

# Board of Trustees Meeting

## Minutes

**Date** 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Time** 16.30

**Venue** SUHQ Kevin Gately / Teams

**Circulation:** ~ Anna Taylor, Sophie Clark, Max Pike, Holly Roffe, Vaishnavi Ravi, Enaya Nihal, Tom Chaloner, Caleb Heather, Jake Thomas, Ben Abrahamson, Praneel Jani, Angella Hill Wilson, John Dubber, Robert Pegg, Harnaik Dhillon

**Executive Board in attendance:** ~ Philip Smith, Mark Crook, Tracy Murphy, Steve Russell

**Apologies for Absence** ~ John Dubber, Angella Hill Wilson, Ben Abrahamson, Szonja Kanderesi

### Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

**MC** declared a conflict of interest with regards to SUSS pension paper, as a trustee of the SUSS pension scheme and an employee of the University of Warwick.

### 5.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting, dated 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024, are approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting, with a number of corrections.

- Section 4.5b should read - *We are negotiating with the University to better support BUCs. Last year the BUCs funding was over spent by £32k, and we estimate an overspend this year of £100k.*
- Change to wording within 4.5b **PS** will work with **MCC** to reword

### 5.2 Matters Arising

No further matters arising raised

### 5.3 Chairs & Full-Time officer Update

**PS** stated that is the last Board meeting of this academic year and this report should provide recognition of the Full Time officers achievements during their term in office, This will also lead into our Impact Assessment report and will be forwarded to the University to evidence the value the SU adds to the University experience for students, and that we should be celebrating our Officers more.

The Video highlighted clips taken throughout the year, and included links to fuller versions of each exert.

**PS** raised with the Board whether this would be a better way to highlight the Officers work at each Board meeting rather than a written report, a short video version of their work. **EN** as the incumbent President agreed.

## 5.4 CEO Report

**PS** takes the CEO report as read, and highlighted a number of points.

- NSS Score – The results show a significant improvement in our year on year results showing an upward trajectory, which reassures the University.

However the jump in result we have seen since last year is not replicated in other Unions who generally score higher than us, we can't become complacent and assume we will jump at this level year on year.

There is a challenge around engagement as 10% less students responded to our specific SU question in comparison to the numbers who completed the survey.

- Palestine Protest – The SU facilitated a meeting between the Protesters and the University and there will be a follow meeting with the VC, **PS** and **EN** have been asked to attend.
- Full Time Officer Training – **PS** congratulated Natasha Patel and Kim Barry, for the excellent training provided for the incoming Officers.
- Membership Services re-organisation – The Membership reorganisation is complete and will take effect as of the 1<sup>st</sup> August 24.

**HD** questioned with regards to the NSS survey, do we have comparisons with other Universities. **PS** responded Student Voice team are currently looking at all the data and **PS** will update at the Board at the next meeting.

**PS** asked the Board if they are happy with the format and content style of the CEO reports, all agreed. **PS** added going forward he will include a brief update on each Department.

## 5.5 Management Accounts

**MC** updated the Board on the Period 10 accounts and takes his report as read.

- **BUCS** – This year, 24/25 has been a successful year for the Sports clubs, **MC** predicts this will result in an overspend mainly due to transport cost. We are in ongoing discussions with the University and they have agreed to an increase the BUCS grant
- **Reserves Policy** – As a Charity the Trustees annually review the reserves policy, which sets out the minimum amount of unrestricted reserves the Union should hold, the amount is based on the cost of a fundamental re-organisation of the Union including a complete closure, staff costs and redundancy. . **MC** requested the Trustees review and approve the reserves policy.

**HD** questioned whether it mitigated against a significant reduction in the SU's commercial income. **MC** responded that although the reserves policy is set to account for a closure of the Union, it is unreserved it could be used for other purposes such as if a fire occurred causing the closure of Union South building, **PS** added that when he came into the CEO post, we had a vague reserves policy with a figure set between £1 -1.5m, it is difficult to hold that amount of resource and justify not doing anything with it. As suggested by **MC** if we had a major incident such as a fire, we could use the reserves whilst dealing with the Insurers and waiting for a claim resolution. **PS** would always keep the Board

appraised of any requirement to use the reserved funds if it takes the Union below its agreed minimum, the policy and reserves amount is reviewed on an annual basis.

**HD** suggested we have a written caveat in the policy to ensure if it does drop below the minimum it would be brought back to the Board.

**PS** suggested that the Board are informed of the Reserves level at each Board meeting but we will highlight this, and added it should be included in the Audit and Risk meeting as part of the Risk monitoring process.

The Board of Trustees approved the Annual Reserves Policy.

- **Budget Update 24/25, 5 Year Plan** – this paper was initially brought to the May Board meeting as well as being submitted to the University Financial planning committee.

