UNIVERSITY OF EXETER STUDENTS' GUILD

Trustee Board

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 6th December 2021

LSI Seminar Room B, Streatham Campus. 2pm – 5pm.

Ref	Minute	Action
	Present: Lily Margaroli (Guild President – Chair), Julie Walkling (External Trustee/Deputy Chair), Bella Enoizi (VP Education), Izzy Harrison (VP Opportunities), Marion Ojua (VP Liberation & Equality), Alfie Carlisle (Student Trustee – ASC), Thiba Baskaran (Student Trustee – THB), Scarlett Hilson-Wheeler (Student Trustee), Deborah Watson (External Trustee), Natalie Stewart (External Trustee), Margaret Laithwaite (External Trustee).	
	In attendance: Andrew Connolly (Chief Financial Officer, University of Exeter - ACO – ***in attendance for the University Financial Update item***), Kate Christlow (Partnerships Manager – ***in attendance for the University Financial Update item***), Luke Appleton (Digital Manager – ***in attendance for the Digital Review item***), Alison Chambers (Chief Executive – AC), Hannah Brown (Head of Finance), Cassie Thornton (Head of Marketing & Brand), Tom Barrass (Head of Student Engagement – TB), Sue Harding (Head of Organisational Development), Lauren Chatfield (Executive Support & Facilities Officer – Minute Taker).	
	Apologies: Idris Bin Mohammad Affrin (Student Trustee).	
TB-21.16	**Minutes of the Last Meeting – 18th October 2021 and Matters Arising (Review of Action Log)** <u>To approve:</u> Approved as a correct record. <u>Matters Arising</u> None declared.	
	Notifications of Any Other Business: • None declared.	
	Notifications of Any New Conflicts of Interest: • None declared.	
TB-21.17	**Impact Report** <u>To note:</u> CT gave a presentation on the Impact Report paper. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments. Key points:	

	• Overall positive feedback received on the impact report by trustees. **Agreed Received**	
Presentation	**Strategy Update** To note: AC gave a presentation update on the Guild strategy. Key points: • *Supporting staff (SLT members and LC) left the meeting for this item to be confidential as trustees and CEO only.* **Agreed Received**	

TB-21.18	**Student Experience Update & Officer Manifestos (rolling item)**
	To note:
	The officers provided a paper update on student experience and officer manifestos. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments.
	
	Key points:
	• LM gave a briefing on the paper
	• The SE report has been organised around officer themes
	• Guild Council – last meeting's agenda items consisted of: UCU action plan, college officer update, student wellbeing forums, international students
	• Officers update:
	  ○ VP Liberation & Equality – NightSafe; meeting with the provost was held with students – hoping to bring in an external consultants for a safety scheme for the next academic year, hoping to pilot something prior to this to remove the gap; Wellbeing student forum – feedback from Guild Council but awaiting more student input – looking to areas of improvement, diversity of students within the discussion.
	  ○ VP Opportunities – Continuing to work on resources and support of societies; working with Activities team on the digital review and how we can make the back end of submitting events easier for committees, obtaining insights for this from students; Hardship fund, worked with AU to formalise the process and collaborate, working on a video and crowdfund campaign to launch this.
	  ○ VP Education – Changes to mitigation and academic side of things, guarantees for students studying through the pandemic – good feedback from students; working on a tutor review inc. personal tutor system, why it is not working and next steps to implement best practice; piloting a feedback system, final paper is going to University Gold meeting tomorrow; hoping to work on changes to the ILP system; working with VP Opportunities around academic societies and how we strengthen academic communities.	

