

Roehampton Students' Union

Trustee Board Meeting held on Tuesday 28 June 2022 at 17:00 via MS Teams

Present: Farrah Black (Chair), Eleanor Wheal (Deputy Chair), Mushtaq Ismail, Oli Ottaway, Lee Bird, Siobhan Kelly. **In Attendance:** Harrison Cohen, Sharon Azams, Mark Gillespie, Jonathan Chien

Apologies: None

1. Welcome and Apologies

FB welcomed the Trustees to the meeting and introduced Sharon Azams and Harrison Cohen as incoming members from July 1, 2022.

2. Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Trustee Board held on April 7, 2022 were **approved**.

4. Chairs Report

FB provided a verbal update on recent activities led by the sabbatical officers since the last meeting.

FB offered the board an update on developments she had received from the police in relation to their pursuit of a suspect in the Roehampton Lane harassment case.

FB actioned a change to the agenda and brought forward item 10 (University Change Proposals – General Meeting Update)

FB noted that the General Meeting held on June 21 took place and students provided their feedback on the university's change proposals. The GM noted that the union's response to the announcement of the cuts was slow and that some students had suggested RSU take a stronger approach similar to the trade union representing staff on the matter, and for members to discuss a confidence vote in the University senior management.

MI concurred and highlighted that in a later forum, she had received similar feedback and that she had shared student's concerns directly with the VC.

LB acknowledged that the process the union followed to call a GM and receive student views was the right one and noted a concern about the officers facilitating student forums and suggested that the university should take responsibility for communicating the information to students. LB also queried if any meaningful consultation had taken place with students. LB also sought clarification on if JC (in attendance) was conflicted as a member of university staff. JC confirmed that he is not in a decision-making capacity and is not conflicted.

EW highlighted queries around the student contract, the student protection plan and the options that may be available to students, including compensation, if the university does not deliver a high-quality educational experience because of the cuts.

SK noted her agreement with the points made and asked what the next strategic steps were and what points should the union influence going forward. SK recommended the officers review and agree how the actions are implemented.

ACTIONS (Sabbatical Officers)

1. Request an extension to the consultation
2. Prepare communications for students outlining their rights and the methods by which they can make complaints and how to access wellbeing services.
3. Refer students to the OfS in the event the material changes to their programme do not result in the quality of delivery referenced in the student contract.
4. Request the university coordinate a new set of student forums, to minute them, and to publish the minutes afterwards.

5. SUC Report

OO provided a verbal update from the SUC meetings that took place since the April Trustee Board. It was acknowledged that attendance had reduced and that no policy decisions had been made.

6. CEO Report

MG provided a verbal report noting the following points

The annual returns to Companies House and Charities Commission had been completed following the external audit.

The university Finance and Resources Committee acknowledged the union's effective implementation of its finance regulations and processes adopted in late 2019.

The RSU awards had taken place in person for the first time since 2019 on May 24 with over 200 nominations across 25 award categories and 130 people attended the event.

The Summer Ball took place on May 28 and passed without significant incident. Attendance numbers has been low relative to targets set and compared with 2019. The event will fall short of its financial expectations representing a loss.

RSU is currently being audited for a Green Impact award and the Dance Society and E-Sports Societies were nominated for national awards. The E-sports society won the Opportunities for All inclusion award.

EW asked if there was any update on the appointment of a University Nominated Trustee.

MG confirmed that one person had expressed an interest but was waiting on the university confirming its process for determining the nominated individual.

7. Q3 Management Accounts

MG presented the accounts which reflected a summary of income, pay and non-pay expenditure as of the end of quarter 3. The variance across both income and expenditure was noted alongside acknowledgement of difficulty in generating commercial income to budget forecasts.

LB noted that inflation is increasing and that the budgeting process should reflect this- and that a 3% increase may not be enough to cover broader inflationary rises going forward as current projections forecast a 7-11% increase, which may impact non-pay expenditure.

8. Budget Planning

MG provided an update on the University's business planning process and notified the Board that the university had not yet invited RSU to submit its business plan for the year ahead, as per the norm. MG had asked the University (Director of Finance) to provide a projection of the block grant amount and the Head of the Vice Chancellor's Office details of the process to submit the union's proposals and was awaiting replies.

LB noted the board's discomfort with the university confirming the block grant too late in the process and suggested that MG had the support of the Board to return to the University and push for a further update and details of the process required to follow to confirm the 22/23 grant and subsequent budget.

ACTION (MG) Return to discussions with the University and obtain confirmation of block grant forecast from the Director of Finance and bring a budget to the next Trustee Board.

9. Trustee Recruitment Update

SK and FB had met as an appointments committee to review applications received. A schedule of meetings had been set up to meet with three prospective candidates in the following weeks. FB explained that HC would succeed her role on the appointments committee.

ACTION (HC, SK) meet with prospective trustees and support with providing an update on the committee's recommended appointment at the next Trustee Board.

10. University Change Proposals – General Meeting Update

This item was brought forward for discussion under the Chair's Update standing item

11. NUS Update

MG provided an update to the Trustees on the Government decision to suspend the National Union of Students from Department for Education working groups and consultations. MG informed the Board that several students' union trustee boards are discussing their respective membership arrangements with NUS in response. The Board noted that NUS is currently investigating an internal matter and would reserve determining a position until the investigation report had been published.

12. CEO Objectives 2022/23

LB confirmed that he and FB had met to review the CEO's progress against objectives and that the new objectives were recommended for approval by the Board. **Approved.**

13. Officer Induction, Training, and Support Plan 2022/23

MG presented a revised sabbatical officer induction, training, and support plan for the continuing and incoming elected officers. Noted by the Board.

14. Any other Business

FB offered her thanks to the Board for their support and guidance during her term
SK, LB and EW offered their thanks and well wishes to both departing sabbatical officers.

Meeting closed