

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF HUU LIMITED  
Held on 21 JULY 2016 at University House**

- Present: Trustees: Simon Clements (SC), Stuart Ferguson (SF), Robin Gilchrist (RG)  
Student Officers: Matt Evans (President); Matthew Thorneycroft, Vice-President Education (VPE); George Bainbridge, Vice-President Welfare & Community (VPWC); Matt Bramall, Vice-President Sport (VPS); Simon Hernandez, Vice-President Scarborough (VPSc)  
Student Trustees: Rebekah Greaves (ReGr), Osaro Otobo (OO)
- Attending: Jackie Berry (CEO); Kevin Pearson, Finance Manager (FM); Andy King, Commercial Services Director (CSD); Liz Pearce, Membership Services Director (MSD); Rachel Kirkby, Marketing & Communications Manager (MCM); Stephen Willis, University CFO (UCFO)
- Apologies: Student Trustees: Andrew Paluszkiwicz, Shannon Webb

Review of Workshop

Following input at the workshop held at the away day, Chair asked the Board to consider what they needed to do to prioritise these discussions and ideas into an action plan. SF recommended linking activities to actions and setting real measurements, short, medium and long term, which could be evaluated regularly. CEO said there could be a dashboard to show the health of the organisation, pulling KPIs together and tracking how the Board delivers.

UCFO said the University would like to see how the Union could get involved on the data side. CEO said we were working with the alumni department and looking at ways to link in. RG offered input on this. CEO said a strategy on alumni relations was needed which would be built into the strategic plan.

Chair asked for an updated strategy to be prepared for the October meeting.

**Action: CEO**

Formal Agenda

Chair said there were additional items to record. Jeff Caplan and Judith Donovan were stepping down as trustees following feedback at the last Board meeting from previous sabbatical trustees. Chair thanked them for their efforts over the last four years – Judith's wide experience as a non executive board member and Jeff for his financial experience. Chair welcomed Robin Gilchrist as a trustee and said he had already made an impact on the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee. He has also been appointed as non executive director of HUU Services Limited. The Appointments & Governance Development Committee will propose a timeframe for recruiting a fourth external trustee. SF suggested looking for specific skills rather than focusing purely on alumni. CEO agreed and said the Appointments & Governance Development committee had recommended that the trustee should be local to support linking HUU into local networks.

The appointments were noted.

1 Apologies

Received from student trustees Andrew Paluszkiwicz and Shannon Webb.

2 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were approved.

3 Matters arising from last meeting

The matters arising from the last meeting were noted as completed or on the agenda.

4 Enabling Theme Review

CEO gave an update on progress with the three enabling themes of the current strategic plan (the trunk of the strategic tree) and set out the work which has taken place. She asked for the Board's view on whether we should continue with the environmental theme; although work had been done on the NUS Green Impact Accreditation Scheme, following disaffiliation from the NUS this would no longer continue and there had been very little interest from students on green initiatives. She also proposed that the strategy timeframe was extended for a further year.

VPA said there had been no Environment & Ethics Officer in post last year which would have impacted on activity. However an officer had been elected for this year and they intended mobilising students and encouraging them to campaign. CEO said we should be looking at what was achievable and that this did not appear to be a priority with students. SF said future students may have a different view. UCFO suggested inviting the University Environmental Manager to present to the Board so we could hold the University to account and not duplicate effort. RG commented that awareness would have been driven down if there was no officer in role. He added that as we now have an officer, we should not discourage them by saying this is not part of our strategy. He suggested driving links with the University, leverage the work done by the University and support it. This would give the officer something to work with and it could become a broader issue. UCFO suggested encouraging the officer to work towards the ISO 14001 certification.

The Board agreed to keep environmental practice as part of the strategy with the E&E Officer connecting with the University and presenting an annual or biannual report to the Board.

VPE asked whether agreement should be made to extend the length of the strategy before work has been done to follow up the output from the workshop. CEO acknowledged the point and said the senior management team will look at the work done to refresh the strategy and bring a revised "tree" and proposal for extending the timeframe to the October meeting.

**Action: SMT**

5 HUU People

HRM presented the highlights and lowlights of the employee engagement survey undertaken earlier this year to the Board. This was organised through the NUS and benchmarked us against a peer group of ten students' unions, the whole students' union peer group and third sector median figures from 59 charitable organisations.

The response rate for the survey had dropped since last year but there were some good results. The key index question "I would wholeheartedly recommend this organisation as a good place to work" elicited a 75% agree or strongly agree response and HRM said that

although it was lower than last year, she was surprised it was as high as it was considering the impact of the restructure including the loss of the Christmas bonus. She said the response from student staff was very positive. VPE said it would be interesting to see the percentage response in terms of the increase in student staff for this year.

The top three highlights were about role, wellbeing and values. The top three lowlights were benefits, pay and communication. HRM will continue to work with the University on benefit schemes. To improve communications, monthly staff meetings were now being held to ensure staff are regularly briefed on current activity.

SF said the results were better than those for any organisation he had worked for. RG said he had worked in comms organisations and had seen survey results much worse than this. He said it was indicative of the management team's efforts.

With the disaffiliation from the NUS, HRM said that this survey would be done differently in future. RG suggested joining with other disaffiliated students' unions. Chair asked for the full results to be emailed to everyone. **Action: HRM**

HRM requested that the Board consider her proposals on reward and recognition – she said these would improve our rewards package and bring benefits into line with other students' unions. She hoped they would make us more competitive when recruiting new staff and help to reduce staff turnover. Changes to pension schemes and sick pay were also proposed to help reduce costs.

