**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON STUDENTS’ UNION MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MAIN BOARD**

# Thursday 29th November 2018

**PRESENT:** R Garcia-Krailing (RGK) (Chair), R Aveling (RA), M Storr (MS), I Nagra (IN), R Bradshaw (RB), G Lovegrove (GL), Shangyin Ji (SJ),

**MINUTES:** K Macintyre (KM)

**APOLOGIES:** J Corbett (JC)

**ABSENT:** P Henry (PH), W Irwin (WI),

**ATTENDANCE:** P Sturgeon (PS), G Gannaway (GG)

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| **69/18** | **Welcome and Apologies** |  |
|  | Apologies received from JC. |
| **70/18** | **Trustee Eligibility Declaration for Charity Commission**  Charity Commission has issued new declarations for Trustees as from 1st October 2018. Trustees signed with the exception of PH, JC and WI who were not present. | All |
| **71/18** | **Minutes of Previous Meeting** held on13th September 2018 |  |
|  | Accepted as a true record. |  |
| **72/18** | **Action List and Matters Arising** |  |

# 42 Heritage Committee

This Committee has not yet met and Minutes will be circulated as soon as they are available. **Action: KM**

# 67.1 Appointment of NSUSL Directors

Members requested that a document be provided on associated risks for such Directors. **Action: Complete**

# Strategic Plan

Members agreed the document is approved on the condition that the Foreword to be amended from ‘Presidents’ Welcome’ to ‘Board of Trustees Welcome’ and then at the bottom of the page signed from the “President and Chair of Board of Trustees”, rather than Raf Garcia-Krailing etc.

Update: Printed copies brought to the meeting. Staff congratulated to producing such an engaging, vibrant document. **Action: Complete**

# Student Numbers

Update on Student numbers to be brought to the next meeting.

**Action: Complete**

# 73/18 Student Numbers

As per 67.4 above.

# 74/18 Strategic Plan for Info

As per 67.3 above.

# 75/18 By Election Results

The by-election has not yet taken place due to data and website issues. The Elections bye-law is rigid in its constraints with dates having to be submitted to Council in advance for approval. Nominations close on 30th November and are progressing really well. There are two student Trustee nominees.

# DECISION PAPERS

**76/18 Terms of Reference**

76.1 Point at 1-4. To be added regarding financial viability of the Students’ Union.

Discussion took place regarding number of meetings and away day. Sabbatical officers, as the away day is their first official meeting, that having both the away and the board meetings was extremely beneficial and contributed to setting the trend for the remainder of the year.

Members agreed that meetings should remain at 6 with the content for the away day not to reflect proceedings in the Board meeting.

President to ensure away activities are related to strategy and top level organization for the June meeting. **Action: RGK**

Finance and HR and Remunerations Committees had earlier reviewed their ToR and recommended to this Committee that they be accepted with the changes as recommended.

**Members agreed unanimously** to accept all three ToR with the changes as detailed.

# 77/18 Proposal – Appointment of Directors for NSUSL

This item was deferred from the previous meeting of this Committee pending further information being supplied. The current Board of Directors (PS, RGK, RB) are seeking support from Trustees in this regard.

* 1. Members agreed that a nomination form be prepared and sent out to assist with the process. **Action: PS**

Positions available:

1. x External
2. x External/Alumni Trustees

WI had expressed an interest, following the previous meeting.

Members agreed unanimously that if WI was still interested, an email vote would be acceptable to approve his appointment which would be communicated at the next meeting.

* 1. PS to approach WI and prepare email vote. **Action: PS**

# 78/18 Proposal – Audited Annual Accounts to 31st July 2018

Chair of Finance Committee informed Members that an Audit Committee had met with the Students’ Union auditors to agree the annual accounts to 31st July 2018. The auditors had raised no issues commended the finance department for their hard work and co-operation. The Chair had no hesitation in recommending the Accounts.

**Members voted unanimously** to approve the Audited Annual Accounts to 31st July 2018

# 79/18 Proposal – BME Sabbatical Officer and related Constitutional changes.

The university hosts a 46% BME student population. It struggles to engage and represent this demographic the Students’ Union, though lack of voice and representation in this area struggles to be taken seriously in meetings and engagements with the university and the student population. It is important that the Student Union does something to support these students. Issues are not only about attainment gap but also many other issues that a part time officer may not be able to take on. Thus year’s Black History Month is a classic case in point. The Students’ Union supported activities for this series of events was not able to put forward a BME person to represent it.

The issues are not confined to campus. It is also how the Students Union have more of a national presence for events such as Students, Not Suspects and Islamaphobia Awareness Week. There are also only two other Students’ Unions who have fulltime Sabbatical Officers. This would show people and students that we are serious about BME issues.

Members were reminded that it is not only a sabbatical role that would need to be resourced but also background staffing resource to push the agenda and support that sabbatical and that all this comes at a financial cost. The question was also asked as to whether such a role could be split amongst the sabbaticals rather than have a new role put in place.

