

Trustee meeting minutes 01/07/2022

Attendees: Andy Parsons (AP, chair), Tom Hillen (TH), Leilani Courtney (LC), Alice Young (AY), Lorraine Teague (LT), Sarah Kerton (SK), Nabeela Mowlana (NM)

1.1 Apologies: none received

1.2 Conflicts of interest: SK (NUS chair of HR subcommittee), LT (in revised budget proposal)

1.3 Minutes of last meeting: approved

1.4 Matters arising

- SK requested support from NUS for governance and board support through their SU match scheme.
- Salaries and job creation scheme have been reviewed and updated. A change in block grant means that we have hired 1 coordinator instead of 2. Position offered and waiting for applicant response.
- SK to recirculate Officer 360s to HR subcommittee
- LT raised amendment to constitution to General Meeting. SK updated that this has been approved by university boards.

AY arrival

2.1 Exec update from AY

Reclaim the night went ahead with 40 student turnout. Students would like to stay involved with other projects. Aston SU and BCU SU also attended. AP said we should publicise our successes.

Officer team have also been attending student events across the institution.

We also won WhatUni awards.

AY published article on WonkHE on students who have priorities other than being a student.

AY thanked everyone, especially LT, for support with HR processes and procedures to have a functioning organisation.

Two main improvements needed:

1. Student space **REDACTED**

LC: more FE students use the space - HE students are not in the building where the space is located so don't use it as much.

REDACTED

SK: Culture shift needed

REDACTED

AP: A powerful tool to effect change is to collect and tell student stories. SK agreed.

Actions:

LC to have conversation with the university and the culture change and placing of the room

SK and NM to look at how to tell those student stories and where we target it

AP suggested SK and NM also look at the psychology of creating change

2.2 Officer accountability

AY: Officer accountability has been a struggle. Too much happened after Christmas to be able to implement proper procedures for officer accountability.

REDACTED

AY: Accountability is about making sure there is understanding of the consequences of not fulfilling their role.

SK: This team was the outlier in how they responded to accountability. **REDACTED** Positive things were still achieved by AY and LC, with good outcomes and relationship management with the university.

LC: Looking forward to community building and working with the team on achieving the Guild strategy. That is why they ran for President.

AP: It is very challenging for officers to come in and lead an organisation, especially during such unprecedented times. Things were dealt with as well as possible. **REDACTED**

SK: Credit to Cassie with how elections were run and framed. Incoming officers are current leaders in their community who are stepping up to the next level through their roles with the Guild. Great people have been brought into the roles. They are very representative of our student body.

LC: Lots of different interactions with students has laid the foundation for building relationships with students

AP: With this in mind, accountability is not the only thing you need. Officers need to use elections as a foundation for building relationships with students and give officers the support and reinforcement to carry on doing good work. There is also a consensus on what the role of the officer is which has not previously been there.

AP and LT: commendations to AY and the officer team on their work, how well they have conducted themselves and how they have built relationships and credibility across the university and Guild.

Actions:

SK to work with HR Subcommittee on staffing side, plus COB governance work, to consider accountability structures

3.1 Report from Guild Director

SK on look back from the past year

- **REDACTED**
- There has been a significant impact from having Alice as President and for her focus on building the relationship with the University.

- The Guild has work to do about the NSS next year.
- The relationship between the officer team, students, Guild staff, University staff was positive and this has allowed to deliver good work.
- The team understands what kind of SU we need to be and delivering what is best for our students
- We are seen as trailblazing new areas of understanding and work when it comes to civil engagement at modern universities. SUs have asked to visit for advice and guidance.

LC: this was evident at NUS Liberation Conference where big unions don't understand what kind of union they want to be and they don't understand practical tools on how to debate and pass policy. We're really closely aligned with students here too. Students often discuss community issues, not just individual issues (housing standards, cost of living etc)

AP: a key skill of the Guild is taking individual stories to build better systems to make things work in the future.

LC: she always asks why things are the done the way they are done: pushing to make long term change and not just short term solutions.

SK: **REDACTED**

- Recap on common room space issues

REDACTED

LC and TH commented on community building through societies and sports teams.

- Opportunity: Officer team deeply aligned to the Guild's strategy
- Challenge: Cost of living crisis - costs are spiraling and some students will be affected much more than others. *TH and LC share personal experiences of cost of living crisis and how this impacts their day to day lives, especially in relation to housing. AP raised the points of whether university housing should be run for profit amidst a cost of living crisis.*

Action point: Officers to consider campaign around housing and cost of living crisis

NM went through officer induction plan

3.2 Guild Finance Report

SK went through management accounts report

- Income generation is being reviewed - especially during freshers where the Guild owns this commercial activity.