RG asked if the additional costs had been built into the budget. FM said the savings on pension costs would balance these out. SF asked if the reasons for staff leaving were being addressed. HRM said these are discussed at exit interviews. CEO said there could be a KPI on staff turnover – to bring it down from 25%. RG asked whether key individuals we wanted to retain had been identified and built into the strategy. HRM said succession planning could be incorporated into the PeopleHR system.

The Board approved the proposals. Chair said it was a good piece of work.

## 6 Budgets 2016/17 and approval of CAPEX

FM presented the Board with a final, balanced budget following amendments approved by the Financial, Audit & Risk Committee to the deficit budget of £376k. A proposal on funding was going to University Council this week, capital works had been adjusted to a smaller scheme over the summer, which would also reduce depreciation and there was the benefit of disaffiliating from the NUS.

CSD tabled an update on the proposed summer works, which had been reviewed after confirmation from the University that the full programme would not be achievable in the allotted time. This proposal had been approved by FARC. FM said FARC had discussed reducing sales because of the changes to the capital works but had decided to leave the budgeted figure as it was. RG advised that FARC said the onus was on achieving revenue and receiving funding and they were concerned about revenue streams going forward. Management teams would have to ensure they achieved targets set in the budget. CSD had been able to prioritise areas for the work which would have a maximum impact on students. RG said it was a realistic capex plan and recommended the Board accept phase 1.

The Board approved the balanced budget and capex.

## 7 Period 11 Financial Performance and Forecast

FM said performance for period 11 was as expected. In period 12 to the end of June the £150k from the University and £90k from Lincoln had been received and there was an overall surplus of £84k. The bar take for the EOYB was disappointing and had an impact of £7k on the budget.

FM said period 13 was quiet but as Staff House had closed for refurbishment, there could be a small surplus on catering sales. He said information was now being shared with staff and advising them of a balanced budget should give everyone more confidence. He said that there will be no resting on laurels and FARC will monitor the situation and address any gaps.

CEO expressed appreciation for UCFO taking the funding paper to University Council and said we had been able to look at the strategy focusing on student experience rather than just on our short term finances.

## 8 Reserved item

## 9 WelcomeFest 2016 Presentation

MCM presented plans for this year's WelcomeFest. She explained the name had been changed from Freshers to reflect that it was a festival of welcome for all students at the University of Hull - not just aimed at the 18 year olds - and to move away from the association with alcohol. The marketing team had worked with a student group over six weeks to develop the brief and marketing materials. MCM said the budget for WelcomeFest marketing was £20k and approximately half of that had been spent on developing the app and the aim was to drive students to this. The app would not be continued over the year, as hullstudent.com would carry all relevant information, but they would be working with the University on events on iHull to see how that worked. Packs would be sent to first years with their offer letters and there would be a mass distribution print, Metro style, handed out during WelcomeFest. The intention was to create a festival atmosphere across campus. UCFO suggested projecting images onto buildings around campus. He asked whether there would be comms for the halls of residence and MCM said this had been included.

SF asked who would be responsible for evaluating the success of WelcomeFest when MCM is on maternity leave. MCM advised that a Comms Manager would be in place and there would be a follow-up survey as usual and a report produced for the Board.

The Board congratulated MCM on all the work for WelcomeFest.

## 10 Chief Executive & Senior Management Team Reports

The detailed reports were taken as read and SMT gave updates. CEO advised that the NUS are considering options for offering associate memberships and CEO will bring updates to Board meetings. SF asked if we had any formal links with other students' unions and CEO advised that she was in discussions with Newcastle, Loughborough, Lincoln and also Sheffield and is linking the student officers in. An external supplier, Jonathan Day, already provides training courses as part of the student officers' induction programme and CEO is discussing additional training with him to replace some of the NUS courses.

OO asked for further details about trustees mentoring the student trustees and CEO said details would be forwarded to them. SF and RG offered support as well. **Action: SB**

MSD advised that the University have arranged three additional clearing days and there will be an impact on us in terms of staffing and building costs. CEO said it was important for the Union to support these but asked MSD to keep a record of the costs. **Action: MSD**

MCM asked if Trustees were happy with the proposals for commercial branding. SF asked whether the club night changes were reflected in budgets and CSD confirmed they were. He said attendance at Brassick had been poor and if the changes do not work, they would have to look again at Saturday nights.

#### 11 Health & Safety Report

CSD said the reports should be taken as read and Trustees should note that there were less incidents this year relating to the End of Year Ball.

#### 12 Report from Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

The minutes from the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 13 July were noted. The Board were asked to approve FARC's recommendation to close the USS pension scheme to new entrants. This was agreed.

The Board were asked for approval to amend the reserves policy to a range of between four to six months of running costs so the policy would be to carry between £705k and £1,110k in reserves. We would have the ability to allocate anything over £705k to a designated reserve to be used for a specific purpose based on the circumstances at the time e.g. capital funding for future projects. This was agreed,

RG suggested that for future Board meetings students trustees should be given the opportunity to provide feedback from the meetings as well.

#### 13 Report from Appointments & Governance Development Committee

There had been no recent meeting.

##### Any Other Business

Chair advised that membership of the Board Sub Committees for the new academic year should be agreed. Interest had been expressed from student officers and student trustees and the following was agreed:

- Finance, Audit & Risk Committee: Robin Gilchrist (chair), Matt Thorneycroft, Matt Bramall, Rebekah Greaves and Simon Hernandez.
- Appointments & Governance Development Committee: Simon Clements (chair), Matt Bramall, Matt Evans, Simon Hernandez, Amy Jackson and Osaro Otobo

The Board approved Matt Evans as President to be on the bank mandate with two other officers.

VPSc suggested holding a Board meeting in Scarborough to keep Scarborough relevant. This was agreed.

##### Next Meeting

13 October 2016 at 10.30 am