

Roehampton Students' Union Trustee Board meeting

Meeting held on 10 June 2021 at 5pm via Zoom

Present: Farrah Black (Chair), Lee Bird, Eleanor Wheal, Nicolo Sodaro, Lauryn Fleming, Siobhan Kelly, Danielle Chegwidan

In attendance: Mark Gillespie, Oli Ottaway, Jonathan Chien (University of Roehampton), Meg Mannion (Minutes)

1) Welcome and apologies

Farrah Black (FB) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ras Binning. FB introduced Oli Ottaway, the incoming Vice President Community.

2) Declarations of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3) Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

4) Chair's report

FB gave her report. She noted that the majority of work had been on induction for the incoming officer team and finishing tasks with the outgoing officers.

5) CEO report

Mark Gillespie (MG) reported on the progress of the strategic plan. He noted that the survey had recently closed and focus groups had been held with around 50 students. He added that stakeholder focus groups had also taken place. He added that he would present the headlines ahead of the strategic plan discussion to think about emerging themes. The project group would then reconvene to work on the themes for presentation at the summer away day.

He noted that the auditors had contacted him to arrange the year-end audit, starting in July.

MG discussed the Hive café re-opening and noted that the café was now operating at a breakeven position after a cautious re-opening.

MG noted that this was the final meeting for Lauryn and Nicolo and that officer handover and induction was coming up, as well as external training for new officers. On staffing, he noted that there had been an increase in staff returning to the office and he was speaking to staff about what they might need in terms of hybrid working.

Eleanor Wheal (EW) asked about the number of students MG expected on campus. He noted that the advice function will be running but summer is generally quite quiet and that he did not want to scale up services too early as this can lead to loss-

making operations. He added that an increase was likely in students using the advice service as the No Detriment policy is not as robust as had been previously hoped. In terms of services, all services needed to be ready for September.

6) Students' Union Council report

There was a discussion about student leadership within the University, as there is some conflict between SU positions and paid University positions. A student leadership audit would be taking place.

Danielle Chegwidden (DC) also noted that SUC had passed a motion about reviewing the elections process as focus groups did not understand the role of SUC.

7) Q3 management accounts

MG presented the management accounts. He noted that there had been some vacancy savings which had brought payroll costs under budget. The Board agreed to accrue £10k usually allocated for the Summer Ball. JC will add a note to the draft trustee report to explain the accrual.

8) Budget scenarios

MG presented the budget scenarios based on the block grant. He noted that the expectation is that it would be agreed in September, adding that the new Relationship and Services agreement will see block grant confirmed in May in future years.

EW asked how likely it was to get the full block grant restored and an increase. MG added that it was more likely than not, adding that the SU was not putting all its eggs in one basket and was looking at engaging different markets to diversify income.

There was a question about the relationship with university payroll. The board agreed there needed to be a conversation about not tying itself to the university payroll if block grant goes down but staff costs go up and can't be committed to.

Action: MG to bring back budget scenarios.

9) Strategic planning update

MG gave an update on what the survey results, noting that there has been 1169 responses. The trustees discussed the awareness of membership, the awareness of sabbatical campaigns and communications. There was also discussion about the SU's role in employability skills and value for money.

MG gave feedback on the discussions. There was a discussion around perception of what the SU does compared to what the University and does and how important this perception is.

The Board suggested that the survey is run again in a few months on a light touch basis to get a sense of "normal" expectations.

Any Other Business

MG thanked LF, NS and DC for the service to the trustee board and thanked LF and NS for their hard work as part of the officer team. FB added her thanks to the three departing trustees.

The meeting closed.