

**University of Derby Students' Union
Trustee Board Summary Sheet**

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| Agenda Reference: | TB/07.2022/009 |
| Title of Report: | Minutes of the last meeting – 18 10 2022 |
| Written By: | Sally Cunningham – HR and Admin Manager |
| Presented By: | Chris Hughes, Chair |
| Action Requested: | Approval |

Trustee Board Meeting

Tuesday 18th October 2022 - 5 p.m. Room S102 A/B

In attendance:

Chris Hughes (CH) Chair

Trustee Board:

Nicola Hartley (NH) External Trustee
 Tony Atherton (TA) External Trustee
 Owen Marques (OM) President
 Alexandra Mazilu (AM) VP Education
 Callum Young (CY) VP Welfare
 Andrew Wilson (AW) Student Trustee
 Angel Fosu (AF) Student Trustee
 Harvinder Singh Saluja (HSS) Student Trustee
 Josh Brunning (JB) Student Trustee

Union of Students:

Colina Wright (CW) Chief Executive Officer
 Emma Taylor-Large (ET-L) Head of Membership Engagement
 Heather Gunn (HG) Marketing, Brand and Partnerships Manager
 Martin Beaumont (MB) Head of Operations
 Steve Taylor (ST) Finance Manager
 Sally Cunningham HR and Admin Manager (Minutes)

University Staff

Prof. Keith McLay (KM) Provost, Learning & Teaching
 Russ Lewis (RL) Head of Student Engagement

APOLOGIES:

Dom White VP Activities
 Rosie Smith University's Head of Financial Accounting

Absent:

No one

1. Welcome and Apologies - CH

The Chair welcomed all to this meeting. Particularly our student trustees to their first meeting; AW, AF and JB. Duly noting we are a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Charity. There is an assumption from the Chair that everyone has read the papers for today's meeting, giving the opportunity for questions to be asked with clarification given as required.

Apologies/absentees are noted above.

2. To approve the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 04 07 2022 – CH

TB/10.2022/001

Minutes from the last meeting *agreed* as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters arising from: 04.07.2022 - CH

Matters to note/update:

Student Trustee recruitment – agenda item 13.

4. Reports from sub committees to note – CH

TB/10.2022/002

4.1 Audit and Risk draft minutes – 08/08/2022

4.2 Finance and HR Draft minutes – this committee has not met since the last Trustee Board

Minutes from the last Audit and Risk committee meeting 08/08/2022 are *agreed* as a true and accurate record.

FOR DISCUSSION/APPROVAL:

5. University strategic overview – KM

Verbal

CH - this is the most important part of our meeting, as we need to agree the Unions strategic plan for the coming 2 to 3 years and we felt it is appropriate before we agree that to invite KM and RL to present the University's view and how they see the next three years and to inform the Board of what is happening from the University's perspective.

KM presented to the Board an insight into the University's direction through to 2025 and beyond, in terms of the University's disposition the main aim of the presentation covers the below within the strategy plan:

- Pillars (or the line of sight) over a 10-year the core strategic framework period include game changers (student achievements), positive impacts (an anchor institution) and opening doors (upward mobility) and what we achieve.

Over 3-5 years the University looks at the institutional success measures that are linked also to the 6 academic themes while the annual planning of the core deliveries of what the University delivers over a 1-year timeframe.

An overview of Student Engagement – RL

Verbal

Student Engagement is a philosophical way of working with students – students working with other students and staff and staff working with students is the key to being treated equally. What RL's department does is work with students from primary age for example learning from them for example their experience of Covid impacting on the classroom.

At a strategic level the key priorities have been around the arrival of students here at Derby to ensure they feel welcomed and how we structure their experience from application process through being on site, so they are in the best possible position academically to start their journey.

Student safety is another key area, to make sure students felt safe in Derby – having worked with OM in terms of campaigns. A key aspect working all the way through the student engagement is student voice, working alongside the Union of Students is a core part, in addition RL is responsible for actioning the work that KM is responsible for. For example, the National Student Survey (NSS) and looking at ways that we find other ways of capturing the student voice, so we are not missing big themes rather than over surveying our students the collaboration with the Union is important around that.

Core themes for student engagement are:

- Culture of partnership / participation – where staff and students work though any problems together
- Student performance – learning analytics allows all students to look at the data that we hold at any key point for example asking what is my attendance like? What are my grades like?
- This is a 9-year plan – 6 years of full work reaching another 3 years to fully evaluate where we are.

