

MINUTES

Trustee Board

Hendon Campus- CG83

Wednesday 13th November 2013

13:00-16:00



TRUSTEE BOARD

Present: Sayed Alkadiri (Chair), Jennie Brown, Sophie McKay, Sarah Bennett, Jenny Compton-Bishop, Bob Burlton, Phil Pilkington.

In attendance: Ed Marsh, Jamie Stratton, Stevie Wise, Dominic Graham-Hyde, Peter Greany and Aadam Ali (Clerk).

Apologies: Shreya Paudel.

SA noted that Santhosh Rengan did not send his apologies for three meetings therefore according to section 43.5 of the MDXSU Constitution, the Board resolved that Santhosh Rengan should be removed from the Board for this reason.

SA welcomed JS, SW and DGH to the meeting on behalf of the Board who were in attendance for items 1 to 10. Peter Greany was present for items 13 to 15 only.

1. Minutes of the last Board Meeting (TB 02/01/13)

The minutes of the previous meeting of the 16th October 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

- The back pay approved by the Board at the last meeting has been submitted to payroll and is being processed and EM has spoke with all affected staff.
- Jo Walton, Chartwells Middlesex General Manager has been contacted regarding the Chartwells conference but is not aware of further details.
- Teresa Kelly has been contacted for the Board of Governors to nominate a member to sit on the Finance and Risk Committee and Appointments Committee in accordance with regulation 3.
- KPI register format has been updated for this meeting.

3. Subcommittee reports

There were no subcommittees that took place between this Board and the last.

4. Declarations of any conflicts of interest

No conflicts were declared.

5. Officer reports

SA outlined since the last Board:

- Intern delivery project recruitment completed- now have 12 Student Interns.
- Working on the Sabbatical Officer's delivery of key priorities.
- Recent MDXSU Subway poll received 300 votes and more than 75% voted for having a halal option.

- Islamic Society committee elections completed and Prayer Room Committee will meet ongoing.
- Received press enquiries regarding the 'Palestine right to education' plaque at the MDXSU Welcome Desk. There were concerns on campus and they are being dealt through the democratic framework.

JB reported since the last Board:

- Involved with healthy campus week and the upcoming Children in Need.
- Setting up Liberation Assemblies.
- Started film nights in halls and will be holding games nights in future.

A question was asked whether any Children in Need activities were being held off-campus and if there would be enough time at present or in future to show externally the responsive side of students. SM replied stating there is a weekly pub quiz and will be doing a press release for money raised for the charity. Shared activities in local schools should be looked into for next year.

SB stated since the last Board:

- Lobbying media loan stores to decrease penalties against loan agreements. Decreased from £5,000.00 to £1,000.00 but still aiming to decrease this further.
- All media committees have been elected.
- Stood for NUS HE Zone Committee but was not successful.
- Met with Head of Media and agreed on a pilot time to do weekly slot for volunteer DJs to do a podcast.

SM reporting the following since the last Board:

- RAG elections completed and Kilimanjaro fundraiser meetings ongoing.
- Planning Children in Need with the University.
- Helping a student organise the MDXmas market on campus and inviting local colleges and schools.

6. Director report

EM outlined his report on the following:

- Operational plan is ongoing and will give more detail to the Board about current activity - should be in place for the next Board. Currently in a period of high activity based on objectives and purpose and the plan will help the transition to show real purpose.
- Will produce a paper for the next Board meeting on HR provision. Current providers used in the turnaround are very legalistic- want to develop a more people and culture approach.
- Ongoing issues with Barclays - received £2,000.00 compensation and have accepted fault.
- Student Advisor chose to leave MDXSU and will be discussing provision to cover this with staff involved.
- The KPIs are now 18 month's old and are the property of the Board. At the December away day, the Board can review whether the 6 aims are still relevant and can make suggestions.
- Contacted solicitors about charitable incorporation and contacted other solicitors who were more expensive. Asked the University to enquire as a corporate governance issue due to difficulty finding information and affordable expertise.

The Board asked what advice NUS could provide. EM responded stating NUS is 3 and half years old as the majority of Unions did this about 3 years ago and is not currently on NUS' radar at present. The University may also support legal costs as EM requested the University to get information from their solicitors, BWB.

