

University of Derby Students' Union Trustee Board Summary Sheet

Agenda Reference:	TB/2021/
Title of Report:	Minutes of the last meeting – 30.03.2021
Written By:	Sally Cunningham – HR & Admin Manager
Presented By:	Chris Hughes, Chair
Action Requested:	Approval

Trustee Board Meeting

Tuesday 30th March 2021– 5 p.m. Via Microsoft Teams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Hughes (CH) Chair

Trustee Board:

Joel Boulter (JB) Student Trustee
Helen Roberts (HR) External Trustee
Michael Spencer (MS) External Trustee
Nicola Hartley (NH) External Trustee

Officer Trustees:

Corey Beck (CB) President
Josh Williams (JW) VP Activities
Nina Cupric (NC) VP Education
Emily Lane (EL) VP Welfare

Union of Students:

Vicky Hossack (VH) Chief Executive
Martin Beaumont (MB) Head of Operations
Suzy Stevenson (SS) Head of Membership
Steve Taylor (ST) Finance Manager
Sally Cunningham HR & Admin Manager (Minutes)

APOLOGIES:

None received.

Absent:

Tony Atherton External Trustee

1. Welcome and Apologies - CH

Chair welcomed all to this meeting. Duly noting we are a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Charity.

Apologies / absentees noted above.

To note - Officer Trustees have a conflict of interest for agenda item 6. Exceptional Pay Award and therefore cannot take part in any deciding vote.

2. To approve the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 25.01.21 **TB/2021/012**
Minutes from the last meeting *agreed* as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters arising from: 25.01.21
Future of Academy Bar – business plan presented for Board Approval – **agenda item 7.**

FOR DECISION

4. Block Grant Application & Draft Budget – VH/SS **TB/2021/013**

The Union showcase what we have achieved within the document, such as sharing some of our key successes. Included in the paper is a report on what we have done with the money given to us last year that includes an update on our KPI's. We then look ahead in terms of what the landscape will be and what our priorities are for the year ahead and because we are going into the last year of our strategic plan, we feel while this will be a bridging year, we are still being ambitious in terms of the requests we are putting to the University for an additional £50k increase to the block grant, for the assisted projects around Peer Assisted Learning (PAL), and an expansion to the service we offer to the Buxton and Leek College.

When we presented our proposal to the University it was received positively, although that is not to say that money was readily available owing to our request representing a sizable increase. The University see the partnership having grown this year and recognise and value the Union's contribution. We realised we would be measured against the PAL project, which has grown this year showing a good barometer in line for future projects and further funding.

We have had some comments around duplication of service, that also came up last year where we started to have some conversations with the Provost and the Head of Careers and Employability, around what areas the Union delivers that are duplicated within departments/teams at the University. Unfortunately, the conversation did not get any further mainly because the Provost left but also outside that team and University Finance there was no appetite to look at that challenge and make changes. The Vice Chancellor is putting that back to the Union in terms of asking where those duplications are, and us asking for a substantial increase to this year's block grant, as funding will need to be taken from elsewhere in the University.

The follow up piece of work that will act as an appendix to the document alongside our block grant application, as well as finalising the budget and financial ask, is a 'value for money' statement which shows just how much the Union does with every £1 the University gives us and how much additional value we can give as opposed to other areas of the University, in terms of the difference it can make to the student experience.

Block Grant and Budget Timeline:

April – Beginning of the negotiation phase with the Vice Chancellors Executive.

May – Final approval from the University VCE.

July – Final sign off at the University Governing Council and taken to our Trustee Board.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- **[Redacted]**.
- The NSS section rising in league tables and referring to performance and student judgement is very impressive showing a trajectory upwards therefore the University investments are paying off.
- An excellent application, a really strong document and through the questions around impacts on any duplication of services, there may be options that may not have been on the table before.

The Board duly **approve** Block Grant application and Draft Budget.

5. Pay Framework - VH

TB/2021/014

The proposal outlines that the Union moves away from a single pay spine, to more of a job family approach. Because the Union is a small organisation and the roles are so different in applying a single spine is difficult, but by drawing on NH's expertise and at our Finance & HR Sub Committee in January a more appropriate and effective way to incentivise performance and reward, exceptional performance is something that we set out to achieve.

Having the opportunity to meet and consult with permanent staff, who generally feel that exceptional pay awards are unattainable, and that there is too much in the way to be able to release that award. Similarly, they do not feel motivated to try and get to that point, feeling it is difficult with the competencies we are assessing them against being so removed from their day-to-day work.

