

MINUTES

Trustee
Board

Hendon Campus- College Building C122

Thursday 27th June 2013

10:00-12:00



TRUSTEE BOARD

In attendance: Shreya Paudel (Chair), Michelle D'Souza, Preeti Sogani, Jenny Compton-Bishop, Bob Burlton, Kat Stark (non voting), Ed Marsh-Rowbotham (non voting), Peter Greany (non voting- present for finance items) and Aadam Ali (Clerk).

Apologies: Santhosh Rengan and Phil Pilkington.

1. Minutes of the last Board Meeting

Minutes of the last Board Meeting were deemed to be true and accurate.

2. Matters Arising

2.1. New Director 2013-2014

Actions were postponed to later in the year for EM.

2.2. Finance

KS updated the Board on the query on management account costs from the last meeting. Has found that due to the compromise agreement earlier in the year, this made the salary figures appear higher but has returned to normal.

2.3. HR

KS said the policy would be covered later in the year by EM after the MDXSU handbook is updated. SP commented that he has claimed back costs for visa renewal but MD had not done this yet. EM mentioned NUS are writing a paper on the process of removing an officer Trustee with implications therefore this will be revisited when they release this.

2.4. Risk Register

This is covered in agenda item 9.

3. Subcommittee updates

3.1. Appointments Committee

SP and the Board officially welcomed BB as a new External Trustee who joins us with a wealth of experience as former Chair of the Cooperative Group and notable alumni of Middlesex University. SP

also officially welcomed EM as MDXSU's new Director from 1st July. He thanked everyone involved in the recruitment.

3.2. No Platform Implementation Taskforce

SP communicated that the No Platform Implementation Taskforce report was released last week and thanked everyone involved, he felt the no platform policy was a major win for students.

4. MDXSU Budget 2013-2014

SP presented the MDXSU budget for 2013-2014. He felt it demonstrates a good balance between idealism and pragmatism and asked KS to present further details to the Board. KS said the budget presented came as a result of an in depth process including taskforces with all staff in the Union. The University Executive members were very thorough and pleased with MDXSU's performance as we were able to defend performance and showed growth and development. In addition, this was a turning point as the Executive felt the organisation has turned a corner and in addition SP and EM presented the new governance changes to the executive and Board of Governors who both were very impressed. Consequently, we received confirmation that we were successful in the increased bid of the subvention and the University has agreed with MDXSU to award £804,186.00.

In addition the paper shows MDXSU's KPIs and strategic aims that we have set. The operational plan for year 1 has been budgeted and there is a forecasted £25,000.00 increase in commercial income through increase staff resource in the Marketing and Communications team. If the new Marketing and Communications Manager role is taken out, the commercial income would also be taken out.

Other costs are detailed in appendix 1 and a current staff structure and proposed restructure is shown in appendix 2. EM presented the following on the proposed staff restructure:

- ☐ Currently in the structure, there is an Operations Manager which we did not recruit for and have shown over the year the MDXSU does not require one person to manage resources and the operations team.
- ☐ He feels that the team should be broken up further with increased management capacity.
- ☐ The Membership Services Manager role is too broad.
- ☐ The proposed restructure does not involve redundancies as a result. The aim is not to remove roles but bring more capacity in.
- ☐ The proposed restructure includes splitting the Membership Services Manager role into two- Student Voice and Student Opportunities. Currently there is only one person working in Marketing and Communications at Coordinator level- the proposal increases capacity to 2.5 FTE in Marketing and Communications.

JCB asked EM if UNISON had been consulted in this. She also noted that the roles will need to be graded first for accurate figures in the proposed budget. EM said yes that the trade union representative had been consulted. KS responded that the way in which MDXSU's salary structure is designed and the bands, we are able to make accurate estimates and any variances would only be £200 either way.

BB commented the paper was very well put together and very clear and reasoned. KS added that final page of the main paper shows the delivery model with the planned intern scheme. The main grant bid had a small increase, as the University wished to link increases in funding to specific projects. The additional £30 000 is for freshers weeks and £24 000 is for the new intern delivery model which the Board may want to pay close attention to over the year.

