

CAMBRIDGE SU TRUSTEE BOARD - 29.06.2023

Attendance

Voting Members:

- Zaynab Ahmed - **ZA**
President (UG), Chair of Board of Trustees
- Eseosa Akojie - **EA**
Women's Officer
- Daisy Thomas - **DT**
Welfare & Community Officer
- Simon To - **ST**
External Trustee, Deputy Chair
- Amelia Jabry - **AJ**
President (PG)
- Luke Patterson - **LP**
Student Trustee (UG)
- Myesha Jemison - **MJ**
Student Trustee (PG)

Observers & Guests:

- Tash Crump - **TC**
Democracy & Representation Manager
- Caredig ap Tomos - **CaT**
Observer, incoming UG Access, Education and Participation Officer (AEP)
- Gabbi Foreman - **GF**
Interim CEO (minute taker)
- Rosie Freeman - **RF**
Observer, incoming Women's Officer
- Oli Gray - **OG**
Interim Director of Membership Engagement (minute taker)
- Maroof Rafique - **MR**

Absent

- Neil Buchanan **NB**
External Trustee

Apologies

- Ambrose Chan - **AC**
External Trustee
- Elia Chitwa - **EC**
Disabled Students' Officer
- Pauldy Otermans - **PO**
External Trustee
- Chara Triantafyllidou - **CT**
Student Trustee (PG)

<p><i>Observer, Incoming BME Officer</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Adam Suggett - AS</i> <p><i>Director of Commercial and Services</i></p>	
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Item	Discussion	Actions
1. Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EC ● AS ● PO ● CT ● EA 	
2. Conflicts of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DT asked if sabbs completing the NUS survey creates a conflict for outgoing sabbs. ● ZA clarified there is no material benefit to outgoing sabbs and therefore it is not a conflict. 	
3. Minutes of the Previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approved 	
4. Matters Arising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning Round - GF updated that after a delay from the university on the block grant bid, pending final approval from Regents House. This reflects an increased block grant to fund a cost of living increase and the provision for a new Finance Manage. 2. Policies - GF updated that internal policies are being reviewed and will be brought to subsequent trustee board meetings. 	
5. Business since the previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data Breach update - ZA updated that the board has received the report from Jamie Stratton and working on implementing the recommendations. There have been no updates or further actions as yet from the ICO. ● CEO Recruitment - ZA confirmed a new CEO has been recruited. SU in April 2024 from Arts SU in London. ZA thanked the Appointments Committee and members of the recruitment panels for their 	

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	<p>contributions to the process.</p> <p>MR and TC joined the meeting.</p>	
6. Campaign update from sabbatical officers	<p>AJ provided an update on behalf of the sabbatical officer team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The university is working on a new Access and Participation Plan (APP) next year. The university is continuing to look at funding for students, particularly Masters students, and a review of the Bursary Scheme. EA is working on an open letter to address the awarding gap. ● NA and EC have been working on the campaign for lecture capture, and the proposal for implementing a reading week. The proposal will soon be reaching Regents House. The university is reviewing support for Postgraduate Students, including supporting the training of new supervisors. ● SU Campaigns have continued to run campaigns throughout the Easter period, supported by their sabbatical officer leads. EA is continuing to campaign for better street lighting. DT has been working on better support for intermittent students and increased support for disabled students. ● There have been some big wins this year for climate action including the climate stakeholder map known as the Resilience Web, which the SU held a launch event for. The report on fossil fuel funding is due, which details how the university works with external funders, and how this can reduce investments from fossil fuel companies. <p>DT added that the SU has begun to supply drug testing kits for the first time, following a policy passed by Student Council. The SU has purchased 100 kits which are now available from the SU lounge, and this has been received positively by students.</p>	
7. HR & Admin Report (to note)	<p>AS presented the report on behalf of the HR and Office Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff satisfaction rate is currently 75%, the Trustee Board's target is set at 90%. ● The most positive category of the staff survey was 	