A job family approach will allow VH and SC to do more accurate salary benchmarking within the organisation and considering the differences between the three very distinct departments we have within the Union. A new matrix to award increments, will remove the fixed steps and the sense of entitlement and expectation they get from the current system to recognising where performance is high or not and adjusting staff pay annually and accordingly.

Subject to approval, further work will take place to include:

1. Prepare an implementation and roll out of the new framework (to include individual meetings with all salaried staff to explain the changes and their position on the new framework)
2. Carry out a review of the PDR process to review competencies and update manager role in new pay matrix.
3. Carry out ongoing pay benchmarking with a view to complete a formal review every 2 years.

In doing this work we can make sure pay bands are benchmarked appropriately against the sector and ensure they are clear, consistent, and broad offering the right amount of progression for staff. And by having a Reward Policy suggested by NH, that will sit behind all the changes and clearly explaining the process to employees.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- The idea of this new system is there will be one annual interval where pay is reviewed and changes applied from 1st August, therefore having removed the cost-of-living interval that we would normally apply in April. This will allow it all to come together as one decision, through one budget that is set ahead as part of that process.
- All managers will need to ensure PDR appraisals are complete by the end of June, we are looking to agree the new framework and have written the reward policy ready to share with staff by the end of April.
- If we want to move from an incremental pay culture to a true performance culture there are two critical elements,
 1. Having a very clear Reward Policy that will give clarity to what the rules and expectations of staff can be. To have a moderating element, so staff should feel comfortable they are being performance managed equally and effectively as everyone else.
 2. Performance Management training will be critical, allowing everyone to have the confidence in having a fair and transparent process.
- A great paper and really makes sense, the Union is not alone on making these types of changes and with the principles followed by many employers.
- We have no trade union rep/agreement and so no formal approval is required. Our contracts refer to a framework only so as this new proposal still offers a framework, we can adopt these changes as we see fit.
- There is no overlap in B and C bands as there is for bands A and B, this is because the bands are currently matched across our old framework and is where that extra piece of work is needed in terms of ensuring there is an overlap between all bands.
- Traditionally amongst Student Unions student employee pay is linked to the annual National Minimum and National Living hourly wage increases applied in April. A number of Unions have advocated financial support from the University to pay student staff the *real* living wage rather than the national living wage. The University of Derby do not pay that real living wage, so they were not prepared to financially support the Union to do the same. When we modelled that it made a significant difference to our wage and cost bill.
- Our approach has always been that we do not pay the minimum hourly rate – if a member of student staff joins us at 18 years, we have maintained paying all student staff the minimum hourly wage for a 21-year-old, and more latterly we pay the national living wage to those who for this year are aged 23 and over. Work will begin with a benchmarking element of how the Union set and agree student pay once this piece of work is completed for all permanent employees.
- The consultation process was insightful and gave individuals the opportunity to think about how they have approached the process in the past. Having dealt with the incremental scheme that creates a sense of entitlement, in having what feels like more comprehensive and up to date scheme related to performance is welcome and will support managers in terms of the process around performance.
- We are able to utilise our Performance Improvement Plan that supports those staff who are underperforming, and aids managers to understand if there are any underling issues, in addition it is a useful tool in supporting a development culture.

- We are working to the 3% budget that was set as part of the draft budget, there might be one or two members of staff that shift within the bands we create, therefore there will not be a significant financial impact in terms of introducing this framework and cost.
- In terms of manager training, we can approach TA to deliver the training, otherwise NH has a team who are more than happy to write a training module and deliver it and NUS could put forward some suggestions of consultants they work with. The University HR team could potentially lend support.

Action: any changes to the new pay framework and reward policy will be shared with the Board via email for any further comments.

The Board duly **approve** Pay Framework.

6. Exceptional Pay Award – VH

TB/2021/015

At the last Finance & HR meeting we presented the reforecast that could potentially be stronger if we do not have the VAT liability falling in this year and we continue to maximise our use of the furlough scheme up until the end of this financial year - if not into next. It is not impossible that we could finish the end of the year with a significant surplus of £80/£100k.

From a staff perspective all were placed on a pay freeze, apart from awarding a cost of living in April 2020 at 2%. Since then, we did not apply any performance increments in September 2020 and staff were prepared there would not be a cost-of-living award this year. That pay freeze as far as the staff are concerned is still in effect, and from an ethical viewpoint finishing the year with a surplus and staff not having the opportunities they would normally be afforded to have the cost-of-living increase, made us consider whether we would want to make a gesture towards staff and officers for the fact that pay freeze has been in effect and our financial position is strong heading to the end of the year.