	○ Guild President – International student working group meeting has taken place around study plans; focusing on internal work in the Guild, reflecting on officer team work. **Agreed Received**	
TB-21.19	**Chief Executive Report and Objectives (rolling item)** To note: AC provided the CEO report and objectives. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments. Key points: • AC gave a briefing on the CEO report. • Preparing for the new University 2030 strategy – The UoE are creating a new structure focusing on: sustainability; health & wellbeing; and social justice. No more colleges, departments will work within faculty clusters. This will create an interesting dynamic between us and the SU to see who supports who. • The Guild was not involved in consultation slightly later in the process than would have hoped for – however, we are in support of the general steer, there could be some disruption in professional services in particular, plans to have this new structure in place by September 2022 • International student experience/degree apprenticeships/PG students/online only students – need to focus on this as part of our strategy • FoS deep dive was held with CGR committee in which a number of key contacts presented, actions have been taken away from SLT • Reballot opens for strike action – waiting on the outcome of this and potentially expecting strike action in the new year – A query was raised on how the University is mitigating the impact of strike action for students? TB advised that the University have been trying to ensure students get marking on work when expected, ensuring focus on securing exam dates for students, ensuring that mitigations are in place for minimal impact on students, making sure that resources and virtual learning environments are available. How do students feel as a result this time? Overall student community is supportive of lecturers. • Vacancies in the Guild: Voice Manager and Marketing Manager – the team are strained, hoping to build these teams the other side of Christmas • Main priority for SLT is getting an accurate reforecast for this years budget, projecting next years budget, and 5 year plan to feed into the SIPC process. **Agreed Received**	
Verbal	**University Financial Update – Joined by Chief Financial Officer, Andrew Connolly** To discuss: ACO joined the meeting to give an update on the University's financial plans. *KC joined the meeting in attendance for the item.*	

	Key points: • The Guild are focusing on 5 year plan: income diversification, what does the Guild look like post commercial transfer, our heavily reliance on the block grant – how is the University planning their finances for the next 5 years? • ACO gave a background on the University's financial plans. • The UoE still trying to navigate financial plans following Covid-19 – trying to understand what is business as usual and what baseline income generation is. • What we know: In the current year – August 2021, Total income year on year – £67m income. Almost back to where it was pre-covid. • Costs have raised due to digital support for departments, student experience, serving academics, national insurance increase, pension costs, inflation. • Main income stream – tuition fees. 10 years of no inflation on this fee – however, the international market has proven to be remarkably resilient. High student numbers the last couple years, resulting in high workloads for staff which is not sustainable • Strategy prior to covid has been focused on international student intake in order to balance the books and enable the UoE to achieve the work they have set out to do – this is a key part of the 2030 strategy. • The University's previous Planning Resource Group and Capital Investment Group meetings have now been amalgamated into one committee – Strategy Investment Planning Committee • By end of April, there will be a steer as to how to logistically achieve the strategy • There are challenges around pandemic uncertainty as to how this could impact the University's strategy • Overall UoE finance's are in a pretty strong position • More investment to be had in digital services • Cash allowances increased last year by £25m despite impact by COVID-19 • Query re: international students – from a Guild perspective – do we need to be planning more on supporting international students? ACO highlighted that looking at other Russell group universities whom are in a similar position, there has shown benefits to focusing on international student support • Restricted on what we can do with the block grant now we do not have our own income through commercial – ML emphasised the importance of the Guild having more involvement in the process; how do we get our suggestions effectively supported by the University governance structure? ACO proposed developing ideas and making use of the connections with the University, having conversations on ideas with relevant people prior to the formal processes • AC raised a concern around the Guild having to wait until March to present, where funds have already primarily been allocated to other areas in the University prior to March. ACO emphasised	

