

# CAMBRIDGE SU TRUSTEE BOARD - 07.02.2024

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| <p><b>Attendance</b><br/>Voting Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caredig ap Tomos - <b>CaT</b><br/><i>Access, Education and Participation Officer (AEP)</i></li> <li>• Fergus Kirman - <b>FK</b><br/><i>Undergraduate President (Chair)</i></li> <li>• Luke Patterson - <b>LP</b><br/><i>Student Trustee (UG)</i></li> <li>• Vareesh Pratap - <b>VP</b><br/><i>Postgraduate President</i></li> <li>• Maroof Rafique - <b>MR</b><br/><i>BME Officer</i></li> <li>• Simon To - <b>ST</b><br/><i>External Trustee (Deputy Chair)</i></li> <li>• Chara Triantafyllidou - <b>CT</b><br/><i>Student Trustee (PG)</i></li> </ul> <p>Observers &amp; Guests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabbi Foreman - <b>GF</b><br/><i>Interim CEO</i></li> <li>• Oli Gray - <b>OG</b><br/><i>Interim Director of Membership Engagement (minute taker)</i></li> <li>• Neith Charlesworth - <b>NC</b><br/><i>Interim Activities Manager (for Item 7 - Activities Team Report)</i></li> <li>• Harriet Saunders - <b>HS</b><br/><i>HR Manager (for Item 8 - HR Team: Staff engagement plan)</i></li> </ul> | <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neil Buchanan <b>NB</b><br/><i>External Trustee</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Absent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul> |
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| Item         | Discussion | Actions |
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| 1. Apologies | None       |         |

| Item   | Discussion   | Actions |
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| 2. Conflicts of Interest                     | <p>None</p> <p>Trustees took an item of extraordinary reserved business, with two Trustees absent.</p>   |         |
| 3. Minutes of the previous meeting           | <p>The minutes were approved.</p>  |         |
| 4. Matters arising                           | <p>None</p>  |         |
| 5. Business since the previous meeting       | <p>Appointments Sub-committee has had discussions by circulation to agree the timeline and process for Student and External Trustee recruitment. FK encouraged trustees to share the job pack and encourage people to apply for the External Trustee roles.</p> <p>The Finance Sub-committee has met since the last meeting, and more information will be provided later in the meeting under item 10.</p> <p>CT asked about how the Student Council would go about electing a mixture of UG and PG Student Trustees from the nominated pool of eligible candidates. FK clarified that a pool of candidates of both UG and PG students will be nominated by Appointments Sub-committee, UG and PG student trustees elected separately.</p> <p>LP asked about the date of when new student trustees would take office. FK confirmed this would be within six weeks of the end of Easter Term, as required by the By-Laws.</p> |         |
| 6. Campaigns update from sabbatical officers | <p>MR provided a verbal update on sabbatical officer campaigns:</p> <p><b>Caredig ap Tomos - UG AEP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with FK on student workloads, had a well attended "Workload Forum" run jointly with the university, where around 30 students and 20 directors of teaching, senior tutors and faculty leaders collectively discussed workload issues in their departments. Results are being taken seriously and feeding into the ongoing teaching review</li> <li>• 2/3 weeks of the shadowing scheme are now done. Feedback from shadows has been really positive, with many mentors also noting the</li> </ul>  |         |

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|      | <p>scheme is running even more smoothly than last year.</p> <p><b>Harvey Brown - Welfare &amp; Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Disorientation Guide</i>: released guide.</li> <li>- <i>University space</i>: launched design competition in partnership with the Cambridge Room and Reshaping Our Estate programme, working on collaboration with societies, working on Student Council motion to increase student engagement with SU lounge</li> <li>- <i>Harm reduction</i>: prepared paper for joint Wellbeing Committee, arranged meetings with key university stakeholders, and in conversation with senior leadership in Universities which have successfully adopted harm reduction model</li> <li>- <i>Disciplinary Procedures: Working with Women's Officer</i> on College disciplinary procedures, prepared paper for Senior Tutor's Committee, increasing DRAG membership creating independent social media</li> <li>- <i>Demilitarisation</i>: Supporting College divestment research and passed an SU Council policy</li> <li>- <i>Union support</i>: supported UNITE strikes, in conversation with union about the SU</li> <li>- <i>Housing</i>: Working with University leadership on housing stock survey</li> </ul> <p><b>Vareesh Pratap - President (PG)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Cost of Living</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Accommodation</b>: A draft on University Rent Guarantor Scheme shared with the University Accommodation Team for review.</li> <li>○ <b>Transport</b>: Catching-up with U-Bus operators tomorrow on their discounted App based ticketing, Tap On Tap off model, Flexible ticketing and multi operator ticketing.</li> <li>○ <b>Food</b>: Trying to learn about the discrepancy between the food costs advertised to the incoming students and faced by students in Cambridge. University Catering services has shared information that clearly indicates that is much higher. Similar data from colleges in coming days.</li> <li>○ <b>The Cost of Living &amp; Institutional Support</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul> |         |