By acting as a recognition to our staff who have all been working part time hours on part time furlough but maintain taking on a lot of work with less time to complete and who have dedicated themselves to that purpose. Trustees are asked to approve a one-off pay award to all staff and officer trustees in recognition of continued commitment and high-quality services to our students and considering the pay freeze taking effect, or to look at applying a cost-of-living increase as we normally would with that impacting on peoples take home pay as minimal compared to a one-off gesture that our finances can currently support.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- Whilst there was an understanding of what was going on in terms of the pandemic, when the pay freeze was announced it was not well received, that we are now able to offer a one-off reward as a recognition to their hard work will be very well received.
- Makes sense to make the award the one-off with staff knowing that a new framework is coming in from August time, staff will feel appreciated.
- The proposal is sensible and is a positive recognition statement as a one-off and fits well also with the pay framework, but the decision should not be linked.
- The plan is to announce at the All Staff Briefing after the Easter break, to implement within April salary.

- To clarify one-off pay award of £250 gross per person (subject to tax and NI).

The Board duly **approve** Exceptional Pay Award.

FOR DISCUSSION

7. Academy Bar – Outline Proposal - MB

Tabled

The paper outlined the current landscape surrounding the potential refurbishment of the Academy Bar at the Kedleston Road site. Included within it is a request for a discussion regarding how the board would like this move forward with this.

The full level of works is estimated to be around the £250-300k mark, however the current University budget available is approximately £150k. Their current budget would be sufficient to complete a small refurbishment, however this would fail to resolve some of the longer-term issues we have been looking to resolve, therefore it would be prudent to consider a large Union investment to complete the project properly.

Due to the complexities and constantly changing scope of this project it has not yet been possible to put together a full business case for the space as it is not fully clear what service we could offer at this stage. Although we could put together a simple business case for the operation of a café, these figures will heavily be impacted by what other elements are included in the scheme. The installation of bookable meeting spaces, flexible study areas and a better decking area will translate into additional sales, therefore we need to identify what investment, if any, that we would be willing to make towards the scheme that I could work towards putting a business case together to support.

It is important for all Board members to consider the importance of this space excluding the commercial elements of it. Resolving issues around meeting spaces, accessible study spaces, club and society engagement and the overall visibility of the Union in general are potentially worth the investment alone and something the SMT are keen to resolve as part of this project. As agreed previously, this project is not being proposed for financial gain and there is unlikely to be a return on investment, however the potential impact of the works should be the biggest factor in any decision.

Based on the information available MB recommends a Board discussion regarding the Unions ability to contribute towards this project and what levels it would consider doing so. This information can then be used to create a clearer picture of what is achievable as part of this scheme, with a business case being formed around this and sent out to the Board via email.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- In terms of timing (ready for September), from a University perspective they are not viewing this as a large refurbishment, as over the summer months is when completing large scale work is usually completed.
- The Business Plan will be a full budgeted plan in terms of what we are looking to deliver from a provision perspective.
- Working on new model for Blends would significantly reduce staffing levels, by simplifying the menu. By improving and creating a better student focused space where they can feel comfortable and can be utilised morning through to evening, by getting the business model right we can capture students for light refreshments and provide good service.

- From a membership engagement perspective of the bookable student space, year on year the feedback from our student Societies is they do not have access student friendly spaces.
- After speaking to students, JB has gained an insight that students do desire additional space, with a more relaxed environment.
- Those city centre partnerships will be key in terms of trying to replace some of that income. As will the successful roll out of the 'Campus Kitchen' wagon situated on all sites and Halls.
- There is no cap ex limit for the board and payback period has typically always been on a case-by-case business as outlined in the business plan. At Audit and Risk meeting, the University intimated that as a shared investment, they could take the depreciation of the project, with the Union making a one-off payment to the Uni for the project and avoiding the ongoing depreciation costs.
- The Union potentially have the facility to match fund the costs referring to the reserves on the balance sheet to commit to that - subject to the amount agreed.
- We have reached an agreement with some clubs in Derby city centre, in delivering Fresher's activities that will see good financial income with very little involvement from the Union.
- In terms of the business plan, best case scenarios will be included within the project, to provide the Board with a sense of what the revenue and profit indications look like. A consultation will take place with students to gain their comments.

The Board feels comfortable to commit to the first stage at £100k (with the decking area to be included), subject to a full business plan being submitted to Board, and to come back to the Board for approval should the Union need to access an additional £50k.

Action - MB email Academy bar Business Plan to the Board for any comments.

The Board duly *receive* Academy Bar outline proposal.

8. KPI Q3 Update - SS

Tabled

Considering the situation at the start of 2021, we have managed to achieve an acceptable level of activity to date. We set ourselves the task of getting our Societies and Clubs to deliver at least one online event in the first term, for example the Business Society are doing weekly social and academic activities.