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	<p>'colleagues', with colleagues reporting that they trust one another.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The HR team is working on a wellness action plan, staff wellbeing, and internal communications to increase transparency of decision making ● A mentor scheme for staff is being researched to help junior members of staff to settle into their role. ● The HR Manager has just completed a Learning and Development Scheme to support the staff appraisal process. ● The report recommends the introduction of an in-house survey, which provides a greater level of detail on employee satisfaction <p>ZA thanked AS and Harriet for the report. DT echoed that one of the main recommendations centred around employee workload and would welcome a timeline for the Board to review progress regularly.</p> <p>ST echoed thanks to Harriet for reviewing this data, and added some context to the scores based on data from other Students Unions. ST flagged that many areas have improved from last year, and suggested reviewing scores against benchmarks including the SU sector and the wider charity sector, particularly in the context of workload. ST added that SUs have the challenge of needing to balance staff workloads with the ongoing desire of striving to do more.</p> <p>MJ suggested that when reviewing the data, results from new employees could be separated from continuing employees to identify trends and changes over time, and evaluate the experiences of those new to the organisation.</p> <p>ZA summarised that the SU is moving towards the strategic goals as outlined in the People section of the strategy, and welcomes regular updates to future Board meetings.</p>	<p>AS - to create a timeline for improving employee workload.</p> <p>AS - bring an update on progress to the next board meeting</p>
8. Democracy & Representation Report (to note)	<p>TC summarised the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Governance and Democracy review section asks the board to review the proposal and approve the 	

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	<p>review. TC explained the rationale for a full Governance review rather than just a Democracy review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The election reports highlighted that roles are not being filled in the main Lent Elections, and TC suggested a potential outcome of a Democracy Review could be a smaller Sabbatical Officer team. ● TC summarised that the report covers the above points in more detail, and welcomed questions from members of the board. <p>ST thanked TC for the report, and asked when the review would be initially introduced, and what the Trustee Board's role would be in this process. TC wishes for the process to start as soon as possible, and looks for the board to be involved in aspects such as selecting an external consultant and reviewing the SU's by-laws.</p> <p>ST offered assistance for beginning the review over Summer, and suggested a review group may be useful to ensure the review is not held back by the Trustee Boards annual cycle of business, as this has worked well in the past. TC welcomed this suggestion</p> <p>LP thanked TC for the report and reflects the thoughts of the student body. In terms of an external review, LP asked how the board would vote to approve an external consultant. LP offered to help with a potential review group over Summer. LP suggested this review appears under the CEO's objectives.</p> <p>GF added that spending on a Governance Review would align with the recommendations of the Data Breach report, so a vote on commencing the review may not be required. TC agreed that getting more societies and colleges running their elections through the SU should be a priority through playing a more proactive supporting role for these groups.</p> <p>MJ asked if it was known why J/MCRs are using – logistical and operational barriers on the SU site which can easily be fixed in the coming months. MJ asked (in relation to the recent controversy of the Cambridge Debating Union) and</p>	

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	<p>ZA confirmed that the SU process has no capability of rigging the voting elections.</p> <p>ZA thanked members for their discussion and thanked TC for the . ZA is sceptical of a one-year pilot, and asked for confirmation from the board they are happy to commence a review.</p> <p>The board agreed to commence a Democracy and Governance review. ST, ML and LP volunteered to join a new review group.</p> <p>MR left the meeting.</p>	
9. CEO Update (to note)	<p>GF provided some highlights from the CEO update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The format of the CEO report has been changed based on feedback from the board, to ease progress tracking ● There has been increased progress on strategic updates, with the Democracy Team update being an example of this. In particular, progress has been made on ownership of the Academic Representation system. ● GF thanked LP for their feedback on changing the formats on communication updates. One of the goals is to achieve a 60% open rate. ● Within the CEO's objectives, the by-laws have been reviewed and will soon be reviewed by the Council Committee for the Supervision of the Students' Unions (CCSSU). This provides a useful point of scrutiny for the by-law review process. ● Following the approval for an increased block grant, recruitment for a new Finance Manager will start soon, as this takes up a considerable amount of time of the CEO. <p>GF asked for feedback and questions.</p> <p>ST thanked GF for the feedback and praised the new format. ST thanked GF for the progress that has been made in the recent months from the SU staff team.</p>	
10. End of Year	GF presented the end of year accounts which need to be	