In addition to the student engagement CW and RL have been tasked with creating a Cost-of-Living task group, one of our teams has completed research into what other institutions are doing. The partnership work with Derby City Council has been great, one of the aspects they wanted to do is put on their radar looking at different ways in supporting people, good practice is already happening in the Normanton area. That they want to expand and are looking at funding additional resources into that area. This doesn't necessarily mean food banks rather, how to manage debt. We know students have access to a large amount of money at the start of their academic studies, but not necessarily have the knowledge of how to manage that money. It is certainly a topic of importance as students are not going to feel as though they belong if they are worried about debt.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- In terms of the strategic 5-year plan the university are in the middle of that, that will take us to 2025 with the ten-year plan taking us through to 2030.
- We know now that Derby has an increasing number of internal students and postgrad, we are seeing a completely different student body compared with that of the past. The
- The University is realising the foundations that have been laid over several years, the growth of international students has been brilliant, and that identification of our

student body will lead to a far richer sense of student engagement as we are able to harness the voice of so many different people.

- It has been great to see this today and we hope that the culture continues.
- What works well has always been the dialogue with the Union's Officer Trustees for example being invited to attend the Education Council giving an insight into what students want; how they perceive the University and being able to attend the Unions Trustee subcommittee meetings would be helpful for RL.
- Access to student data is an issue for the Union as students must opt in, that would give the Union easy contact with the student body. CH met with the VC and CW to discuss the issue; RL is of the opinion that that had been signed off at a Student Affairs Committee pre Covid; the VC has asked why has this not been completed? When the GDPR changed the Union had to change the fields we had asked for, which anonymised the most data so having meaning demographics has disappeared. We can speak to students at the point of enrolment, but at that point we are unable to do many demographic analytics.

To note: KM can commit to picking up the access to data for the Union and will make enquires, to see where we are in terms of accessing the student data.

The Board duly **receive** University strategic overview.

Chair thanked both KL and RL for their presentations, they left the meeting at 5:35pm.

6. Strategic Plan presentation – CW, ET-L, HG and MB **TB/10/2022/003**

A concern CW has is the word EVERY. One of the comments in the research is that there is too much of a 'you come to us' attitude. We need to focus on the Students Union being more than a physical building, but a concept that you carry around with you, having positive experiences of who you are.

The proposed vision is to have a positive impact on EVERY student, asking the Board to consider the other phrases around positively impacting on the student experience as well as the considerations for our mission.

We are looking at students as a block of people, and we want to engage with as many as possible. What is important is we identify them at different stages in their Union experience. Sheffield has a process by looking at the stages of engagement for example stage 1 for Sheffield is there is no real idea of feeling who they are, stage 2 is becoming an SU service user, stage 3 is becoming a SU service provider, stage 4 is becoming an SU service leader by becoming a Student Trustee. The question is how does a Union get themselves from stage 0, that is not being involved in the Union? Strategically rather than saying to us as a staff team to do it all, is there a call for one group moving disproportionately more than another? Should we get more stage 0's to stage 1's than stage 2's to 3's?

Some points noted are is students realise 65% of their tuition fees were given to the Union as part of the block grant, we wonder whether they would they be happy with the service? The research proves that some students do not think we do enough for them, and we have a lack

of visibility. If we had to defend the purpose of a Union, would students defend us as a Union?

How do we encourage a change of student mindset and inform students of what a Union can be or is it not for everyone?

Another question is who is doing digital provision well in terms of students are twice as likely to engage online?

Students who have identified emotional and mental support should be the Unions top priority and the importance of inductions.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- General feelings are that the proposed wording is fine, and it does have a true vision and mission to it.
- To have a positive impact for EVERY student – is a good bold statement.
- Visions are what you aim for – to strive to impact EVERY student. The reality is a 'get of jail free' card being the version of a positive impact is that the Union cannot change how a student feels or their experience or how a student is choosing to be. But by leaving a student alone is important, because if they do not want to engage perhaps that student just wants to learn, in other words by leaving the student is great.
- It is compelling in recognising that the Union wants to support the students, what the Union is here to do is to have a positive impact on EVERY student, the mission follows through to this.
- Previously we have worked hard to reach those very hard-to-reach student groups and almost ignored the power of the collectivism. If we are looking at first years, they have a unified experience of 'newness' having less awareness than a second or third year. It is all about the potential threshold for example you can't go 0 to 60 if someone is only ever going to go 20, we must have that journeyed approach considering where are the students at now and where can the Union get them to? Too often we try to push people all the way, but a big change through this proposed strategy is for the Union to think that is okay and we are here for EVERY student.
- To have an agreed collective approach in accepting the fact that a student may only want to purchase a cup of tea every two days rather than concentrating aiming to impact on all students – if a student wants to be left alone then accepting the fact that is fine too.