There is one area of risk to highlight within championing clear and effective student voice, where we set ourselves an ambitious task of achieving a 30-1 student to representative ratio. In a normal year we would have been on course to achieve this, however it has been impossible to have physical presence to encourage those elections to happen, sadly the reality is we are not going to hit that target. We still have Reps for every program, but we wanted to increase the quality of what was being delivered, therefore having more Reps to students.

Our Academic Representation Policy will be implemented in 2021/22 and will embed a new approach for the institution aiming to satisfy the quality assurance approach for the University and the Office for Students.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:
None raised.

The Board duly *receive* KPI Q3 Update

FOR NOTING

9. Finance Update (February) – ST

TB/2021/016

Summary: Operating results

Income summary 7 Months to 28 Feb 2021

	Budget £000s	Actual £000s	Variance £000s	Forecast £000s
Grants	629.8	652.8	23.0	649.1
Core/Support	83.1	21.3	(61.8)	43.7
Venues	58.6	67.8	9.2	69.1
Retail	103.2	84.2	(19.0)	82.6
TOTAL	874.7	826.1	(48.6)	844.4

Net Surplus/(Deficit) 7 Months to 28 Feb 2021

	Budget £000s	Actual £000s	Variance £000s	Forecast £000s
Core/Support	82.4	127.8	45.4	132.8
Venues	(37.3)	(32.7)	4.4	(30.4)
Retail	(36.0)	(26.7)	9.3	(27.9)
TOTAL	9.1	68.3	59.2	74.6

Sales/Net Income

Grant Income - Net gain of [Redacted] to date from extended CJRS.

Activities – Sporting activity did not commence this year producing cost savings.

Welfare - £8k college income budgeted, not proceeding.

Democracy - £15k PAL income budgeted - PO just promised today by University.

Other cost centers performing to within +/- £2-3k tolerance of net income forecast.

Balance Sheet

Cash - Bank position shows a positive movement by £80k during the period to £945k bank balance, drivers being mainly Covid-JRS income driven £147k YTD.

Trade Debtors – Balance at £22k, University £17k (£2k 1918/19 debt discussed shared w/off with UoD today)

Other Debtors – Mainly prepayments (Insurance £11k, February CJRS £18k, £19k Facility hire 2019/20 due from UoD, discussed today)

Trade Creditors – Balance £10k, UoD balance £NIL.

Other Creditors – Mainly accrued costs (audit £7k, Nuffield hire £9k, general PO commitment £6k. Preferential creditors – PAYE/NIC £17k and VAT £17k Covid deferment from Apr 20 to Mar- Dec 21 (instalments).

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

None raised.

The Board duly **note** Finance Update (February).

10. Union Trends Report – February 2021 - SS

TB/2021/017

The data coming through has proven the value of the report and specifically to the Union, in terms of being able to bring the voice of the student forward. Credit to our Officer team who have been running the “Thursday thoughts” a weekly poll that asks a series of relevant questions, either relating to Officer manifestos or to the University. Those topics have ranged from whether measures on site have been adequate, through to how students are getting on at home and what they would like to see from the Union in the future.

The stats around College student forums; a new concept that sits as a feature as part of the Academic Rep Policy, is another way to capture an opportunity to obtain the student voice, this allows a two-way conversation with students and College senior leadership teams.

In terms of specific Covid-19 issues which caused a slow start particularly for Societies, when members committed to a digital only offer, we saw a recovery in membership numbers with all credit to student led Societies.

We are seeing more cases for our Advice service particularly around accommodation, specifically issues with Halls of Residence and the flexible student contracts and the University have since responded to those student concerns.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- The Union Officers have remained up to date with information around vaccinations, working closely with Derby city and the University ensuring communication is kept up to date and more accessible for students.
- Currently there is no indication that the University will introduce Vaccination Passports.

The Board duly **note** Union Trends Report.

11. CEO Report - VH

TB/2021/018

We have a couple of vacancies for Student Trustees and have received interest from students who wish to become a Student Trustee that will be from July onwards. At the next full Board meeting we will have some new faces and the new Officer team for 2021/22 will be present.

The current Officer team are having their 360 feedback reviews, we will be working with the outgoing team with their development and action plans and supporting NC for her transition as a returning Officer.

CB and VH have continued to respond to the online Student Summit held in February, where 100+ came together to discuss their tuition fees and value for money, with examples and case studies of their experiences. We took practical actions, to become more involved in the NUS campaign and to revisit what is happening nationally at Government level and lobbying MPs for greater clarity of information.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:
None raised.

The Board duly *notes* CEO Report.

