

**Roehampton Students' Union  
Trustee Board meeting**

Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 via Zoom

**Present:** Farrah Black (Chair), Lee Bird, Eleanor Wheal, Oli Ottaway

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

**Apologies:** Siobhan Kelly

**1) Welcome and apologies**

Farrah Black (FB) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Siobhan Kelly.

**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 a verbal report, noting the work on recruiting student reps and promoting the upcoming by-election.

**5) CEO report**

The CEO report was taken as read. MG noted some key highlights for the board. MG noted that there were some capacity issues within the Membership directorate due to two staff members leaving, which had resulted in some work being reallocated and two student interns being recruited. The focus of the team is on the upcoming by-election and NUS delegate election.

In the advice service, a new case management system had been implemented, which should help manage the volume of casework.

MG noted that Welcome Week would be happening shortly and that there was an events programme in place, which should be commercially successful. There was a discussion around the contingency for events and activities should restrictions return; MG added that staff were wearing face coverings and thought had been given to online events and training societies to deliver online events. There was a discussion about staff recruitment. MG noted the two interns that had been recruited and that job descriptions were being reviewed in line with the strategy.

**6) Election dates and appointment of Returning Officer**

The paper was noted and the appointment of Peter Robertson as Returning Officer was approved.

## **7) Relationship and Services Agreement**

MG presented the agreement, noting previous review by the Board. He noted that the process for agreement was agreement by the Trustee Board and then presentation at the Finance and Resources Committee for sign off.

EW noted that there were some minor amendments required to the section on GDPR. There was a discussion around the university sending an observer to the trustee board meetings and the board reserving the right to select who the observer is. MG agreed and recommended that the wording was amended to clarify this.

The Trustee Board approved the agreement and noted the closure of the Transition Committee.

## **8) Hybrid working policy**

MG presented the policy, noting that the consultation had been put in place. There had been a good response to the consultation and a good understanding that the needs of the business were a priority. LB asked if this process was the default process for staff requesting any type of flexible working. MG confirmed that this was not the default. The Board discussed concerns that there could be inconsistency across teams if the policy was decided by line managers and should be an all or nothing approach. The Board discussed the possibility of using a trial period and what good would look like and added that there should be an organisational view as to whether hybrid working worked for the organisation.

The Board noted the need to distinguish between hybrid working and flexible working and that there needed to be a consistent approach to flexible working.

**Action:** MG to develop flexible working policy further and revert to the Board.

**Action:** MG to amend wording around considerations of alternatives and to add timescales of appeal to the policy.

The Board approved the policy subject to amendments.

## **9) Year end accounts**

MG presented the year end accounts for the financial year ending July 31 2021. He noted that some savings had been made to fixed costs and that the organisation had a surplus of £31k at year end.

There was a discussion about how surplus is spent and MG noted that it may be a useful time for the board to consider its reserves position. MG added that he was cautious due to the potential of further lockdowns but agreed that it would be useful for the board to consider as it reviews management accounts.

**Action:** MG to add reserves policy to the next agenda

## **10) Budget**

MG presented the draft budget for approval, noting that the board had reviewed budget scenarios previously and that the Block Grant had been provisionally approved. MG noted that the commercial functions were expected to scale up which would come with an increased cost and that there were some additional costs around staff development. There was a question about the new increase to National Insurance and the impact on staff costs.

**Action:** JC to follow up on this question.

MG added that there was some caution around re-opening, which was reflected in the budget. The budget also reflected funding for part-time officer work.

The budget was approved.

## **11) Strategic objectives**

MG noted that the board had met over the summer to discuss the strategic objectives and had been asked for feedback to formulate a plan. The Board agreed that the strategic objectives were coming together well. They discussed that it would be helpful to ensure that the objectives aligned with what had been agreed in the Relationship and Services Agreement. The Board discussion moved to the mission, vision and values to help the discussion around strategic objectives.

## **12) Mission, vision and values**

MG introduced the proposed mission, vision and values. The Board noted that the statements were accessible and easy to understand. The Board agreed on wording of "RSU is here to represent, support and develop students to enable them to have the best possible university experience."

The Board reviewed the member survey results when considering the vision, wanting to be the distinctive voice of students. There was a discussion around the values of the organisation. The board noted that there had been a good response to approachable, inclusive, empowering, representative, passionate and fun.

Reverting to the discussion around strategic objectives, MG agreed to review the objectives in line with the wording of the mission, vision and values and revert to the board.

**Action:** MG to circulate MVV to LB and SK for work outside of the meeting.

There was no other business and the meeting concluded.