| Item          | Discussion   | Actions |
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|               | <p>survey has received about 260 responses so far.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Making Cambridge More inclusive for PG student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Research on why not even a single student from 25 eligible countries could attend this university on Commonwealth Master's Scholarship is underway. Look forward to engaging with the commission next month.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Maroof Rafique - BME Officer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● BME Forums 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>● BME Exec Committee</li> <li>● Meeting with Racial Harassment Advisor and BME Advisor</li> <li>● BME Lent Term Card Event</li> <li>● EDI Committee Update: EDI Online Training Module (Anti-Racism training)</li> <li>● Decolonisation Hub Consultations</li> </ul> <p><b>Fergus Kirman - UG President</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing to lobby for Free Prescriptions in Colleges - now operational in some form at 9 colleges</li> <li>- Recently worked with the Activities Team to help launch and begin administering the SU Society Grants</li> <li>- Working on sustainability in the University - including to develop plans for more effective climate leadership</li> </ul> <p><b>Rosie Freeman - Women's Officer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Policy to support menstruating students, passed at council</li> <li>● DRAG campaign building and 'know your rights as a student survivor' event</li> <li>● Reclaim the Night promotion and campaigning</li> <li>● Gender awarding gap</li> <li>● Supporting student carers</li> <li>● Women's campaign events and forums</li> </ul> |         |
| 7. Activities | NC updated on the Activities Team's progress towards their   |         |

| Item                              | Discussion  | Actions |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------|
| Team Report                       | <p>strategic objectives, introducing the written report and inviting questions from the Board.</p> <p>VP welcomed a successful refreshers fair, and asked about the method for monitoring footfall. NC explained that attendance is monitored by clickers on the entrance and exit to the event to determine the overall footfall.</p> <p>MJ and ST congratulated the team on producing the report, with impressive numbers and progress indicated. The rest of the Board agreed, and asked that its thanks be conveyed to the Activities Team.</p>   |         |
| 8. HR Team: Staff engagement plan | <p>HS updated on the Staff Engagement Plan, introducing the written report and inviting questions from the Board.</p> <p>Within the context of an increasing workload, LP asked if the SU holds any data on if the increase in workloads is disproportionately affecting any bands of the SU structure in particular. HS explained this is an increased workload across the board,; this is often amplified by a lack of willingness to drop projects across the organisation.</p> <p>ST welcomed the results, and suggested some benchmarking from other organisations in the sector as workload is a common issue affecting the majority of SUs. ST asked which staff would get access to the training opportunities mentioned in the staff engagement plan. ST added that prioritising the actions will help trustees to understand the timeframes involved. HS explained everyone would be invited to EDI training, and HS was confident that actions will be completed by January 2025.</p> <p>CaT asked, given that some metrics have not increased in contrast to the previous year's survey, whether it might be necessary to move more ambitious targets to a longer timeframe. HS explained that the SU will commence its own survey this year rather than using an external, NUS-led one, meaning the Board should have access to relevant data about these targets soon.</p> <p>VP added that the sabb team had recently worked to redistribute some of the Disabled Students' Officer's workload to other sabbs.</p> <p>FK suggested that in future, the report should come sooner</p> |         |

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|                                    | <p>after the survey responses are gathered, so that the Board can act on them in a timely manner. HS noted that the results for this year's survey will be gathered in March, and could therefore be circulated by the start of Easter Term.</p> <p>LP reflected on June 2023 conversations at Board about the importance of taking swift action on the survey results, and noted that it appears limited progress had been made since the previous year's staff survey.</p> <p>FK suggested that the Board could communicate to the HR Manager that it expected the results of this year's internal survey to be shared with it in time for its meeting on 1st May 2024, and the Board agreed that this would be useful.</p>  |  |
| 9. CEO Update                      | <p>GF provided a verbal summary of the CEO report.</p> <p>GF summarised recent meetings with stakeholders such as colleagues in Education Services have been successful, and have received positive feedback from SU staff.</p> <p>GF updated trustees that the Director of Commercial and Services has left their role at the SU, and the role is being covered by SMT.</p> <p>With regards to the SCA merger, LP acknowledged that many members of the board may not be aware of the historical context of this opportunity, and suggested that documents from initial discussions could be reshared with trustees to ensure everyone has adequate knowledge.</p> <p>VP echoed the importance of the University Centre for the wider student experience, particularly as a space which the University was currently considering the use of. GF and FK provided further context on the University Centre Future Uses Consultation. FK emphasised that this held both opportunities and risks for the SU, and that there would likely be opportunities for sustained engagement with the team leading the project.</p> | <p>Reshare SCA papers with trustees (GF)</p> <p>Add SCA as a discussion to a future trustee meeting (FK)</p> |
| 10. Draft 2024-25 budget scenarios | <p>FK introduced the draft budget scenarios and reminded trustees of confidentiality.</p> <p>The Board's Finance Sub-committee met last Friday to consider the budget and recommend a particular version to the Board. In the past 36 hours, the Chair and SMT have become aware of some context which affects the SU's</p>  | .  |