It was noted that the motivation behind such a proposal should not be tokenistic in terms of having a role because it looks good to have one, but should focus on having a role that actually achieves clearly identified objectives that resonate with the Students’ Union, students and the university.

Acknowledging 46% is a large number, Members were counselled against creating roles just for creating roles-sake. Consideration should be given to what might happen if no sabbatical is elected and how the work would continue between the other sabbaticals.

The President stated that if he was given £25k to spend, he would spend it on this BME sabbatical role. The changes that such a role could bring, not just in the university, a staff member would not be able to do. The President said he would take £25k from somewhere to get this done.

The Finance Chair informed Members that the financial commitment for this sabbatical officer would be two months’ salary in this financial year and the remainder to be budgeted for in the next financial year.

The President went on to say he had received verbal commitment from the university for funding for this role but given that the same had been given for the Welfare sabbatical and withdrawn due to university financial constraints, it would not be wise to rely on such commitment as yet. It was also confirmed that it is too early to start estimating budget for the next financial year.

# Members voted unanimously to accept the BME Sabbatical proposal.

In respect of Constitutional changes, it was suggested that the quoracy of the Board be changed to 6 to reflect the additional Member.

It was noted that a substantial increase in Members has been experienced over the last two years and the question was asked whether the Board wished to reduce the number of Student Trustees. Members further noted that the university Board of Governors had been trimmed down significantly and there was a view that a keeping a smaller Board would be beneficial.

It was suggested that the External Board Review include recommendations on future strategy for the number of members on the board. It was suggested that based on the number of sub- committees would require 13 different people based on 5 members per Committee. At some point, decision would need to be made on the direction of the committee over the next 3 to 5 year with a set of aims and adjectives agreed,

RGK to prepare a paper on what the Board should look like, for the Away Day. **Action: RGK Constitutional Changes**

Vote to change quoracy to 6 of which 3 must be Officer Trustees.

# Members voted unanimously in favour.

Vote to add an additional External trustee to the Board of Trustees..

# Members voted unanimously in favour.

**80/18 Proposal – Mature Students Association – Bye Law Amendment**

This has been tabled as an amendment because an Association is different to a Society and therefore any change to their Bye Law must be tabled at Council and Board of Trustees for approval.

It was noted that there are no members currently on the MSA Committee and the proposal has been submitted by the part-time officer in a bid to provide a number of smaller roles that would ostensibly spread the workload of the Association and therefore be more attractive in terms of recruitment to those positions.

It was suggested that if current roles are not being filled then it would be remiss to anticipate that further roles would be recruited. It was noted that this Association lacks a developmental pathway, with no real, defined purpose. Further opinion suggested that the issue is not with the addition of roles but in staffing resource. People are not aware of the aims and objectives of the Association and therefore it is not easy to provide support, as well as being unaware of the differences between a society and an association.

It was noted that the proposal had been voted through by Council unanimously and further noted that such a proposal does not have strategic or financial significance apart from the fact that there are a huge number of mature students that are currently under represented.

Financial implications would be that a lot of time and resources would be spent in marketing and maintaining the Association but it’s the process by which the bye-laws are amended. A need to have more consultation on such changes before they are tabled has been identified to mitigate unchecked opportunities that make significant changes to governance.

It was noted that the proposal is not representative of the student body and that the proposal itself is a little disjointed adding weight to the idea that the process for making proposals needs to be re-examined.

Further point to note: A Society is an organization formed for social purposes. An Association is led by students who are elected by cross-campus ballot, campaigns etc and have full seats on Council

Members voted to accept the proposal: In Favour: 2 Abstain: 5 No: 0

# The proposal was approved by majority vote.

80.1 RGK to prepare a discussion paper on how to better represent the MSA demographically. **Action: RGK**

# 81/18 Proposal –CEO Key Performance Indicators

These are new organizational KPIs that now relate to the new strategy.

**Members voted unanimously** to approve the proposal.

# 82/18 Proposal –SU Talks

VP-Union Development summarized the proposal as being a series of 5 events with well- known speakers on current topical issues over a five-month period. Changemaker have donated £10k to be match funded by the Students’ Union. If this year’s series is successful, it could be carried on in years to come as long as the speakers and topics remain relevant.

The first event took place recently with the Engine Shed with 80 attendees, being comprised of capacity by both students and university staff alike. Students were engaged enough to ask some good questions.

It was noted that the Finance Committee had been assured there was enough flexibility in the budgets to cover this cost.

**Members voted unanimously** to approve the proposal.

# 83/18 Proposal –Risk Register

In line with the move to Waterside, the Risk Register has been re-vamped, updated and re- organised. It is ranked in terms of significant risk and is now much easier to understand.

**Members voted unanimously** to approve the proposal.

The Risk Register will now move to the Audit and Risk Committee.

# SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

**84/18 Finance Sub-Committee**

Finance Committee looked mainly at the year to date position at the end of the first quarter.

This year has been difficult to base a forecast on as there was little or track record to forecast on.

The budget for the Platform is not currently being delivered with difficulties in attracting members of the public. It is doing well for conferencing and events but it’s business plan is heavily reliant on the general public.