The Board duly **approves** strategic plan – with the caveat the senior management team to set the KPI's and work from there.

ET-L – Membership Services Presentation

The membership services presentation details the membership departments priorities for the year ahead based on the strategic priorities and goals identified by the Red Brick Research they conducted last year.

As before already mentioned the research identified the following priority areas:

- Awareness and Understanding of the Union of Students

- Supporting Student Needs
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Digital Provision
- Easing Students Financial Pressures

There was nothing particularly surprising that emerged from the research with many of the areas complimenting what we are already working on looking to achieve.

Based on the consultation held with Union staff by the previous Head of Engagement and subsequent conversations and meetings with the Union senior leadership team to explore those priorities and our strategic goals were agreed.

The priorities set out for the three membership teams – advice, activities, and voice and to look at the priorities for the union champion groups:

Advice:

- Offer face to face support to students beyond the Kedleston Road site
- Develop the Sexual Violence Liaison Service in collaboration with the university, create a Union welcome booklet for international students
- Create visual online resources to increase accessibility
- Money Management Campaign

The Brit Mill provision will be our starting point and we look to develop this throughout the year to other sites – including Chesterfield. Last year the Union invested in training two staff members to become sexual violence liaison officers. We will continue to invest in this area and work closely with the university to develop a model that effectively supports students reporting cases of sexual violence. Our Advice Centre Manager is already having conversations with the Head of Student Services. Last year we saw an increase in the numbers of international students accessing the service plagiarism aside – we saw trends around dependents, housing, visas, and right to work – as a result of this we would like to work in collaboration with the university to develop a student friendly union guide which focuses on the issues we see in the hope to reduce the number of cases we see. With consideration given to the different languages to make it clear and transparent for the international students.

Work has already started on the advice section of the website – where we hope to develop further is to create video content explaining the university regulations – i.e., appeals, complaints, etc.

The last priority here is going to be extremely important this year as we respond to students in hardship due to the cost-of-living crisis – the team are planning a whole of host of events, activities, social media campaigns to Proactively communicate money-saving opportunities and resources.

Activities:

- Increase membership across all areas

- Increase the number of Clubs and Societies available
- Developing areas of Activities – volunteering plan, sports bursary scheme, society funding process.
- Promote the opportunities of societies to support widening participation for 'hard to reach' student groups.

As we look to increase the awareness of the Union and create a sense of community and belonging – we are keen to increase the number of students joining our clubs/societies and student lead services.

Additionally – we are looking to increase the clubs and societies available for students to join and will be looking to ensure students know how to set up clubs and socs – whilst also creating opportunities for students to seek out like minded students. This is a vague priority, but we are looking to develop various areas of activities – the list here is not exhaustive and I look forward to welcoming our Activities Manager to join us at the next trustee meeting to share an update on the progress within his team.

Finally – we have activities plan to – this will be through funding opportunities, bursary opportunities, and reviewing the club and society offer to do some targeted work to support students to set up societies that our hard-to-reach students feel are relevant to them.

Voice:

- Increase the number of students in student representative roles
- Our Student Voice Manager is keen to explore innovative ways to make the Union elections more engaging and used as a tool to promote our service and democratic function
- Create an active and welcoming community between reps
- Increase student engagement with Peer Assisted Learning (PAL), through the roles of leaders and learners
- Develop student voice portal to include FE and PGR reps and increase its overall usage with students and staff

The Voice team is involved with our Student Reps, Student Education and Welfare Officers. We have never carried out snap elections before or considered a 24-hour voting period – we are looking forward to seeing the outcomes and gauge student feedback from this. We hope to achieve this through a community building activity for our Reps and PAL leaders.

We have appointed a new PAL coordinator and we hope with this role in place we can further develop and promote the opportunities through this scheme. We have already seen great progress with the student voice portal – looking to see an increase in effective usage for students and staff:

- Buxton and Leek College - Boost clothes bank, sanitary protection, personal hygiene products. Looking to launch this after the college half term.
- NUS Green impact - run effective projects and campaigns around sustainability.
- Team Accessibility Audits.
- Produce, implement, and communicate a mental health at work action plan.

Union Champion Teams:

- Equality and Diversity - audits to review each team's accessibility – to understand how accessible they are by looking at communications, physical etc – once collated the champion group will look at the areas of development and put actions in place.
- Sustainability.
- Mental Health at Work - focus is currently around the staff but will be looking at implementing a mental health at work action plan.

