

8) Summer Ball plan

MG presented the paper and felt that due to a more positive outlook, it was possible to plan the Summer Ball with confidence. MG noted that there were some risks attached to a large project and that the aim would be to break even on the event. The Board discussed ticket sales to alumni and that the project group would be considering how to manage conduct issues for non-students.

It was noted that the marquee for the RSU awards could be used for the Summer Ball, which would allow the events team to spread some costs. The Board endorsed the approach to planning the Summer Ball.

9) Strategic Operating Plan

The Board noted the paper, which will be used as part of staff objective setting.

There was no other business and the meeting closed.