

## SUBT 19/20 Minutes October 2019

### UNIVERSITY OF SUFFOLK STUDENTS UNION BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2019/20

#### Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 01 October 2019 in A2.07, Atrium Building

**Chair:** Jen Mackness (External Trustee)

**Present:** Lou Chiu (LC) (External Trustee); Georgia Downs (GD) (President, SU); Amy Grant (AGr) (Vice President, SU); Peter Knights (PK) (Finance Manager, SU); Sarah Tattersall (ST) (CEO, SU); Alex Gooch (AGo) (Student Trustee); Stuart Tinsely (STin) (Director of Finance and Planning, University of Suffolk); Jake Thomas (JT) (Student Trustee); Caroline Waters (CW) (External Trustee)

**Secretary:** Sarah Tattersall

**Clerk:** Selena Timmins Chapman (Assistant Manager (Committee and Validation), University of Suffolk)

**Apologies:** Jordan Bambridge (JB) (Student Engagement Manager, SU)

Agenda Item	Notes	Action
1. Welcome	The Chair welcomed members and those in attendance.	
2. Apologies	JB sent apologies as he was leaving the SU temporarily on secondment to the University (see item 7, CEO report).	
3. Conflict of interest	No conflicts of interest were declared.	
4. Remarks from the Chair	The Chair extended accolades to the SU for the extensive work undertaken since the previous meeting to ensure the SU Grab and Go outlet / social space was ready to open.	
5. Minutes of previous meetings	The Chair apologised for the late circulation of the minutes due to circumstances beyond the control of the SU. The Chair and Secretary were satisfied that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate record however members were asked to review the minutes and notify the Secretary of any inaccuracies by 11 October 2019. The minutes of the previous meeting would be approved at the next meeting.	All
6. Action record and matters arising	The Action Record and matters arising from the June 2019 meeting were updated as per <i>Appendix 1</i> .	
7. CEO report	<p>The following updates were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The new Student Opportunities Co-ordinator had started and was performing well in the role;</li><li>• The Democracy and Representation Co-ordinator would be shortly be leaving and the SU planned to recruit to fill this post;</li><li>• JB would very shortly start a six month contract as Head of Marketing at the University; during his secondment additional administrative support would be in place and a current member of staff would take on additional responsibility;</li><li>• All new front-of-house posts had been filled and new staff members were progressing well;</li><li>• The Board planned to mitigate the collective gap in trustees'</li></ul>	