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Accounts 2021-22 (to approve)	<p>submitted to the Charity Commission by 30th June. There has been a slight delay to the publication of the accounts due to a longer Audit process.</p> <p>The Board unanimously approved the accounts for submission to the charity commission the next day, after being signed by ZA. The Board will be updated by ZA and GF if the deadline is missed for any reason.</p>	
II. Budget Variances Report (to note)	<p>GF presented the budget variances report, with the caveat that spending will change slightly until 30th June as this marks the end of the financial year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GF explained the purpose of the variance report is to track the progress against the initial budget which is drawn up at the start of the year. ● This variance report shows that there are some areas of underspend, and these are counteracted by other budgets which have spent more than budgeted. ● Representation and campaigns spending is down, largely due to roles becoming unfilled in elections and campaigns, which has led to campaigns not spending all of their allocated funding. ● Staffing has continued to be an underspend this year, resulting from vacancies throughout the year. Whilst this 'helps' the bottom line by counteracting a deficit, it is not an ideal place to be in. ● Budgets for legal fees have increased, with a view for more legal advice expected given the current political landscape. <p>ST thanked GF for the report, and asked for any initial indications for where the year-end figure will likely end up. GF explained that the total variance will likely be thousands rather than hundreds, but cannot provide a more accurate figure until the end of the financial year.</p> <p>ST raised that the year-end forecast looks more positive than the original budget, with a significant surplus rather than the budgeted deficit.</p> <p>ST explained that there would always be a shortfall on salary spending and how this causes increased staff workloads. ST suggested the notice periods of staff could</p>	<p>GF to circulate a more detailed update after the end of the financial year.</p>

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	<p>be reviewed to reduce staffing gaps and retain people for slightly longer. GF agreed and explained that managers have been discussing this internally.</p> <p>ZA thanked GF for presenting the variance report and echoed the good financial position that the</p>	
<p>12. Communications & Marketing: Additional Funding Request (to approve)</p>	<p>GF presented the additional funding request, which is for an additional £2k for improved email distribution for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GF explained that because this is an unplanned spend of over £1000, it requires the approval of the trustee board ● The additional features offered by MailChimp will enable to the SU create better communications to students, such as the SU bulletin which has a good open rate, and can be increased further with MailChimp's capabilities. ● The funding for this request is available from the current financial year, but could also be paid from the next year's budget. <p>ST asked if the SU had accounted for the savings from the later start of the new CEO in the 2023-24 budget.</p> <p>The board unanimously agreed to approve this additional spend.</p>	
<p>13. Commercial Strategy (for comment)</p>	<p>AS presented the Commercial Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Additional funding from commercial venues provides us with extra financial stability which enables the SU to deliver services to its members. ● The document outlines research of the student market and how this would inform the development of commercial services. ● AS presented 5 key areas for commercial income opportunities as outlined in the report. ● The proposals outlined in the commercial strategy require additional <p>AJ thanked AS for the report, and asked for more detail on the proposals for Freshers and Refreshers as these are the SU's largest engagement projects, rather than a</p>	

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	<p>standalone festival event. AJ also asked for a timeline on the proposals for renting out event space, given the limited spaces that the SU currently has. AS explained that the festival event does not need to be linked to Freshers and Refreshers events, and can be their own standalone events with income being generated from food and beverages. AS clarified that the SU lounge is currently the only rentable space, but the plans for renting out space is more ambitious and covers the SU's future plans for a student bar and additional event spaces.</p> <p>LP thanked AS for the strategy, and welcomed the approaches from a non-SU background to increased commercial opportunities.</p> <p>ST echoed that the new CEO would be able to share good practise of commercial strategies. ST echoed that it is important to reflect our values, and the way this is presented in the strategy is an essential aspect of this.</p> <p>RF left the meeting.</p>	
14. Commercial Advertising Policy Review (to approve)	<p>GF presented the policy.</p> <p>ZA asked how this related to the SU's new freedom of speech obligations.</p> <p>The board approved the policy.</p>	
15. Updated By-Laws (to approve)	<p>GF provided an overview of the key changes of each by-law.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Council - terminology alignment, largely changing 'the Union' to 'the SU, as well as reordering to allow for more efficient use in practice. Approved. 2. Policy of the Union - same as above. Approved. 3. Sabbatical Officers - minor amendments. GF explained the rationale of the by-law concerning resigned sabbs being vague. Approved 4. Executive Committee - the most significant change is the removal of the Double Time Officer, as this is a role which represents a very small number of students and is therefore often unfilled. Approved. 5. Standing Bodies - minor changes throughout, with 	<p>Document for supporting grievances - end of August</p> <p>Whistleblower policy to come to the next board</p>

