

DSU Board of Trustees Minutes

Meeting Two of the academic year 2022-23

Tuesday 13th December 2022 / Adam Redfern Board Room / Microsoft Teams

Members	Initials	Meeting 1 11.10.22	Meeting 2 13.12.22	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5
Geoff Kershaw (Chair)	GK	✓	✓			
Phil Gilks	PG	✓	✓			
Laura Arends	LA	A	A			
Beverley Shears	BevS	A	✓			
Nyashadza she Nguwo	NN	✓	✓			
Aashni Sawjani	AS	✓	✓			
Amir Iqbal	AI	✓	✓			
Aliya Khan	AK	✓	✓			
Meera Dasani	MD	✓	✓			
Luke Martin	LM	✓	✓			
Mehul Parekh	MP	A	✓			
Benjamin Smith	BS	✓	✓			
Stephanie Glazebrook	SG	✓	A			
Sarah Bradley (CEO)	SB	✓	✓			
Paula Heneghan (Clerk and HOF&CS)	PH	✓	✓			
Elgan Hughes (HOMS)	EH	✓	✓			
Andy Reynolds (HOIGE)	AR	✓	✓			
Catherine Searcy (Minutes)	CS	N/ M	N/ M			

Key: “✓”= Present, “A” = Apologies given, “N/ M” = Non-member, “P” = Partial attendance, ‘X’ = Non-attendance

Formal

Item	Discussion	Actions
<p>1. Introduction/ Apologies for Absence/ Conflict of Interest</p>	<p>Apologies were received from LA and SG.</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Register –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI is a member of Esports and Nintendo societies <p>ACTION: PH to update Register with AI additions</p> <p>BS queried if for student trustees it should be listed that they are also a member of the Union? SB believes this is covered in the Articles so doesn't need to be repeated on the register.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of the previous meeting</p>	<p>No comments/amendments.</p>	
<p>3. CEO Update</p>	<p>Verbal update from SB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koreo are no longer attending today's meeting for various reasons, so this will be picked up in the New Year • Review of the Articles in progressing – will be instructing Wrigley's soon and aim for this process to all be completed by April 2023 • Hosted JEC meeting recently – AK brought a proposal for a 'breakfast club' for students to access for free so AK and AR are currently working on the costs • TEF writing workshops – have had over 40 different students involved • Final Trustee Board meeting for EH to attend as he is moving to TEXT REDACTED. An internal interim recruitment for the role of Head of Membership Services has already begun <p>LM noted that he had seen that the DSU stance on UCU strikes was neutral. Is there some more information on that stance and any student feedback about the strikes? SB believes this will be covered in AI's update as part of agenda item 4.</p>	

