

## **Roehampton Students' Union**

Minutes of the Trustee Board meeting held on Wednesday 24th November 2021 at 5:30pm via Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Farrah Black (FB, Chair), Lee Bird (LB), Siobhan Kelly (SK), Oli Ottaway (OO)

**In attendance:** Mark Gillespie (MG), Jonathan Chien (JC) (University of Roehampton), Megan Mannion (MM) (Minutes)

**Apologies:** Eleanor Wheal, Mushtaq Ismail.

### **1) Welcome and Apologies**

FB welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Eleanor Wheal and Mushtaq Ismail.

### **2) Chair's Report**

FB gave a verbal Chair's report. It was noted that the majority of officer time had been working on planned industrial action by UCU, who had voted to strike. FB noted that there was a Students' Union Council meeting on Monday 29th November 2021 at which there would be a discussion whether to support the strike (and action short of strike.) FB added that regardless of the result, the main focus will be to support students amid any action. It was noted that assessments had been pushed back and extensions to mitigating circumstances had been given.

FB added that Student Senate had raised some issues such as international students having difficulty registering with GPs and allowed the students' union to provide support in these areas.

### **3) Students' Union Council Report**

Oli Ottaway (OO) presented a verbal report from SUC. It was noted that SUC had met and held a number of successful events across campus. It was also noted that a new president for Southlands College had been elected and the sabbatical officers were working with them.

### **4) Chief Executive's Report**

Mark Gillespie (MG) presented his report. It was noted that the external audit had taken place successfully and that the auditors would be present at the next meeting for audit sign-off.

The Board noted that the by-election for the Vice President Education role had taken place with a slightly higher turnout than the election in Spring. MG noted that there were some challenges with induction straight into the role but that support was in place for this.

The Board discussed Freshers Week, noting that there had been a small profit from the events which was a measure of its success. MG noted that the Hive's performance was improving and that the mobile Hive will be returning in January.

MG noted that the Advice Team had started using AdvicePro as the case management system and that the team anticipated an increase in service users due to upcoming UCU industrial action.

It was noted that the number of students engaging in societies is increasing and work was being done to increase this further. Growhampton is the union's most consistent service and has been largely unaffected by the pandemic. On events, MG noted that performance had fluctuated for ticketed events and needs consideration and for expenditure to potentially be scaled back. MG added that there may be a reforecast in Q2 to reflect the performance of ticketed events.

On staffing, MG noted that 11 staff members were undertaking hybrid working, with 70% of staff on campus at least three days a week. MG added that recruitment was taking place for two new co-ordinators and that these roles should be in place by Christmas. MG added that staff morale and energy was a consideration and that there should be capacity for more staff development in the new year.

LB asked about the mitigation for increased advice service numbers. MG responded that use of AdvicePro would help to understand the case load and how much time was being spent on advice cases as this is currently calculated manually. MG added that this would help build an evidence base for further recruitment if required.

The Board discussed hybrid working and the need to ensure equity and fairness in working arrangements, but to consider the business need and whether there may be a need for some staff to be more face to face.

SK asked about the CMS system and whether this was a paid for service. MG confirmed that this was paid for and included in the block grant.

## **5) Register of Interests**

The Board noted the Register of Interests. The Board discussed the vacant lay trustee position and that some of the lay trustee terms ended simultaneously.

**Action:** MG to work on lay trustee recruitment.

## **6) Review of Risk Register**

MG presented the risk register. The Board noted risks around the reserves policy and felt it was useful to reflect this in the risk register. MG noted that there was some risks around Brexit and how this affects onboarding EU staff members. The Board added that there was some risk around the new strategy and the capacity of SLT to deliver everything in the strategic plan.

## **7) Q1 Management Accounts**

The Board noted the Q1 management accounts, noting that the Union is on budget and controlling costs around use of casual staff. Jonathan Chien added that Q1 performance had been good, although noted that ticketed events income and expenditure was being monitored as discussed in the CEO report. There was a discussion around how spending is presented, which MG and JC would take as an action from the meeting.

**Action:** MG and JC to provide forecasting exercise for Board across the year.

### **8) Draft Strategic Plan**

MG presented the draft strategy and thanked the Board for their input into the process. MG noted that EW had asked a question about how the success of the plan would be measured. The Board agreed that an annual survey of members would be the best way to get student feedback. Additionally, the SU will gather feedback on activities and graduate outcomes through the Graduate Outcomes survey done by the University.

MG added that there was a communications plan in place to launch the plan, such as website space, a social media plan and stakeholder engagement.

The Board noted that the draft strategy was well developed, noting the need for staff buy-in. MG confirmed that staff had been consulted and that he wanted to implement some 'golden rules' on how to operate. Additionally, staff would be invited to the Trustee Board to present progress against the plan.

The strategy was approved by the Trustee Board.

### **9) CEO PDR**

LB introduced the item, noting that he had met with MG and FB to discuss the PDR and progress against agreed objectives. LB noted that all objectives were being met but had not been completed yet, as intended as the objectives are not one year goals. The Board agreed to continue with the approach to the PDR. LB will continue to lead on the PDR process and communicate with the Board.

### **10) Any Other Business**

The Board considered the date of the next meeting and proposed 27th January 2022, with the aim of meeting in person. There was no other business and the meeting closed.