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	<p>changes to section 4 to ensure this reflects the SU's role in supporting Student Activity Groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Student Members Meeting - the changes reflect the need to approve the annual accounts, which were stress-tested this year. The proposed update reflects a more common-sense approach. LP added a suggestion for the chair's ability to extend the cut off time for quoracy from 15 minutes to 30 minutes for Student Members Meeting, at the Chair's discretion, which would bring it in line with Council. Approved 7. Board of Trustees - minor amendments, reduction of operational aspects of board and this will be covered by reports from managers to Board. LP flagged discussion around the Board's responsibility of the SU's premises. Approved. 8. Elections - clarification added that the voting system uses single transferable vote (STV). LP suggested a change the the mention of CCSSU in case the committee's name is changed, and that this reflected best practice. Approved. 9. Referenda - minor changes. Approved. 10. Grievance and Complaints Procedure - major amendments allow for a more efficient procedure and to ensure the processes are more transparent. GF added that 'Deputy CEO' should be changed to a 'member of SMT'. AJ suggested we should have a record of complaints that are submitted. DT echoed the need for this, including the need to record informal complaints. GF added that the SU plans to develop a society complaints process in partnership with the University. CaT raised that the Deputy CEO role isn't a well known role which may be seen as a barrier by students, GF explained that the SU is working towards taking the burden of complaints away from sabbatical officers, meaning that senior managers will be required to play a greater role in dealing with complaints. Approved. 11. External Affiliations - asking for clarity from CCSSU under clause 3, specifying political affiliation are to be approved by Student Council. GF gave the example of Disability Confident Employer, this does not require the approval of Student Council. 	<p>OG to update TCS governance documentation.</p>

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	<p>Approved.</p> <p>12. Student Societies - deliberately vague as this does not yet exist. Approved.</p> <p>13. Membership - minor changes. Approved.</p> <p>14. Democracy Committee - Similar to above, the amendments reflect improvements to allow more efficient use in practice. Approved.</p> <p>15. Forums - improved clarity in amendments. Approved.</p> <p>16. Member Disciplinary Procedure - adjustments to sections concerning legal advice within disciplinary procedures, and some parts removed from section 6. ZA suggested the removal of sections such as an agenda of a disciplinary hearing, to ensure the by-law reflects the overall process rather than all operational details, which can be clarified in a separate operational policy on the SU website. DT suggested additional amendments with regards to the written apology, as well as more flexibility of sanctions to reflect the University's processes. DT suggested this by-law should be prioritised as part of the ongoing review process. GF recommended a supplementary document should be in place by the end of August, ready for the Michaelmas Term. Approved.</p> <p>17. Academic Representatives - key changes have been made to the obligations of Academic Reps, as well as increased partnership working with the University. Approved.</p> <p>18. Member Code of Conduct - the changes cover the principal expectations of members. LP suggested a whistleblowing clause as part of this, GF explained the SU has a specific whistleblowing policy but suggested this should be discussed at the next Board meeting. Approved.</p> <p>ZA summarised that the reviewed by-laws will be sent to the next CCSSU and their feedback will be shared with the Board in the coming weeks. ZA added that Campaigns each have their own by-laws which have not been reviewed as part of this process.</p> <p>CaT flagged that the TCS governance documentation is</p>	

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	not readily available. OG confirmed this will be reviewed and published in line with the by-law review process.	
16. Date of next meeting	18th October 2023, Zoom	
17. AOB	<p>ZA thanked the board for their support this year.</p> <p>GF thanked Sabbatical Officer trustees for their role on the board, as did LP.</p> <p>ST echoed the thanks for the sabbatical officer and student trustees for their contribution to the board, particularly to ZA's leadership of the board through a very challenging year.</p> <p>GF is looking into trustee training.</p>	