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|      | <p>2024-25 budget.</p> <p>The SU had hoped to increase its block grant from the University (University Administered Funds) by 8% between 2023-24 and 2024-25. However, during the previous day's CCSSU meeting, the Presidents and SMT were made aware that the university is not likely to approve significant increases above 3.3%, given its current financial situation.</p> <p>Furthermore, the previously prepared budget was based on provisional information with regards to the SU's reserves position. Upon further investigation, information from the Finance Manager and preliminary information from the accountants regarding the 2022-23 end-of-year accounts indicated that the SU was significantly below its required reserves position, and would end the 2023-24 financial year in that same position.</p> <p>FK called the accountants on the previous day, who confirmed they will aim to provide the accounts within the next two and a half weeks, which FK acknowledges is not desirable.</p> <p>ST asked about the audit, and FK clarified that the accountants are preparing the final 2022-23 year accounts, with the auditors waiting on this to be able to undertake their audit. ST asked if the SU needs to file for an extension to our reporting deadline. FK explained that the Companies House deadline is the end of March, and the Charity Commission deadline is in April. The accountants mentioned informally the possible need to file an extension, and have already taken steps to begin this process. FK and SMT will raise this with them when meeting them next week.</p> <p>CaT raised that the draft accounts need to be presented to the student members' meeting in approximately four weeks' time, and asked if there was a specific communications plan for this. FK confirmed that this was on course to proceed as normal, and that the situation would be managed properly from a communications perspective.</p> <p>FK closed discussions and summarised the next steps for the Board and the Finance Sub-committee, as follows:</p> |         |

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|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To <b>confirm</b> the Board's assent to the following two principles for the 2024-25 Budget, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The SU's UAF bid must fall within what the University's may accept; and</li> <li>- The SU's uncertain and apparently below-target reserves position mean that the Board must plan a surplus budget in order to move towards the required reserves position</li> </ul> </li> <br/> <li>- To <b>note</b> that FK<i>i</i> and SMT will meet our accountants imminently, in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand more about what the SU's reserves position will be; and</li> <li>- Take all measures to procure the 2022-23 accounts as soon as possible, ready for audit (and for informing current budget planning), and mindful of the need to make any deadline extension applications</li> </ul> </li> <br/> <li>- To <b>note</b> that Finance Sub-Committee will have a further meeting in February, once the draft accounts are available, to provide further scrutiny and assess what specific budget (matching the above principles, and working from the basis of the prepared Version 2 Budget) to approve, so that it can be circulated to CCSSU by <b>1st March 2024</b> latest, for them to add commentary to the SU's UAF bid. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FK emphasised that the absolute priority was meeting CCSSU's deadline, and that the budget circulated to them was not final, and was mainly intended to provide context for the SU's UAF bid.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The board voted in favour of these actions and proposals.</p> <p>VP asked to abstain from the vote.</p> |         |
| 11. Variance Report   | GF welcomed questions about the variance report.  |         |
| 12. Governance Review | <p>SMT's recommendation was that the board selects Coole Insight to lead the Governance Review. Coole Insight is able to offer a bigger operation with a diverse range of consultants, which is a real benefit given the importance of diversity and representation in the SU's structures.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged that the incoming CEO is an</p>   |         |



| Item                     | Discussion   | Actions |
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|                          | <p>associate consultant for Coole Insight, but confirmed that this was not a significant enough reason to rule out the company. The Board agreed that safeguards should be put in place to ensure that no conflict of interest could arise, and noted that the Director of Membership Engagement would be the primary point of contact with the consultants leading the review.</p> <p>ST asked about the scope of the review, FK explained the broad outline from the review, and GF summarised headlines from the briefing document.</p> <p>ST flagged that the timeline appears very restrictive. FK explained that the document was sent to the SU in January and therefore some deadlines are no longer viable.</p> <p>FK added that some changes may require an all-student referendum, and acknowledged that this could delay the implementation of a newly structured sabbatical officer team. FK noted that changes requiring only a vote of Student Council could be implemented more swiftly, and noted that the Board would likely wish to consider decoupling proposed changes once the review had reported.</p> <p>The Board voted to initiate the governance review, with Coole Insight, on the basis that the precise elements of the additional support package desired could be established in tandem with the consultants as the review progressed.</p> <p>VP asked to abstain from the vote.</p> |         |
| 13. Date of next meeting | Wednesday 3rd April  |         |
| 14. AOB                  | None   |         |