

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 8 MAY 2019

Members present

Anthony Baker, Clare Powne, George Walker, Ben Zealley, Kate McIntosh, Sam Johnson-Audini, Saul Cahill, David Evans (via Skype), Meg Haskins, Charlie Walker.

In attendance

Gareth Hughes, Kirsty Morrison, Georgina Lambert, Martin Horrocks, Laura Wilkinson (minutes), Ross Kitching (beginning of the meeting only)

Apologies

Oliver Colling, Estia Ryan

Notification of Any other Business or conflicts of interests

'Amendments to the Standing Orders' was added to the agenda (paper already circulated). No conflicts of interest were raised.

Meet a member of staff

Ross Kitching, Digital Communications Executive (Web and Data), explained that his job role included monitoring the website, making sure student membership data is up to date, dealing with student issues concerning elections, membership, course finish dates etc. The recent rebrand meant the website had to be brought up to date which was a big job. The Advice Service update has also been a big task and has been extremely successful.

AB asked what the most challenging part of the job role was, and RK replied that it can sometimes be tricky to find the balance between someone's idea, and how the end user will see it. AB asked how many visits the website gets and RK responded that recently within 2 days we had over a thousand views on the study space map; in each month it's approximately 10k. The Advice Service and the President's email usually do well. CP asked how good the organisation was at 'thinking digital'. RK replied that there have been massive changes since he has started working here and we are definitely working towards a digital first approach. We have lots of ideas that we are planning to implement.

Minutes from the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

GH updated members that we have not yet received the Returning Officer's Report. BZ asked if we had heard back from QSU yet and KMo advised that we had not, but expected to very soon. GH informed members that we were still waiting for the University Secretary to sign off the Complaints Procedure.

Chief Executive Report

GH gave a brief overview on the Employee Engagement Survey Results, stating that the next step was talking to student staff and each directorate meeting. It is a fantastic result but there is still work to do. DE asked if the breakdown by departments of the Employee Engagement Survey would be shown in the HR minutes so all Board Members can see them. GH advised that the minutes wouldn't go into that much detail but he could circulate the documents to Board members. AB suggested Graham Atkinson could do a short presentation to the Board at the next meeting.

GH stated that NUS reform had been approved by National Conference. The Board agreed that GH should cast Durham SU's vote, and were happy in principle with the decision to support the proposals. The Board noted thanks to the NUS conference delegates, who

should be pleased with their contribution to process. GH would circulate further information when it became available.

Durham SU were nominated in two categories at the National Societies Awards. Our Annual Awards evening is on 17 June, where our group successes would be celebrated internally.

CP asked if the VC town hall meeting that was taking place was unusual and GW advised that it is unusual to have one just for students; it will be good to show students are engaged and care about the strategy. GW would be chairing.

Further Action:

- GH to circulate NUS reform documents

Finance Report

AB was of the view that future reports to the Board could be more high level as the Board were confident Finance Committee looked at the finer details.

Commercial had improved their position by 10k, and there was no cause for concern. CW asked if we would be working on diversifying our Commercial income, as media sales are down and the majority of income seems to come from the Bar/Café. MHo advised that the focus now is getting Kingsgate right, but next year would investigate diversification. MHo stated that the budgeted 100k is fairly moderate for the size of café that it is.

DE asked if the success of Riverside was due to the lecture theatre. MHo stated that it would continue as a lecture theatre next year but with reduced lectures (60%). KMo advised that we have already attracted a lot of people because of it and we hope to keep their trade. Dunelm House was just as busy on days there aren't as many lectures, so there is no concern that this would change.

Assembly Report

The Board has previously received the minutes of Assembly, and considered this sufficient oversight but recent guidance from the insurers has suggested that the trustees would be better advised to receive a report which considers a management judgement of risk. AB stated that it does alter our risk profile a little. AB asked trustees if they'd like to trial it coming directly to the Board, or whether they would like to appoint it to a Committee.

KMc stated that it could be useful to have further engagement with specific risks, as it would depend on what Assembly are resolving to do. GH stated that the risks are more likely to be in stakeholders and governance. GH stated that the Campaigns team already do a lot of work with students when they submit policies to Assembly. The Policy team will induct Assembly members differently; currently they receive a Board report, and minutes are available online. It was agreed that Board minutes should be sent to Assembly members.

GW suggested that it could be too time-consuming for Board, and GH advised that SLT, the Policy Manager and a relevant Officer could assess the risk first. AB suggested that as long as we have confidence in the risk procedure, only a risk of 6 and above should come to Board. GH assured members that everything would be recorded, no matter what the risk level.

CP suggested the word 'policy' may not be useful and it could instead be Assembly 'resolutions'. GH agreed that this could be useful for general purposes, but they are still officially called policies in the Standing Orders.

All members agreed that a report should come to the Board in the first instance, rather than a Committee, for all resolutions assessed above a rating of 6 under the Risk Policy

Strategic Themes Presentation: Stronger Communities and Resourceful and Intelligent
KMo presented slides to the Board on the two strategy strands and asked members if they had any questions.

SJA asked if there had been work done on marginalised communities. KMo advised that as yet there had not been but it could be looked at in the future.

Further Action:

- LW to circulate slides

Planning 2019/2020

KMo presented to the Board plans for 2019-2020.

Further Action:

- LW to circulate slides

Committees of the Board

GH presented formal text reflecting the Board's discussion at its last meeting, recommending that the appended text go to the next Assembly meeting with a request to delete Standing order K. The Board has power to amend its Committees in any event, but deleting the Standing Order would remove any ambiguity. AB stated that there would be a risk to the relationship between Assembly and Board if they voted no and we went ahead with it anyway, so we should work with keeping them informed on the run up to June and hope there is no reason they would vote against it.

GW stated that he was committed to taking a broader package of tidy up changes to the next Assembly.

GW stated that there had been a discussion last time regarding Leadership Committee, and asked if there were still a discussion to be had regarding the pros and cons. GH stated that the proposing report would go to the Management Team first, and then to Board in June.

The Board approved new Committees, and agreed to ask Assembly to delete Standing Order K which was inconsistent with this resolution.

Trustee Recruitment

GH informed members that the advert is out and closes on 31 May with some interest already. The interviews are scheduled for 12 June and the panel will be AB, KMc, and GW. GH asked members to send over interview question suggestions if they had any ideas. Any recommendation would go to Assembly on 20 June and Board on 26 June.

AB suggested that there should be more of a recruitment process, involving staff, officers, and Board members. GH would work up some options.

Amendments to the Standing Orders

Assembly has approved an amendment to G13, that *"Each Association shall elect an executive committee on an annual basis, including a President or equivalent, by a cross-campus ballot of all self-defining members."*

SJA stated that should the Board approve it, the change should be made clear to the Associations. GH stated that we would certainly tell them that this is the case and what is expected as of this year. If there is a legitimate reason it can't happen, the Deputy Returning Officer would make that decision. Ideally all elections would be held at the same time so we need to be reasonably firm.

SJA asked what the headline interpretative items would likely be. GH identified notice on when nominations are open, how long for, how votes are cast, as well as information on promotion, the Returning Officer, and the voting process.

MHa asked for clear communication with the Associations. KMc stated that the unratified Societies should still be encouraged to do cross campus ballots.

The Board approved the amendment.