12. Officer Scrutiny Reports – OT's

TB/2021/019

Updates/main focuses:

President - CB – main focus around that communication piece with the University and making sure they remain committed to one accessible page with clear and honest information. <https://youtu.be/z5JGoabRMQg> - a great example of the type of collaborative communications 'Using Your Campus' that we have been working on.

VP Welfare - EL – Student Loneliness and Safety - Virtual Living Room in the trial stage, however student response is positive and Report and Support, waiting for IT support from the University to ensure a secure system in place. Mental health has been very different this year, more students are struggling with issues that have been exemplified due to isolation.

VP Education - NC – Largest project to date is the Academic Representation Policy, in terms of how we better utilise our volunteers and ensure there is a difference between student representation and student feedback, making sure the flow of information is more efficient and effective.

VP Activities - JW – Successful mental health training has now been delivered to our committee members; this will be repeated but at the start of the academic year as a mandatory session to ensure we create a mentally health aware community of students. We have received confirmation that both 3G pitches at KR will be upgraded to 4G and will be completed for the start of the academic year.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:
None raised.

The Board duly *note* Officer Scrutiny Reports.

13. Election Report – SS

TB/2021/020

We saw a higher number of candidates running than we have seen in the past, with a lower turnout of votes compared to last year which was to be expected in terms of the current situation.

After comparison with other Union's, we feel we performed better than some of our competitors in terms of limiting that loss in voter numbers. Considering the circumstances, we saw a good Election period, our current Officer team are aware of how challenging it was to campaign this year in terms of digital only. Pleasingly, and for the second year we went through the entire Election process with zero formal complaints.

Additional comments/clarification/recommendations:

- The fact that the Elections have been carried out during the current situation is a remarkable achievement.
- Our Bi-Elections open this week where hopefully those remaining roles will be filled, with our Sports and Societies Council roles running alongside.

- All Union's reporting downturns of more than a 3rd - with exception of Cardiff who offered every student who voted a £5 amazon voucher, who had a record-breaking voter turnout with over 8500 individual students voting, the bill came to £42,500.

The Board duly **note** Election Report.

14. Any Other Business - CH

Draft meeting schedule - VH

https://unimailderbyac-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/stf2085_derby_ac_uk/ESMPCy_R0wVAqZMM44uvlWsByEcY6StbnfgFDI7RrOebzQ?e=ngj61M the link to the draft meeting schedule for 2021/22, Board to email if there are any clashes to the proposed dates.

Post-meeting notes and action for the Board - VH

A short discussion was held on the proposal from our incoming President, to grant permission to continue to hold a freelance arrangement with BBC Radio Derby alongside the required duties at the Union. VH mentioned that there are no fixed contracted hours, with this arrangement being ad hoc and covering broadcast assistant duties and occasional presenting on an evening show. In conversation, assurance was given that the responsibilities as President will be fully upheld, but due to professional development wishes to maintain a link with the broadcaster for future career progression.

In response to some of the questions raised at the full Board meeting VH shared her thoughts for how any risks or concerns associated with this arrangement will be managed via follow up email, to include the following:

- In-depth Trustee training, to clearly establish responsibilities as a trustee and company director of the Union
- Press and PR training, delivered in conjunction with the University Press team
- Meetings with the University's head of legal services, to understand requirements of Governor responsibilities
- Advance HE governor training sessions specific to the role held with the University
- Enhanced provision for confidentiality within contract of employment with clear links through to Officer accountability processes

The risk of a representative sharing personal views and opinions to the media is a risk featured on our risk register. Our approach to mitigating this risk is to take a proactive approach to providing structure and support to elected representatives to manage these conversations appropriately, an approach we have held consistently. VH therefore recommends we maintain this approach and apply the above principles to incoming President's situation and approve the request.

Three formal objections were noted via email, following the meeting. As the majority are content to proceed, JT will be allowed to maintain his arrangement with the BBC, subject to the mitigations taking effect.

Chair thanked everyone for today's meeting, reminding members to make contact should anyone require additional support.

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 6th July - 5-7 pm - Microsoft Teams.

Trustee Board Meeting Action Summary 30.03.2021

No	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	DUE DATE	STATUS OF THIS ACTION
1.	<i>Pay framework - any changes to the new framework and reward policy will be shared with the Board via email for any further comments.</i>	VH		
2.	<i>Academy Bar proposal - MB email Academy bar Business Plan to the Board for any comments.</i>	MB		
3.	<i>To reach a decision on freelance request from incoming President</i>	VH	09/04/2021	COMPLETED

COMPLETED OVERDUE OUTSTANDING ONGOING

DRAFT