EM commented that the new delivery model is something new from the traditional SU model which is not representative of Middlesex. Students here are time poor and cash poor with no social sphere. We intend to employ 36 interns (paid at London Living Wage) and for the pilot this year, 6 interns in 2 or 3 areas will be piloted in the 6 schools. The University was sceptical but is enthusiastic now and after the full roll out, he envisions that the scheme will be a sector leading example. KS added that next year a reporting dashboard and KPIs and targets will be monitored by the Board and the work of the interns will be contribute to MDXSU meeting the KPIs. A report will be produced by EM and the new Sabbatical team at the end of the pilot including how it will be evidenced demonstrating cause and effect. The Board formally approved the MDXSU 2013-2014 budget and appendices.

5. Management Accounts for month 10 (April)

KS presented the management accounts for month 10. PG said at the start of the year the figures were ahead of budget by £44,000.00 and the redundancy costs are lower. Variances that are showing may be attributed to training costs which may be time related or club and society funds which need to be allocated. He estimated that MDXSU should be around break even at the end of the financial year and reflects on the deficit budget. The cash position is healthy.

BB asked if a balance sheet will be available on a regular basis. PG said this can be available on a monthly basis. KS predicted that the year will end in a small deficit due to training costs. The new sabbatical officer training will also come out of this years spends.

KS highlighted that staff salary savings are real and also due to under spending on marketing campaign material which is another real saving which will not be spent this year. The year may potentially end in a £10,000.00 deficit but will be anyway near a £30,000.00 deficit budget which the Board approved earlier in the financial year. The Board approved.

6. Counter Culture- Letter of Engagement

KS presented the Board with Counter Culture's letter of engagement which PG is a part of. MDXSU currently uses their services and the Board needs to formally appoint them. PG left the room for the Board to discuss.

KS asked the Board for any disagreements and explained last year before the Turnaround, the organisation was at crisis point, there were questions about the senior person responsible for finances. Cash was fine as nothing was happening and the accounts were unreadable. Financial processes were impenetrable. KS approved to have Counter Culture for 6 months who have tidies up internal processes. The letter requests the Board to consider appointment for another year to support the union and have management accounts which everyone can understand and asked if the Board wanted to do a wider tender process.

BB commented that the proposal is sensible and having senior finance staff in small organisations is difficult. It is a reviewable decision therefore there are other options that can be used in future that are sensible if needed. KS agreed. JCB asked how many other SUs they work with. KS said approximately 20 other SUs and even more third sector organisations. The Board approved the letter of engagement.

7. Buy back of NUSSL shares

BB declared a conflict of interest in taking part in voting on this agenda item as he is currently a Director on the NUSSL Board and would only give information. EM explained that the NUSSL is asking SUs to sell

there shares to NUS to give it 100% ownership, which they believe will simplify the governance model and also allow for an affiliation fee reduction.

JCB said she agreed and the Board agreed to sell MDXSU's NUSSL shares to NUSSL (except BB who abstained from the vote).

8. MDXSU Staff Survey results 2013

EM and AA presented the staff survey results to the Board.

BB said the results were very positive and asked if there are any particular reasons for lowlights. EM said pay is a low which will improve through yearly planned job evaluations. Some scores are behind the third sector benchmark and the SU benchmark such as the questions relating to coaching and mentoring which needs to be built into induction. EM will be holding an all staff meeting next week to talk about the year ahead and will be getting a pensions advisor to speak to the staff team. Health and safety was scored low however procedures and documents will be finalised in September as three staff will be trained as health and safety champions. For part time and student staff all our scores are green and the results show they feel a real affinity and engagement.

9. Risk Register

KS presented an updated risk register and said the front face of delivery risk is still high on the point on reputation, pointed out the NSS results have a three year lack due to it being completed by final year students. Jamie Stratton the current Membership Services manager is running the first ever annual student survey to get some raw data. This has happened later than the NSS so students have enough space to fill in both and there has been difficulty in getting students to respond to the survey.

BB commented that given that what has happened the past year, it is good that the current risk register is in existence however, he thinks the Board should regard it as a work in progress as it needs to be developed further. BB offered to share other examples if it would be helpful.

10. Future of the Turnaround Board

SP proposed that the Turnaround Board should be discontinued. SP thanked Ben Ward and Jacqui Boddington for their contributions. EM is the new Director and the Turnaround Board should now be concluded. The Board agreed.

11. AOB

SP thanked MD, PS and SR JCB, PP for their contributions on the Board. He felt proud of what was achieved. He also thanked KS especially for leading MDXSU through the Turnaround process and wished her all the best in her future.