ON the Charitable side a number of staff vacancies means that currently the Charity is dong slightly better than break even.

As a Group, the organization underperforming and so the decision has been made to re- forecast. This is not to say a critical stage has been reached as yet. The current position is stable but as the re-forecast comes in, the focus is to continue on delivering a surplus.

Colleagues in the Students’ Union will need to deliver the surplus as budgeted and the Board should look for that strongly.

# 85/18 HR and Remuneration Sub-Committee

Confidential

# 86/18 Update on Audit and Risk Committee

Not yet formally brought into being but in accordance with normal practice, RGK and RA met in an Audit Committee in order for the auditors to approve the year end accounts.

# REGULAR BUSINESS

**87/18 Chief Executive’s Report incl NSUSL**

Two main points to highlight:

1. The Lease on the Engine Shed. Financially, there is no risk. The university will fund any changes. The HLF required the engine Shed to be leased for a 30 year period as part of the HLF bid. The areas of concern are the constraints the university are placing eg. No alcohol on campus whereas the Engine Shed is the only place that does not have a licence, not being able to sell Starbucks brand, implied noise restrictions etc.

It’s the series of implied restrictions that are of concern and those that extend to our trading, compared to the other trading areas on campus.

Legal advice has been sought in the first instance but not sure it is relevant now. It is a risk.

The view was taken that in time, the constraints would be relaxed but as long as there is no financial implication this was acceptable.

1. The Website. Still remains an issue. There had been a plan in place to get it up and running and despite having followed the plan it is still not operational.

Not having a website has had a significant impact on both the Students Union and the students. The Web developer York St John offered a good price but failed to deliver and now the requirement is to go externally from SUMS to get the job completed.

Significant progress was made in the back end but the front end needs more input.

The bigger costs can’t be measured in terms of lost engagement, can’t measure how well or not the Students; Union is doing and can’t get any measurement on membership numbers.

Final Point is to inform members that the Best Bar None Local Award was recently awarded to The Platform as the best late night venue in Northampton and a well done and congratulations are to be offered to the staff involved in the work to winning that.

# 88/18 Charitable Services Report

**Highlights**

Union Day was a totally different event than previously experienced with many unexpected, positive impacts. The event took place on the Market Square in the Town Centre but not only did students come but also the community did engage, asking questions and so on which broke some of the negative perception around students. There was also a really positive article in the Chronicle.

Feedback was great. The university was positive about the event but there may be pressure to do the same again next year which may cause issues about not being under cover.

# Student Voice Working Group

VP-Education has put this together. The Education Committee was engaged but lacked the right network. This group now has all fo the Faculty Deans together with a student representative team. The Deans are able to see the value of the student voice and this get them to buy into the student advocacy scheme.

# Operational Challenges

Just a few challenges over the first couple of months including items such as the automatic doors not working during a very cold weather spell, understanding how the Engine Shed space can be utilized by and the staff-student interaction, the café seating and staff working space ratio, health and safety and fire risk assessments and the data for the website which has now been received and students can now log in.

# Marketing

A meeting is being held on Friday to develop a strategy to be followed by an away with the marketing agency on 10th December to train staff on how to interact with the agency for maximum effect.

# 89/18 Any Other Business

* 1. **Approval of NSUSL Independent Director**

This was mentioned at the last Board Meeting but not voted on. It was confirmed that Richard Clinton had been approached to act as the NSUSL Independent Director and had accepted pending the Board of Trustees Approval.

# Members voted to approve this appointment.

* 1. **Sabbatical Officer Reports VP-Union Development**

Has been working on SU Talks as already discussed and on a partnership agreement with a sports facility in Towcester to facilitate training for sports teams, hosting Freshers and Varsity and then looking at keeping campus facilities available for wellbeing activities. Having been working on scope for a refreshers programme for January to give the platform a kick-start and getting students to re-engage with the Engine Shed.

# VP-Education

Making sure she is a champion for student voice, working on partnerships between the Students’ Union and the University.

Working with QAA team (Quality team) validations and re-approval of Bloomsbury Institute. Met with QAA Manager regarding student representation on panels and extending student voice through validations process.

Working with the post graduate team to try and indirectly see what we can do to be more representative and facilitate their work.

VP-Education was commended for managing to get all the Deans, Faculty Advoctaes and Advocates together and particularly commendable where the Deans have decided to divide their regular two hour meeting to include an a hour with the Advocates.

# VP-Welfare

Wellbeing Wednesdays is now a regular event with the PAT dogs coming in to the engine Shed each week and Conversation Café taking place. After Christmas there will be a monthly Mental Health event with specific topics being addressed such as mental health in sports, supported professionally by the NHS and staff from the university.

A project called SU Cook, to assist students with cultivating healthy eating habits is currently being developed with Changemaker. There are a few issues with facilities and equipment but hopefully this will progress soon.

The first round of mental health first aid training has now been done for part time officers and staff.

# President

Has been dealing a series of difficult disciplinaries with different groups but engaging with local community and the university to mitigate effects. Attending a variety of university meetings.

**90/18 Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday, 31st January 2018

End.