A question was asked about the Auditor's report presented in the papers and if this should go to the Finance and Risk Committee, there were also concerns raised about how the document will be used as the audit report has no commentary attached. EM replied saying that the December Board meeting will have the complete audit report including commentary. The process of the audit report is that it will need approval from the Board, then to the University's Board of Governors and will then be presented at the AGM as audited accounts in March 2014 with the report.

The Board commented that they would like to see the evolution of HR and move towards a more people and culture approach which would reflect and advancement in the change in service.

7. Student Voice Manager report

SW reported the following to the Board:

- Has been dealing with elections and various issues with the website. Communications with the University has been difficult.
- Same numbers of Student Voice Leaders and have a bank of great representatives but have spent time fixing relationships with the University and the new scheme. First planned Voice Conference will be taking place with training on policy writing and representation.
- Advice gap present due to the departure of the Student Advisor however SW has recruited 7 volunteers to engage in advice work using advocacy skills. The planned pilot mentoring scheme might be delayed as a result.

8. Student Opportunities and Activities Manager report

JS reported the following to the Board:

- Received a good number of sign ups for student media and societies at the Freshers' Fairs. At present there are 37 societies, a new media committee has been elected and the media smart phone application will be launched on the 1st December.
- Worked closely with SA on academic societies, student interns are working in setting these up. Extended funding will be match funded by the University for these societies.
- Green impact- working through the criteria. Optimistic about possible aiming for silver.
- Building engagement with the sport department and putting data together for a bigger research project with SM.
- Full evaluation of Welcome Week will be compiled over the next month. Initial evaluation shows two weeks is not enough due to the staggered programme of induction.

9. Marketing, Communications and Income Manager report

DGH reported the following to the Board:

- Tying up quirks with the new website platform, NUS Digital. Obtained a data share agreement with the University for the website which supported the recent elections.
- Completed media content on the website and currently more money exchanged online for events set up on the website.
- Two new members of staff in the department, Tyelle Render- Marketing Assistant and Suki Ferguson- Communications Coordinator. Greatly supported Marketing and Communications activity and ongoing press releases will take place working with the new marketing strategy which DGH presented to the Board in agenda item10.

EM added that Doug Tomlinson from NUS will be talking with the Officers and Management Team about the future of the digital platform.

PP raised a concern that as MDXSU now has student data on the website, whether we are registered with the ICO. EM stated that MDXSU has satisfied the University's Data Protection Officer and should be put on the risk register. AA stated that he believes MDXSU is registered with the ICO and will check this for the next Board.

10. Marketing and Communications strategy presentation

DGH presented his Marketing and Communications Strategy to the Board. They made the following comments:

- The student hatch application would require a tender process.

- Talking about 10 year objectives is far too long and concerned that the language could jar some students. DGH said he could soften the language. PP suggested changing 'are' to 'if in difficulties' and 'would help me'.
- Asked about being a leader in the sector and what the political context will be in five years. EM said that there will be a long period of time before there is a national leadership in applications in the SU sector which is where the gap is. MDXSU would be a leader of commuter Universities and commuter Students' Union applications.
- EM said that there is a clear communications plan for the next 12 months with target dates. In a year, MDXSU will have a sector average website etc. In three years, we will keep incremental growth but also to do something new, different and tangible in this area.
- The Board were concerned that MDXSU wants to be sector leading which is not very collaborative and noted that in the strategy, being 'sector leading' would be potentially less abrasive than 'the sector leading'. EM suggested that there can be more than one Union sector leading, more about being at the forefront of the sector.

11. Updated KPI Register

EM presented the updated KPI register. Described it as a blunt tool at present however when the operational plan is shown against, the register will become a more useful tool.

12. Income generation options

Through Working with DGH and Avis Johnson (XXX), the 1 year strategy is quite a larger piece of work in terms of securing income and it is currently the area that has the least thinking behind. EM raised the following:

- Easy to copy other SUs model of income generation and there is a desire to increase independence and capacity. In addition there is a desire for something bigger than this.
- Aiming to target £200,000.00 as income through a new way method or thinking. Asked the Board to think about restricted vs unrestricted funding.
- Target for the year is currently £75,000.00 and would mean two to three projects targeting £25,000.00 each to reach capacity.
- Already surpassed last years income target however £75,000.00 looks stretching. Can be achieved however this will divert attention in other areas.
- EM has frozen the Employability role recruitment to make some savings but suggested the Board could reduce the target to £60,000.00 which would be more achievable.
- Will allow further input into the income generation strategy and requested an indicative steer from the Board.