ET-L is keen for the managers of these teams to attend our next board meeting so they can share their KPI's and present to the Board their updates.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- The Board wish ET-L every success on the heavy agenda this area has, congratulating her on her presentation.
- The SVLO is limited because this is run through the Advice Service, who are all female. What will be important for the Union is a joined-up approach that we need to have with university. We are aware the university are looking to invest in this, so the Union are hopeful with a bigger staff resource we can ensure we can secure both male trained SVLO's and trained SVLO's representing different cultures.
- As part of the induction process, we deliver Roadshows, this is something that continues throughout the academic year as well as ensuring we are and have a continued presence at other sites.
- Our Officer Trustees deliver several Welcome/Induction Talks at all sites.
- Our marketing team reintroduce the Officers with a video series (that is happening now). The Union student platforms deliver something different by looking at a journeyed approach via centralised platforms that is something we learnt from the pandemic – that it doesn't matter where a student is the Union are still able to reach students particularly via Instagram, rather than just putting a poster up.

The Board duly **approve** Strategic Plan presentations.

Action: The senior management team to set the KPI's and work from there.

7. Officer Themes – OM, DW, AM and CY

TB/10/2022/004

- Community and Belonging
- Development and Opportunities
- Support and Accessibility

These themes fit well within the Officer manifesto points:

- OM – Student Safety, Belonging and Extracurricular and Life Skills
- DW – Facilities for Sports, Societies and Student Led Services
- AM – Open Book Exams, Increase Industrial Year Employability, Mental Health Support for all Students, and No Idea Left Behind
- CY – Student Safety, Wellbeing Officers, Promote ED&I and Sustainability

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

None raised.

The Board duly *receive* Officer Themes.

8. Block grant update – CW

TB/10.2022/005

The Chair congratulated CW on the Block Grant Proposal noting it has not been easy this year. [Redacted], we have to future-proof the decisions that we take. We need to be mindful of what the Board wants to do with the reserves, with the Union defining what we spend the reserves on and be determined in our response.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- It is a surprise to see the university's change in their approach towards the union, after being involved with this process for a number of years this subject has never come up.
- In having so many conversations about our staffing costs and reserves, as previously the block grant has concentrated on identifying gaps, being innovative and ambitious. It is such a shock to realise the change in the university's approach, as if this is how it is going to be in the future, we are completely having to reposition ourselves.
- The wording within the paper suggested by the University HR Director is that they are not there to pay staff better...it is not about paying staff better - it is about paying staff at the level at which we should be paying them - at the market conditions. It is about paying staff for a fair day's pay.
- We have reassured the university that we are a living wage employer our student staff we employee are paid at a higher age bracket, but this new scrutiny on staffing and what we are paying staff is such odds at how the university are operating that we are unsure where it has come through.
- Historically the university do tend to react this way if they have serious doubts about commercial performance, if they believe there is a dip in commercials they will respond in a more aggressive way, this is because they assume that the union are requesting the university to cover the shortcomings in our commercial areas.
- In the original paper submitted CW was advised to stripe the detail out so all the university saw was these two comparisons panels for membership and central services. But then in commercials they only saw one that was the projections for the year ahead that did not include last years, as the university said they did not need to know that information – hence asking CW to strip the detail (in reality our commercials performance is projected to double to that of last year). This resulted in the university sensing that we took that out seeing that maybe our commercial performance has dipped from the year before.
- The agreement came with conditions and does put the union in a good place for next year, albeit we do have allies within the university.
- The reserves particularly came under scrutiny several times.

The Board duly *approve* the Block Grant Update.

Summary: Operating results

[Redacted]

Key variances to Forecast

[Redacted]

Additional comments/clarification:

- MB - please be aware that due to some technical issues impacting our stock figures within Retail and some working needing to be done on the correct allocation of Freshers income the commercial figures are not entirely accurate and me and the team will need some time to work on this over the next week to resolve. Historically we would have had this time and been able to support ST prior to the meeting, however with it being moved forward a week there has not been the time for this to take place.
- The issues are around IT is the new database that can be determined to user error, but we are able to correct that.
- We need to acknowledge that ST would normally issue commentary with the accounts, however with this meeting being moved forward by two weeks to allow quoracy it has not been possible.