	<p>BS – see that we are aiming to get the block grant on a three year basis rather than annually and that is definitely more sensible. Are we having conversations about growth of the grant amount? SB – has been some growth over the past few years and DMU are open to these talks going forward too. SB and PH are putting together a proposal with the help of the FHRC. The bare minimum will be a cost of living increase included.</p> <p>BS – what is keeping SB up at night as a concern?</p> <p>SB – The cost of living crisis is a concern for everyone so is naturally our biggest concern too. Keeping our eye on this re after student loan payments have come in for students and what they are left with after that, so February 2023 will be key.</p>	SB
4. Executive Officer Update	<p>All spoke through the slide show distributed before the meeting.</p> <p>NN –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing with visibility theme including lecture shout outs • TEF writing • Is making the opening statement for DMU TEF statement • Events for student feedback • COP27 <p>PG: you’ve spoken to a lot of students. What are they saying they want that we’re not delivering currently? NN believes their main focus is how Ed2030 is going, needs within societies, what we’re doing on the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>MD –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various events held for Disability History month • Trying to encourage students to talk comfortably about their disabilities 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open mic night for Black History month was great success with lots of positive feedback and requests for more events like that <p>AS –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No update on the dance studio as yet as meeting has been delayed. DMU had wanted to evaluate the use of the space at the end of the first academic term • Hosting a SHAG week in mid-Feb 2023 which is a first for DMU • Games Nights – encouraging student leaders to attend as ideal opportunity to engage. Have been very successful so far <p>LM asked how planning for varsity was going? AS confirmed that regular meetings are already happening, a joint photoshoot with UofL took place today in the Function Rooms so going well.</p> <p>BevS joined the meeting via TEAMS.</p> <p>AI –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCU update – decision of the Exec team to take a neutral stance. There hasn't been a lot of student feedback on the matter. One student asked why we are not supporting the strike. It has impacted an estimated 4-14% of classes at DMU. UCU now have a working agreement in place so if any further strikes were to take place, we would reevaluate the Exec stance to ensure it reflects our students. <p>AK –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invited to write an article for WONKHE • 'Having a ruff day' event was great success • Breakfast club for students in progress – potential to serve up to 300 students per day <p>LM: How much help are you getting from NUS about the cost of living situation? AK feels that they have been useful – they've been completing a lot of student surveys (and DSU then ran a more condensed version of that – findings can be shared?). Have offered mental health and careers support too.</p>	
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	<p>LM asked if NUS are taking actions? BS is aware from his interactions that they have done a lot regionally and supporting a lot of people on the ground, plus working with Parliament too.</p> <p>BS asked what the Execs biggest concern right now is? AI feels it's the cost of living crisis as its affecting everyone and isn't going away. GK congratulated the Execs on the amount of great work happening currently and the agenda being driven by members.</p>	
5. FHRC Update	<p>Meeting held recently – PG gave an overview –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful update on commercial progress and assurances • EDI update – concern at the approach Koreo has taken since the audit happened. Don't want to lose momentum on that. • HR policies updates <p>GK asked what the next steps on Koreo were? SB confirmed that SB and PH are meeting with them on 2/01/23 and then Koreo are on campus for some all staff training on 5/01/23.</p>	

Substantive items for consideration

6. Freshers Report	<p>EH wanted to reiterate the success from 2022 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 3000 students attended both fairs • A lot of international student activity • Needs to continue passed one week – more of a term one induction process • From January 2023 Freshers planning will begin using a workstream model so the load is spread and involves more staff. • Interactions on The Hub are helping inform decisions – e.g. there were over 1000 interactions on 'where is my class?' <p>BS: What were the key weaknesses?</p>	
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	<p>EH: DMU/DSU/communication relationship. This has already been raised at JEC for improvements and both side working positively on this. Disappointing wristband sales.</p> <p>PG: How will you measure success next year? KPI's? EH: Numbers of students joining societies, numbers through fairs etc. But need to ensure we are answering our 4 key points – visibility, representation, belonging and resetting. KPI's will be set in Jan 2023 as part of the Freshers planning. Staff were burnt out by the second week of Freshers in 2022 so we are putting on too many events in too short a time frame, so they need to be more spread out throughout the first term and more mindful of staff workload.</p> <p>ACTION: KPI's shared at Trustee Board in either March or June.</p> <p>BevS hadn't been aware of delays in students receiving their timetables until 4 days into the term. EH confirmed there had been issues with an error on the DMU system but traditionally students always get them very late at DMU. Going forward, if we inform BevS of issues like this as she can raise them as a DMU Governor, alongside the student Governors. EH feels it was exacerbated this year as DSU weren't equipped to help/advise either.</p>	
7. Koreo Update	Discussed in CEO update.	
8. Q1 22/ 23 Financial Update	<p>PH now has four months of accounts to share until 30/11/22.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £28k profit • £56k behind in Commercial • £32k underspend in Membership Services – largely due to recruitment turnaround times/staffing • Dec 22 budget – how are we doing so far for Dec 22. Compared against the new proposed budget, The Union and Supplies look like they would make that but Injunction would not (quiet on Wednesday's, early exit from World Cup) <p>BevS asked as trustees, can we recast the budget and what is the way to do that if so?</p> <p>PH: We did this for the first time last year 2021/22. Instead of sticking with the June approved budget I propose we approve a new budget – this is due to the large variances against the June budget. By</p>	