The Board noted the £75,000.00 is currently part of the budget and can reduce activity if reduced. They also thought freezing the Employability role recruitment would be an accelerant.

The Board approved to decrease the year's income target to £60,000.00 and would like an ethical checklist and clear targets with a business plan for income generation.

13. Sabbatical Officers campaign priorities

EM said this year we have an array of officer priorities compared to last year when we had none. SA presented the campaign priorities paper for the officer team.

The Board noted that good relations with UNISON would support the London Living Wage campaign and lobbying the University to include ethical criteria in all their activities.

Skills for change, camps to activist dev training- peer to peer, students giving peer to peer. More retrospective, everything must be transparent. Part of the action plans with traffic light system. How we achieve the priorities, taskforces, etc.

- PP NHS Bursaries, probs with male student with prof prac issues.

14. Management Accounts for month 3 (September)

PG noted to the Board the change in format of the accounts separated into three parts: summary, balance sheet and detail which is segregated for budget holders and made the following comments:

- The management team have been trained in using the budget system.
- Total assets show £223,000.00 at the end of the period.
- Struggled to receive information from the bank currently £12,000.00 worth of receipts not showing.
- Few timing variances and some things that are not featured e.g. the audit and £1,000.00 worth of residual depreciation and irrecoverable VAT.
- Underspent on salaries and this saving will offset the previous point.
- In the New Year it would be more accurate to show the reforecasted position of income for the Board.

The Board noted in terms of debating what the numbers state, they do not mean anything. EM clarified the reforecasted budget in January will show the salaries balancing themselves out making a real saving.

15. Draft Auditor's report

The Board saw the accounts and felt:

- The presented report was incomplete as no commentary was present and they did not feel equipped to comment. BB noted that reasons for adverse variance of expenditure should be highlighted and put into context.
- On section 1.F the pension costs should be treated as defined contribution- accounting conventions coming into place next year to reflect this.
- On note 14, realistically, the deficit of the pension scheme in 2010 is 47 million pounds and is being re-evaluated however it will likely increase. The 1.5% of MDXSU's share of that will be close to £600,000.00.

PG responded saying the deficit should be acknowledged and the auditor initially said that it should be there, because the amount was quantifiable however it is a technical reason why it hasn't been recorded. PG also said the Unions he deals with tend to not expose the deficit.

BB noted that in line with transparency this should be included in the commentary which is agreed by NUSSL as a technical deficit.

16. Office closure dates and Trustee away day plan

The University have taken decision to open on Monday 23rd December this year and return on the 3rd January. EM proposed that on the final week:

- Board away day 18th December
- Staff Christmas away day 19th December
- Option for staff to work from home 20th December

- Union offices reopen and all staff return on the 6th January

For the trustee away day, EM proposed management should attend with PG and a facilitator to go through Board effectiveness, skills present around the table and a discussion about the 5 year aims. The Board approved the plan and closure dates.

17. AOB

No business was raised.

Action: EM to speak to involved staff and process the approved backpay through payroll.

Updates on actions from Board meeting of 21 August 2013			
Action	Who	Completed	Comments
Investment sub-committee comprising of BB, JB and HJ (EM to advise) to research a tender of banks and investment accounts and circulate to the Board in accordance with MDXSU's financial regulations	AA	No	Pending completion of the audit
To look at options and present a paper to the Board on becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation	EM	Ongoing- current solicitors are not specialised for charities and have very little information on becoming a CIO	
Draft guidelines for the Board on criteria on information disclosed in minutes of Board meetings visible online	EM and SA	Ongoing	
Actions from Board meeting of 16 October 2013			
Contact the General Manager of Chartwells (Middlesex) regarding information on the Chartwells conference and attendance	AA	Actioned	Verbal update at this meeting
Contact Teresa Kelly for a nominee from the Board of Governors to sit on the Finance and Risk Committee	AA	Actioned	Verbal update at this meeting