**MC** requested the Board approve the 1 year 24/25 indicative budget based

**HD** questioned whether we link our pay awards to the University, **TM** responded that we don't as the Union would struggle to keep up with the University pay rates, however we completed a full bench marking exercise in 2023, and as a Union our pay rates are good.

The Board approved the 1 year 24/25 indicative budget

**RP** added that although happy to approve he felt the Union should be capitalizing on Media Sales.

- **SUSS Pension** – Warwick Students' Union is a member of the SUSS pension scheme which is a final Salary scheme, one of the risks for us within the scheme is if another member of the scheme were to cease trading the existing members have to pick up there liability. Therefore, we have been in discussions with the University regarding how they could support us in a section 75 payout from the scheme which has been agreed in principle, the loan repayment would be set at the same level as the scheme but would remove the risk associated with the scheme.

**AT** stressed we are requesting the Board approve the start of negotiations with the University, **PS** asked the Board to delegate negotiations to him, he will involve the FTO's where appropriate and will report back to the Board on progress.

## 5.6 Strategy

**PS** had previously provided the Board with indicative timelines for the strategy review and would now like to provide more structure, setting out 'Where we are going and how we do it'

**PS** went on to set out work required prior to September to look at the current strategy to assess what was good and what was not so good, missed targets etc. At the trustee training, 10<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> September 24, we will carry out a session on the strategy and get views on the direction the organization should be taking, what we should be focusing on, this will be the starting point to go out to students and stakeholders, within the first term up to December 24 we will have covered the review and analysis so by end of January / February 25 **PS** will come back to the Board having taken the proposal to Student Council.

By May 25 we should have the Strategy 80% complete, having carried out

- Review
- Engagement
- Analysis
- Development

Returning to the Board in June /July 2025 to sign off the completed Strategy.

**PS** does not intend to bring in external consultants, unless totally necessary. The strategy will be drawn up in parallel with the University of Warwick 2025-2030 vision.

**RP** agreed with the direction of the work, and added it needs to reflect what a Warwick Student looks like and wants 2025-30.

**HR** added that the University are planning for more online based learning, we therefore need to consider how we deliver our services in this working environment.

**CH** asked if the new Strategy will be based around the existing one, or a totally different vision. **PS** responded that although the existing strategy has good elements, it is very aspirational and not all achievable, it was felt the staff haven't brought into the strategy, we need a vision that every member of the staff engages with and see's where they fit in and how it is relevant for them, that they engage and are enthusiastic to be a part of.

The Board of Trustees approve the direction and approach to the strategy and the inclusion of the Strategy session within the Trustee Training days in September 24.

## **5.7 Employee Engagement - Next Steps**

**TM** provided an update on the recent Employee Engagement Survey (EES), and the next steps.

All Directors have held team meetings to discuss the results of their individual teams EES results. The main focus for concern within the results are:~

- Leadership and Development
- Senior Leadership Team
- Communication
- Reward

## **5.8 Freedom of Speech / Bylaws**

**PS** provided the Board with the draft Trustee Code of Conduct and Code of Practice relating to Freedom of Speech. Having been unable to ratify the bylaws due to non-quoracy of Student Council, they will be agreed via power of council.

## **5.9 Committee Meeting Update**

The Committee meeting minutes for Audit and Risk, People and Remuneration and Governance and Appointments are taken as read.

## **5.10 Action Log**

The action log has been reviewed all actions are within timelines or have been completed within this meeting, the log will be updated.

## **5.11 AOB**

The Sports forum have taken the decisions to de-recognise a Sports club, Wake Boarding.

### **Board of Trustee Resignations as of 31<sup>st</sup> July 24**

#### **Full Time Officers**

Anna Taylor  
Max Pike  
Holly Roffe  
Sophie Clark

#### **Student Trustees**

Tom Chaloner  
Caleb Heather  
Jake Thomas

Ben Abrahamson  
Praneel Jani

**Board of Trustee Resignations as of 31<sup>st</sup> August 24**

**Full Time officer**

Vaishnavi Ravi

**Appointments to the Board of Trustees as of 1<sup>st</sup> August 24**

**Full Time Officers**

Muneeba Amjad – VP Education

Sasha King Smith – VP DDO

Joe Stanley – VP Societies

Louis Gosling – VP Sport

Naomi Carter – Welfare and Campaigns

**Student Trustees**

Sinai Ejechi

Szonja Kanderesi

Charlotte Dodd

Prosper Omopariola

Noor Al Syed

Nickan Panjehshahi

**Appointments to the Board of Trustees as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 24**

**Full Time Officer**

Alijah Taha – VP Post Graduate

**PS** thanked the outgoing Full Time Officers and Student Trustees for all their hard work and commitment to the Board during 2023/24.

**Next Meeting – TBC**