Decision: Board approved Paul Bowater from BVSC to be the external examiner for the annual return to the charity commission

3.3 NUS Update

NUS update presented by SK. Conflict of interest declared as SK as trustee for NUS. Update paper prepared by COB prepared an NUS update.

3.4 Guild Budget 2022-23 update

LT declared conflict of interest

REDACTED

Action: LC to discuss Partnership Agreement and setting steps in place with Uni

REDACTED

AP explains that LC should set up a working group that looks at student experience - including university, Guild, and other influencers - issues like housing, etc. can be brought to this group. LC agrees but raises that the university may use the pandemic as an unforeseen impact that will impact student experience but cannot be planned for.

Action: LC to discuss setting up student experience working group with the University

REDACTED

3.5 Guild Website

COB unwell, so unable to present Guild Website paper to board. SK gave brief overview - highlighting the preferred move from MSL to One Voice.

LC and TH highlighted society issues with MSL

MSL needs a year's notice to end the contract but One Voice will bring us on board right away without a fee so we can transfer over without a glitch next summer.

Board to send thoughts to COB. COB would like permission to give notice to MSL. Board happy to give COB permission to do this.

Decision: Notice given to MSL

Action: COB to explore OneVoice and Sums as possible options.

4.1 Guild Strategy

presented by SK

SK presented the new Guild strategy

Purpose and Vision highlighted

By 2025, we will be established as a key sector leader in SUs, especially for modern Universities.

SK added point to the strategy under challenges and opportunities: ensuring all student can benefit from the offers from the Guild, **REDACTED** developing student leaders, attracting and retaining the best people, exploring city and regional investment opportunities, building a symbiotic relationship

Supporting student to feel like the Guild is one of the places that have your back

Focus of the Guild: academic representation, partner with the university to ensure student voice is central, developing local partnerships with community orgs. We are key to helping retain students and help them progress.

LC: happy with the success measures - wishes this is what they had when they were a student. AY agrees.

AP: should a measure be how well the university does because of our work?

Action: SK to look into Q27 of the NSS - student voice.

SK: this becomes more important in the context of the cost of living crisis.

LT asked about inequalities of education experience - is this the sector as a whole or particularly at UCB. SK said it is the sector as a whole and how this affects the day to day lives of UCB students, but also highlighted the differences of experiences and outcomes between different courses at UCB such as Food and Physiotherapy.

Action: SK to amend the 'Got Your Back' section to reflect this.

LT asked for clarification on success measures - LT would like to see focus on working together with the university to improve shared goals. AP highlighted how the Guild and University achieving measures of success is intertwined.

REDACTED

LC commented that engagement with the Guild provides real life work experience for students in a safe environment.

AP: We are taking people on a journey to better themselves, whatever that betterment looks like. TH raised the issues of support in taking people on a journey to improve skills and outcomes. AP: We provide good examples and give people a standard to work towards. TH shared personal experiences of how peer support amongst societies has supported them.

SK: This is what we will be discussing in officer induction about building that culture of peer to peer support: abundance vs scarcity mentality.

AP: This is also how we built the case for a higher block grant because we need to resource the projects we say we want to run for the outcomes we want to achieve.

AY: Alice Wilby wants to start doing work on a student hierarchy of needs.

Action: SK to meet Alice Wilby to discuss the strategy and working in partnership here.

AP: We need to build capacity to offer 1-2-1 proper personal support volunteer plans for those students engaged with the Guild. This should also be available for staff involved in the Guild. This is fundamental to whether or not they success with their activities at the Guild, but also sets them up to achieve later on in life. All this contributes to better graduate outcomes.

Action: COB to make a video communicating the Guild strategy in time for Freshers

AY: Reminder that this is the goal to achieve by 2025 - not everything in one year.

AP: We need evolving plans that underpin this strategy. SK agrees.

AOB:

We're taking up Investors in People to see where we're doing well and what we can improve on

SK relayed next set of meetings: dates, times, and standing items

AP suggested restarting the strategy working group. SK happy to do that.

Action: SK to set date for strategy working group and look at who would be happy to be on it.

LT suggested looking at the risk register on a more regular basis to show good governance.

SK said we send it to every finance sub committee but happy to bring it to board. AP

suggested making the risk register available to everyone. SK will present it as a standing item where people can comment on it if necessary.

AP suggested including starred items where they're brought to board but only discussed if needed.

Action: SK to add Risk Register to board as a starred item

Alice Young's last day. SK thanked AY for all her hard work. AY thanked the team for all their support.

End of meeting.