

Roehampton Students' Union
Trustee Board meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 4th May 2021

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

In attendance: Mark Gillespie, Meg Mannion (Minutes)

1) Welcome and apologies

Farrah Black (FB) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Danielle Chegwiddden and Bal Kaur.

2) Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3) Chair's report

FB gave a verbal report of activity since the last meeting.

4) CEO Report

Mark Gillespie (MG) gave his report. He noted that the strategic planning exercise had been his main focus since the last Board meeting.

It was noted that the Services and Relationship agreement was with the University legal team for final checks but should be available to sign soon.

MG gave a finance update, noting that the SU was still participating in the furlough scheme and had recovered around £30k, with the potential for a further £15k to be recouped. The restoration of campus activity was being funded by the university, which was also helping income generation. He noted that the Hive café had re-opened 3-5 days a week.

On staffing, MG noted that a Head of Membership had been appointed and would be starting shortly. MG added that he was thinking about the return to campus working and how to manage flexible and hybrid working but was keen to restore a visible presence on campus. He added that the Union was also trialling an Employee Assistance Programme for staff.

Lee Bird (LB) asked whether there was any cause for concern in regards to the Relationship and Services agreement being with the legal team. MG did not believe that the risk was significant, but would chase for a response.

MG spoke about activities. He noted that the events and marketing team are working on a programme of events for after May 17th. The bar on campus has re-opened and the Students' Union has a relationship with the bar in order to facilitate events. He added that the university was leaning a lot on the Union to provide social activity but that he was pushing back a bit to focus on income generation.

5) SUC report

There was a discussion at SUC about the relationship between College Community Leaders and College Officers and what the difference was between the roles. There was a discussion around incentives for Part Time Officers and what budget could be allocated to these within the remit of the Education Act.

6) Risk Register Review

MG presented the risk register as a comparison to October 2020. Some of the risks had been downgraded, such as Health and Safety. The risk around reserves was the same. The Board agreed not to reduce the risk around finance currently, as the pandemic remained an external risk.

MG added that the risk around strategy had increased, due to the strategic development exercise that was taking place currently.

7) Elections report

MG presented the report, for noting. He added that turnout was down and the elections had been run online but that the aim was to get to around 30% turnout in future, but understands the limitations caused by the pandemic.

Action: MG to circulate elections diversity data.

8) Strategic planning exercise

FB introduced the item. She noted that the project board have undertaken a SWOT analysis and would like the Board to review. The Board broke into breakout rooms for the SWOT analysis.

The group provided some feedback on the SWOT analysis. There was discussion about the lack of separate identity from the University and how we can change this as we move out of the transition period, especially in terms of commercial growth and income generation. There was a discussion about whether the lack of separate identity was a problem. The group discussed the financial reliance on the university and how this affects the relationship between the two organisations.

The group then broke into groups again to discuss PESTLE. There was discussions about the changing nature of the students recruited by the University, looking at the changing nature of students being recruited, remote learning, challenges for student wellbeing and the ongoing impact of the pandemic on events, health and safety and risk assessment.

The group noted that there would be further discussions of the research at the next Board meeting and the strategic planning day.

The meeting closed.