The Board duly *receive* August/September management accounts (2) – with the caveat MB will update Commercial areas via email upon the completion of the management accounts review

FOR NOTING

10. Union Update – MB/HG

MB – verbal overview

MB – trading has seen a large amount increase in footfall in Blends, Friargate is above our expectations, Markeaton Street shop is difficult at times, this is because the smaller sites are more challenging trading wise. We met our expectations over Freshers period with our affiliates, so we are on track in terms of delivering those numbers. Challenges in Keddies is due to stock, we have a trainee Retail Manager in place – that has been a steep learning curve for the first few weeks of the academic year where we were caught short by the increase in footfall to ensure the shelves were fully stocked. This was impacted slightly by the Queens funeral, in terms of cramming weekend enrolments into the week.

This will be summarised in the commercials report to follow shortly.

HG - TB/10.2022/007

HG - essentially, we met all expectations in terms of income generation and some of the media sales and Market Traders. We have a new Commercial Coordinator who is working

effectively with local independent businesses on a rolling weekly basis who are on site up to three times a week.

Freshers Village is a huge infrastructure that needs to cover costs, we had a number of new partnerships that we hope to build on throughout the year. We collaborated with RL's team on a couple of key events. Interestingly they have moved their strategic direction away from delivering events, because they know that is where the Union excels. Traditionally an event called Moving Day is now called Welcome Fest where we are given £14k to deliver a catering opportunity, entertainment, and a general welcome from the Union – we saw that being bigger than ever this year and was a real success. Just recently we have hosted a dedicated Internal Students event in Basecamp. We saw around 600 students from Nigerian, Indian and Chinese and Austrian communities, where they enjoyed music from local musicians and a British buffet. We were able to create an opportunity for different demographics to connect.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

None raised.

The Board duly *note* Union updates.

11. CEO update – CW

TB/10.2022/008

In addition to the paper in terms of HG's upcoming maternity leave, MB is stepping up to take over the strategic management of the Marketing team, with a developmental opportunity of one member of that team. These will come with some cost savings.

We are holding SNAP Elections tomorrow with a 24-hour voting window. Subject to the response from student voters the main Elections (held in March) will be looked at potentially to be 24-hour voting period as opposed to a 3-day voting period. CW does have some concerns over this, one being that voter turnout is a metric we use, therefore if we reduce the time that people can vote automatically will reduce the capacity of student voters. This is an operational decision that will have strategic implications because we then must be a lot braver in terms of the numbers are going to fall. We are going to try this.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- In terms of 24-hour voting at the main Elections – it is a tricky one to decide on as this has not been done before.
- Do we need to look at data to understand when more students are on site?
- This is good time to test a 24-hour voting period to evaluate ahead of the main Election period. Evidence is required as the Union will be judged by the University.
- Conversations are taking place in terms of postal votes that it would not necessarily mean just a 24-hour period.
- We need to consider a 24-hour period would impact on students who are not feeling well or not able to be on site at the time of voting.
- Until the data is through, we are unable to make a definite decision on 24-hour voting period for future elections.

The Board duly *note* CEO update.

12. Risk Register – CW

TB/10.2022/009

CH - the risk register is a great document and an important one.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

None raised.

The Board duly *note* risk register.

13. Trustee Recruitment Update – CW

Verbal

Several people reached out to CW asking if they could do this role. Unfortunately, none came forward and submitted their application. Interestingly several other Unions were recruiting for Trustee roles at the same time, so it is not just Derby. We will look at re-recruiting.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- It would be a conflict of interest if a university staff member came forward to be a Trustee but not necessarily a barrier to the role.

The Board duly *note* Trustee Recruitment Update.

14. Any Other Business

ET-L and CW are arranging the Christmas meal on Friday December 16th, Trustees are cordially invited.

Meeting ended at 7:15 pm.

Date of next meetings:

- Tuesday 31 January 2023, 5 pm – 7 pm, room TBC
- AGM: Tuesday 28th February 2023 – Time TBC, in person
- Tuesday 25 April 2023, 5 pm – 7 pm, room TBC

Trustee Board Meeting Action Summary 18.10. 2022

| No | ACTION | ACTION OWNER | DUE DATE | STATUS OF THIS ACTION |
|----|---|--------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | <i>Strategic Plan - the senior management team to set the KPI's and work from there</i> | SLT | 31 01 2023 | |
| 2. | Reserves principles are still being discussed. | TB & SLT | 31 03 2023 | ONGOING |
| 3. | <i>MB to provide data in terms of student footfall for Blends at Friar Gate Square with the view to earlier opening times</i> | MB | 31 01 2023 | ONGOING |

✓ COMPLETED OVERDUE OUTSTANDING ONGOING