	that the University process is trying to avoid a first come first served basis moving forward so that the process is fair for all. • Discussion had around how the University's strategy can work alongside the Guild's on how the Guild can plan for the future. • AC – What would enable us to have the independence? Could we come to the University with our strategy for 5 years and come to an agreement for 5 years at a time, rather than annually. It would be helpful to include an impact fund, more informally that we manage year on year. ACO advised this could be possible, would be subject to change if there are unforeseen circumstances. **Agreed Received**	
TB-21.20	**Management Accounts** To note: The management accounts for October 2021 and cashflow were presented. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments. Key points: • HB gave a briefing on the paper. • Budgeting process impacting management accounts – specifically in non-directorate; money allocated to areas where we have known figures and we have overbudgeted for that now needs to be repurposed elsewhere • Payroll spend is lower than what was asked at 50% - this is largely due to vacancies • Seeing a spike in societies incomes this month, expected around freshers with new memberships • Society negative balances – we are looking to create a policy to support this • Cashflow is in a strong position to July 2022 with the lowest position is in January – reforecast planned for January • To ensure we are utilising our funds properly. *ROLLING MINUTE*: *"The Chair reminded the meeting that the Guild had negative net assets and should review cashflows to ensure that it was appropriate for Guild to continue as a going concern."* **Agreed Received**	
TB-21.21	**Sub-Committee Update – FAC** • **Finance & Audit Committee; Minutes 05.11.21** To note: ML gave a verbal update on the FAC sub-committee meeting. The previous minutes were circulated for Board overview. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments. Key points: • ML gave a briefing on the FAC sub-committee meeting that was held on 5th November 2021. • ExSIF policy – University are now working with the students to take forward next steps	

	• Patrick Heron painting – recommended to propose joint ownership with the University with the Guild • Items for approval in part 3 of today's agenda – taken as approved unless otherwise raised – A few suggestive changes made to the documents, board in support of approving in principle of changes being made. **Agreed Received**	
TB-21.22	**Sub-Committee Update – CGR** • **Compliance, Governance and Risk Committee; Minutes 18.11.21** <u>To note:</u> JW gave a verbal update on the CGR sub-committee meeting. The previous minutes were circulated for Board overview. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments. Key points: • JW provided a briefing on the CGR sub-committee meeting that was held on 18th November 2021. • Freedom of Speech deep dive session was held prior to the CGR meeting • Health & Safety update • Coronavirus arrangement discussion • Discussion around fire evacuation responsibility • Lift project and refurbishment project • Data protection and IT security • Safeguarding policy – first draft • Update on People plan • Reviewed proposed HR Management Policies – on today's agenda for discussion and approval • Discussion on implementing a HR & Nominations Committee. **Agreed Received**	
TB-21.23a TB-21.23b TB-21.23c TB-21.23d TB-21.23e TB-21.23f TB-21.23g	**HR Management Policies** • **Cover sheet for item** • **Summary of changes** • **Flexible working policy** • **Probation period & review policy** • **Performance improvement policy** • **Cover sheet – New sick pay scheme & Sickness absence policy** • **Sickness absence policy** <u>To approve:</u> A draft version of the HR management policies were circulated for discussion and approval. Papers taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments. Key points: • SH gave a briefing on the draft HR management policies and proposed changes. • No queries raised on the proposed policies. Board members in support.	

	All in agreement to approve the proposed HR management policies. **Agreed Received**	**All**
TB-21.24	**Digital Review** <u>To approve:</u> A paper was presented on the digital review for approval. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments. *LA joined the meeting in attendance for this item.* Key points: • CT/LA gave a briefing on the paper. • Discussion had around the options – recommended option is option A: Memplus: to enable implementation in line with agreed project delivery timeline to be ready for the next academic year. • Feedback from societies has been positive around the proposal, and society leaders are keen to work with us and make change. **All in agreement to approve the Option A: implementation of Memplus system.** **Agreed Received**	**All**
TB-21.25	**AGM/Student Members Meeting** <u>To approve:</u> A paper proposal was presented for approval on implementing a AGM/Student Members meeting. Paper taken as read. Board members were asked for any questions or comments. Key points: • TB provided a briefing on the paper. • The updated Mem & Arts now required an AGM/Student Members meeting to be held once a year – asking for Board approval for a provisional date for late January. • Board members in support of the proposed date. **All in agreement to approve the calling of the annual Student Members' Meeting to be hosted on Thursday 27th January 2022.** **Agreed Received**	**All**
	Any Other Business <u>To receive:</u> • None declared. **Agreed Received**	
	Date of Next Meeting – Monday 14th February 2022	

Action Log

Meeting Date	Ref No.	Action	Action owner	Target date