	<p>commercial knowledge by appointing a candidate with the requisite background as well as by requesting NUSL support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on the new shop had been positive</li> <li>• Clothing at the shop was also selling well however these transient sales could not be factored into sustainability predictions;</li> <li>• Sales at the shop would need to increase in order to meet targets.</li> </ul> <p>Following routine updates, the Board expressed concern regarding the ability of the SU to fulfill their obligations to students in the absence of two key members of staff. The Board were equally concerned with the well-being and resilience of remaining SU staff. PK explained that once the shop was fully established it would not be as great a drain on staff resource. As well, the staff shortage had been identified as a risk with controls in place and in development. Should JB not return from secondment, a replacement member of staff would be sought.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged this response but asked whether the SU had considered advertising JB's role as a secondment opportunity, for example within the NUS Workplace community. The SU agreed to consider this.</p> <p>The Board asked if there was a contingency plan should, for example, ST leave the SU or for any reason be unable to fulfill her role. The SU explained that there was a business continuity plan in place as well as the risk register and further explained that the current situation was exceptional due to the additional workload associated with the opening of the shop.</p> <p>The Board noted that they would assist the SU as and when necessary but asked that the SU be proactive in ensuring appropriate internal contingency plans were in place. It was therefore agreed that a copy of the business contingency plan be circulated for members' review.</p> <p>With regard to the shop, it was reported that stationery and Christmas stock would be ordered. The SU planned be cautious with regard to overstocking, however.</p> <p>Members queried whether there was an allowance in the budget for shop waste and theft. The SU explained that there was not but that they would consider this following additional consultation as well as the first shop inventory (due to take place within the week). Members asked the SU to provide an update on this matter.</p>	<p>ST</p> <p>ST</p> <p>ST</p>
<p>8. Executive report</p>	<p>The following presidential campaign updates were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A key campaign had been achieved with the successful opening of the shop;</li> <li>• GD would meet with the Head of Quality Enhancement at the University with the aim of progressing the campaign for students to receive feedback in a more timely manner;</li> <li>• A bid to the University's Student Experience Group (SEG) to support Sofia, the Suffolk online feedback tool, had been successful and the funding would be used to hire an intern to support the launch of Sofia</li> <li>• An additional bid to SEG to fund a course rep reward scheme had also been successful;</li> </ul>	<p>GD</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment for course reps was underway;</li> <li>• It was noted that whilst the SU was not heavily involved with course reps at the Partner colleges, they did offer support;</li> <li>• The SU planned to trial an online induction for course reps at London School of Commerce (LSC) with the aim of offering this resource to Partner colleges in future.</li> </ul> <p>The following vice-presidential campaign updates were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A key campaign had been achieved with the successful opening of the social space adjoining the shop;</li> <li>• AGr and the Head of Student Services at the University had met with developers of the SilverCloud online mental health programme and had been given demos and access to the SilverCloud app;</li> <li>• The University Vice-Chancellor planned to launch a well-being working group; AGr expected both to be a member and to launch and promote the SilverCloud app as part of the group's work;</li> <li>• As the outcome of an unsuccessful bid to SEG to fund student laundry facilities, it had been agreed AGr would further explore the national issue of affordable student accommodation laundry facilities with Athena Hall and with SEG.</li> </ul> <p>The Board was pleased with the progressed made on the presidential and vice-presidential campaigns.</p> <p>An update on the Freshers' Fair that had taken place in September was provided. Positive feedback had been received and the highest attendance in the history of the event had been recorded. It was thought that the new venue had helped with student engagement. It was also thought that continuing to hold Freshers' activities over the course of one week would be beneficial to student engagement. The SU agreed to feed this observation back to SEG.</p>	<p>AGr</p> <p>ST</p>
<p>9. Finance</p>	<p>The first month of the 2019-20 academic year had generated an exceptional surplus due to a number of factors, including receipt of the expected block grant deposit; Freshers' Fair invoicing occurring ahead of schedule; and payment last academic year of insurance fees due for the current academic year. The SU had also paid fewer wages than budgeted due to staffing vacancies.</p> <p>PK cautioned members that the surplus was not expected to continue in future months, but advised that the budget for 2019-20 was more robust than the one for the previous year. This confidence was due in part to experience gained in 2018-19 as well as the increased block grant.</p> <p>Members queried the current position on reserves and it was reported that £120,000.00 was reserved. Members were satisfied with this position.</p> <p>Members also queried the position on staff wages. It was reported that the SU planned to make use of the entire staffing budget rather than saving money due to staffing vacancies. It was noted that spending the budget would create a savings in time and human resource as well as ensure the SU could offer relevant services to students. Members were pleased with this position.</p>	
<p>10. Risk register</p>	<p>Significant changes had occurred within the SU since June 2019 and ST</p>	

	<p>asked members to grant additional time to consider risks related to staffing. Members agreed to this proposal, with the Chair noting that she would continue to keep in close contact with ST regarding staffing matters.</p> <p>PK noted that there was updated guidance regarding legislation related to the obligations of charitable operations and commercial operations. Members were cautioned that should the shop (a commercial operation) generate a loss, the SU (a separate charitable operation) could not help finance the shop as per the new guidelines. This would be explored further at the Board Development day in November 2019.</p> <p>The SU would make every effort to lawfully support its commercial subsidiary and noted that it was not planned or expected that the shop, in the long-term, would generate a loss.</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>PK</p>
11. Any other business	<p>New University of Suffolk partnerships</p> <p>STin updated members regarding two new partnerships undertaken by the university: London School of Commerce (LSC) and Global Banking School (GBS).</p> <p><u>London School of Commerce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,500 students would start this academic year;</li> <li>• The majority of students were based in London;</li> <li>• A new campus was planned in Manchester;</li> <li>• It was expected that some LSC international students would study for a time at the Ipswich campus.</li> </ul> <p><u>Global Business School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,000 students would start this academic year;</li> <li>• Campuses were located in London, Birmingham and Manchester.</li> </ul> <p>STin reported there were no plans at the moment for the University to seek additional commercial partners.</p> <p>Members discussed support for LSC and GBS students. As none of the block grant had been allocated for these students, STin recommended that the SU make a request for additional funding within the usual cycle.</p> <p>ST advised members that she would liaise with the Deputy Academic Registrar (Academic Services) regarding timely communication between the University and the SU with regard to new partners.</p>	<p>ST</p> <p>ST</p>
12. Date of next meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesday 25 February 2020 from 4pm</li> <li>• Friday 22 November 2019 (proposed Board Development Day from 12pm)</li> </ul>	