	<p>approving and reporting on differences to a new budget this would help ensure more visibility on variances rather than just allocating them to Term One differences. In the New Year we will need to start focusing attention of 2023/24 budget to ensure this is at least a break even budget</p> <p>SB: Have a new team in Commercial, this budget is more accurate and reflective. PH: Can also scrutinize more with the new figures going forward.</p> <p>BevS: What are the implications for a going concern? PH: None. We have a reserve policy in place and we are fine for this year, but after that then there would be implications. I will continue to review this and would not be proposing a deficit budget for 23/24.</p> <p>PG: If we recast this years budget, do we not learn from that/see our mistakes/issues?</p> <p>SB: If the Board would like, we could produce a recast budget against the original budget?</p> <p>GK: Lets have one set of numbers going forward. Exception rather than the rule that we recast budgets. Also a discussion maybe to be had in FHRC? Does everyone agree with that?</p> <p>BevS: Yes. Want to just ensure that as a trustee, we are following the rules.</p> <p>SB noted that the recast is focused on Commercial areas and not all budget lines.</p>	
<p>9. Commercial Strategy Progress</p>	<p>AR gave an overview to the board of the progress made within commercial since he started at DSU:-</p> <p>Marketing & Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outward thinking/more involved in events • Next term look at more income generation, more small streams rather than expecting a big ticket item <p>SUpplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong sales promotion in December 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the number of lines we sell, handing over two-thirds of the space to pop-up shops (external and students) and we take a portion of the income • Aim to maintain existing sales and hope to increase online sales too • Vending machine installation – easy earner <p>The Union</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has seen the most activity since October 2022 • Christmas menu, Dollies Cookies, new Chef, serving food to Function Rooms <p>Function Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified work with societies is key so actioning that already • Extended drinks promotion • Average spend increased in recent weeks • Looking at use of the space during the day • In pipeline to become a Leicester Comedy Festival venue in either 2023 or 24 • Private hire – working with DMU • Conversion – seeing increases so actions are working <p>NN asked if the pop-ups would be for a fixed period of time?</p> <p>AR is intending on them being for a week at a time, but may vary company to company. Have to be aware of what is being sold in there in relation to Chartwells service. For weeks where there are no bookings, then the space could be transformed into additional seating area.</p>	
10. Reforecast 22-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £54k deficit budget • SB noted that previously it had been a £90k + deficit and that was not reflective of where we are as a Union and DSU as a whole. This new reforecasted budget takes into account AR's work so far. • SMT still recommending a freeze on staff pay progression applications. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB: This new budget is inline with the vision, reset year etc. stick with us, we are bringing people in, students are engaging with us <p>PG: not a fan of SU's using Membership Services to prop up commercial services finances, so we need to be careful of that. New split of Deputy CEO role seems unusual? Need to recognise the true cost. At what point do we make a difficult decision? What will be the trigger/s?</p> <p>SB: This is year it is definitely a win that the underspend has been within staffing and not Membership Services projects.</p> <p>PH: AR role is fully commercial – the previous split was between commercial and membership budgets due to Joes role being Deputy CEO and HOC. It could be useful to put those costs into The Union to see a trigger? PH will look to allocate commercial staff to areas outside of Function Rooms for the 23/24 budget.</p> <p>AI: Supports PG's point. As the Function Rooms are taking 75% of AR's role. PH noted that we can move that cost around and suggests we do for the 2023/24 budget.</p> <p>GK: Agree to do that for 2023/24 budget. March 2023 is when we next meet – can we ask for clarity on progress before then for the trustees? We are behind you SMT but stay on your toes – we don't want to keep revising the budget.</p> <p>BS – Had a similar conversation in December 2021 so it is a concern to me. Can we get money back from areas that don't affect Membership Services?</p> <p>SB: AR and myself weren't here this time last year. We hear what you are saying but we only presented the reset year in June 2022.</p> <p>BevS: How close to reserves are we?</p> <p>PH: It would start to reduce if we are here again next year. I will update the reserves policy and bring that back to the board in the new year.</p>	
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	<p>PG: It's a longer term decision on strategy and what we see commercial services as/doing in the longer term. How do they contribute to members? Reassess the value of spaces?</p> <p>BevS: Agree with all that has been said. As a trustee of a charity I would not be comfortable with anything that takes us towards a 'going concern' not coming to Board soon. We only have limited reserves and can't spend what we don't have. I would like a longer term trajectory.</p> <p>EH: The past 6 months there has been discussions on the value of nightclub, venues etc. It feels like a student's union downstairs now – we've never seen commercial/membership working together like this. Feel short term that its not fair on commercial if we don't let them have a go.</p> <p>BevS: Need to future-proof. What are we for and how do we fund it?</p> <p>BS: This is the busiest I've ever seen it personally. If we accept the deficit budget this year then next year should be almost a pessimistic budget perhaps?</p> <p>AR has gone into the budget in fine detail and we are conscious of not hitting targets. It is a pessimistic take but confident with the new reforecasted budget.</p> <p>ACTION: 2023/24 budget to be a breakeven budget.</p> <p>ACTION: Trigger points identified</p> <p>GK noted that this could have been a really difficult conversation but so many positive things happening.</p>	
11. Review of Working Groups	SB will be doing this in the New Year now – will ask trustees to feedback and then will collate information and bring back to Trustee Board. The long term view is that it will link well to the new Articles and we will be able to launch the new sub-committees easily from there.	
12. Deputy Chair Appointment	<p>Two nominees – AI and AK. Each spoke for 2 minutes to explain why they felt they would be suited to the role.</p> <p>Majority vote within the room in AK favour.</p>	

