

Roehampton Students' Union

Trustee Board Meeting held on Monday 12 September 2022 at 17:00 in LA008 (Froebel College)

Present: Harrison Cohen (HC) (Chair), Eleanor Wheal (EW) (Deputy Chair), Mushtaq Ismail (MI), Sharon Azams (SA), Lee Bird (LB), Siobhan Kell (SK).

In Attendance: Mark Gillespie (MG), Jonathan Chien (JC)

Apologies: Siobhan Kelly

1. Welcome and Apologies

HC welcomed the Trustees to the meeting and noted that SK

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 June 28, 2022 were **approved**.

4. Chairs Report

HC (alongside SA and MI) provided a verbal update on recent activities led by the sabbatical officers since the last meeting including

- The sabbatical officer's induction, training and support schedule across July and August
- The officer's approach to consolidating their manifesto aims into five core objectives
- Involvement in fresher's week planning activities
- Black History Month and accessibility campaigns planning
- A review of the union's democratic structure and processes
- Establishing forums for students to provide feedback and suggestions on the library
- Plans to discuss staff support levels for sabbatical officers attending university committees

EW asked if there were further updates on the university's planned cuts. MI provided an update on the university's actions and support the union can offer students affected by the longer-term impact of changes to programmes. MG added that the university had indicated that the current exercise was close to completion.

NOTED

5. CEO Report

MG provided a verbal report noting the following points

- RSU has been awarded the Students Organising for Sustainability Green Impact Excellent Award.

- The Fresher's Week programme had reflected feedback and extended to over 20 events to cater for both commercial and non-commercial audiences.
- The trajectory of participation in membership services functions was positive and that the numbers of volunteers, societies and committee members had increase significantly in 2021/22.
- The university's indication of the union block grant rate for 2022/23, acknowledgement of a 2% cut against inflationary rises, and plans to request additional funding to bring the increase from 1% to 5%.

NOTED

6. Q4 Management Accounts

MG presented the accounts which reflected a summary of income, pay and non-pay expenditure as of the end of quarter 4. The variance across both income and expenditure was noted alongside acknowledgement of difficulty in generating commercial income to budget forecasts. An operating deficit of £83k was noted.

NOTED

7. Budget Planning

MG outlined the budget for 2022/23 noting cumulative projections for key income, pay costs, and non-pay accounts. The budget reflected a 1% increase in the block grant and commercial projections forecast on 21/22 performance, ongoing changes to events and paid activities, and external factors such as increasing inflation.

Monitoring of the budget would be through the production of monthly management accounts and a likely mid-year reforecast in Q2 when commercial performance is better known.

EW noted that rising inflation and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis will have on students may impact commercial performance and that controls should be in place to monitor variable expenditure.

LB noted that as pay-costs were aligned to the university's pay scales, RSU should explore benchmarking and creating its own pay scale structure in the long term, and for 22/23 discuss a subsidy increase to bring the level of university funding in line with pay cost increases.

APPROVED

ACTION (MG) to discuss subsidy funding relating to pay-cost increases with the university.

8. Audit Dates for 2022/23

MG outlined the dates for the external audit of the RSU accounts. The on-site audit will take place between 7-11 November with Goodman Jones invited to report to the board by the February 21, 2023 meeting.

APPROVED

9. Hybrid Working Policy

MG outlined changes to the hybrid working policy to reflect a staff consultation, meet business requirements, and retain levels of operational flexibility in and out of term time.

APPROVED

10. Employee Engagement Survey

MG noted that 60% of substantive, 80% fixed term and 15% of student staff had participated in the survey in March 2022 and summarised the employee engagement survey findings, including those that scored high and low against peer group, SU sector and the third sector.

11. Trustee Recruitment Update

HC outlined the process to date and summary of meetings with three candidates. He reported to the board on which prospect was the preferred candidate

LB noted that the low number of candidates may reflect the advertising strategy and invited further discussion about strengthening finance skills on the board.

ACTION (MG) Notify the candidate of the board's interest as a preferred candidate with approval subject to a follow-up meeting with trustees outside of the appointments committee and the ratification of SUC.

12. Trustee Board Dates 2022/23

HC outlined a schedule of dates for the Trustee Board to meet bimonthly between October 2022 and June 2023.

APPROVED

13. SUC Meeting Dates 2022/23

HC presented the proposed dates for the SUC to meet monthly during term time across the 2022/23 academic year.

NOTED

14. Any other Business

None.

Meeting closed