	<p>BevS suggested having a rolling Deputy Chair to give all an opportunity? This doesn't currently work under DSU Articles but SB will add it to the revisions taking place.</p> <p>ACTION: SB to add rolling Deputy Chair to new Articles.</p>	
13. Reappointment of auditors	<p>PH asked for formal minuting that the board approved the auditors for the 22/23 financial year. This is the last year of the agreed 5 year term for the auditors in the previous tender. PH will start a new tender process for the year ended 31st July 2024.</p>	

Other Items for discussion		
14. Annual Members Meeting	<p>AI updated all on this, held on 30/11/22. This year it was held in the Atrium and online. Used a script rather than a presentation so more engaging. Looking at how we can increase engagement for next year.</p> <p>LM: Definitely need to plan ahead to increase the engagement. Could we take ideas from the commercial approach perhaps?</p>	
15. AOB	<p>GK noted that there will be a few administrative tweaks to future meetings coming from PH this week.</p> <p>GK expressed thanks on behalf of the Trustee Board to EH in his new role in Cardiff.</p>	

Meeting closed

Items for receipt (not discussion)

Future Meetings

- 7th March 2023
- 2nd May 2023

- 20 June 2023

DSU Trustee Board Action Log 2022/23

Date action added	Action Reference	Action Required	Notes	Action Lead	Target Date for completion	Status
Dec 21	5. CEO Report	Contingency plan to be prepared re single points of failure including consideration of block grant allocation.	Consider during commercial strategic review. Include on Risk Register	SB/AR	April 22	CLOSE
Feb 22	9. Board Structure	Evolve discussions outside of board Revised Working Groups	To be reviewed in OCT 22	SB	Dec 22	Agenda item
June 22	5. CEO Update	Discussion outside of meeting regarding agreement with SULets		GK/SB		Ongoing
June 22	8. Risk Register	SB to take all feedback and amend register as required. Trustees to then confirm they are happy with the amendments and also the main focus to be on: 1) EDI 2) National picture 3) Financial risks		SB		Complete
June 22	11. Commercial Vision	Timeline for Wetherspoons for JS to bring to Commercial & Development Committee		AR		Ongoing
Oct 22	5. CEO Report	Add cost of living to Risk Register and contingencies.		SB		
Dec 22	1. Conflict of Interest	PH to update Register with AI additions		PH		
Dec 22	6. Freshers Report	KPI's shared at Trustee Board in either March or June.		SMT		Ongoing
	10. Reforecast	2023/24 budget to be a breakeven budget.		SMT		Ongoing
Dec 22	2022-23	Trigger points identified		SMT		Ongoing

Dec 22	12. Deputy Chair appointment	SB to add rolling Deputy Chair to new Articles.		SB		Ongoing
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