

# DSU Board of Trustees Minutes

Meeting One of the academic year 2022-23

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022 / Adam Redfern Board Room / Microsoft Teams

Members	Initials	Meeting 1 11.10.22	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5
Geoff Kershaw (Chair)	GK	✓				
Phil Gilks	PG	✓				
Laura Arends	LA	A				
Beverley Shears	BevS	A				
Nyashadzashe 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	✓				
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				

Key: "✓" = Present, "A" = Apologies given, "N/M" = Non-member, "P" = Partial attendance, 'X' = Non-attendance

**Formal**

Item	Discussion	Actions
<p><b>1. Introduction/Apologies for Absence/Conflict of Interest</b></p>	<p>GK welcomed SG as a new student trustee and AR in his role as Head of Income Generation &amp; Enterprise.</p> <p>Apologies were received from BevS, LA and MP.</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Register –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SG is a current employee of DSU</li> <li>• Amendments from LM and BS have been given outside the meeting to PH</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that agenda item 13 impacts on DSU staff therefore all staff present will be asked to leave whilst voting takes place, this includes Executive Officers.</p>	
<p><b>2. Notification of AOB</b></p>	<p>GK requested that this item be removed from agenda going forward. All items to be added to agenda ahead of the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>3. Minutes of the previous meeting</b></p>	<p>No comments/amendments.</p>	
<p><b>4. Action Log and matters arising</b></p>	<p>PH gave a summary of the items which were all in progress or on the agenda and has updated the action log to reflect this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dec 21 5. CEO Report</b> - Contingency plan to be prepared re single points of failure including consideration of block grant allocation.</li> </ul> <p>Now AR is in post this will progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>June 22 5. CEO Update</b> - Discussion outside of meeting regarding agreement with SULets</li> </ul> <p>SB: SULets Board met last month. This is in progress and SB will be involved in these discussions.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>June 22 11. Commercial Vision - REDACTED</b></li> </ul> <p>SB confirmed that DSU have gone back to them to say that the <b>TEXT REDACTED</b> is too much and AR will now join that process of discussion with them.</p>	
<p><b>5. CEO Update</b></p>	<p>SB gave an overview of what was in her report distributed before the meeting.</p> <p>SB thanked all for their input into the Trustee Board Away Day in August – it has given us a clear vision and direction.</p> <p>Block grant – keen to start those discussions with DMU and look at three year term. GK suggested that we need to outline our vision for three years and how we can work with them to achieve that.</p> <p>Governance – SB will be speaking to solicitors soon for ideas on cost to amend our Articles. No big amends expected but they will need to be brought to Board. PG suggested Wriggleys for a good price point.</p> <p>TEF – being led by EH. Very important to DMU and we are heavily involved in that process which is great.</p> <p>PG asked what DSU is doing in light of the current cost of living crisis for staff? SB has taken a paper to the People &amp; Culture working group on it and we have our hybrid working policy, the annual leave paper that is on the agenda today. We want staff to know that we are aware of it and looking at how we can help.</p> <p>PG: What is in the risk register for the cost of living crisis? Do we need a contingency for the next budget?</p> <p><b>ACTION: Add cost of living to Risk Register and contingencies.</b></p> <p>PG: with regards to ‘cementing’ the hybrid working policy, I would be reluctant to cement anything as in 6 months there could be a different need. Hybrid was a powerful tool when students were remote too but they are who we are here for. The sector doesn’t know what is going to happen right now so its about agility.</p> <p>SB wants to change the culture of the expectation of ‘presence’ or ‘being present’. Agrees with PG on the term ‘agility’.</p>	<p>SB</p>

	<p>GK thinks there is a language check needed here. Not locking us into anything but being more cautious. Don't want to set the wrong expectation.</p> <p>BS asked with regards to the governance review, is the timeline of April sensible or would it be better to do it before elections? SB confirmed that the change in Articles would have no impact on elections but will take onboard the comment with relation to byelaws. EH noted that any change would realistically affect the next cycle of Executive Officers not those currently in place.</p> <p>LM: Is there an update from the recent JEC meeting? SB: Yes, it was held last week. The Execs took a paper on graduation costs. We gave feedback to DMU about their Welcome Weekend and they took that well. AR and EH will also now both be attending going forward. LM asked if DMU were surprised by the feedback at all? SB didn't believe they were and its our job to highlight these things to them. PG noted that its an opportunity for us to ask for funding from them to put on successful events during Welcome Weekend.</p> <p>SB has also offered our space for summer graduation robing too.</p>	
<p><b>6. Executive Officer Update</b></p>	<p>All spoke through the slide show distributed before the meeting.</p> <p>NN – focus on visibility and resetting.</p> <p>PG asked what NN meant by 'empowering' course reps and how will you judge if you have? NN believes that recognition from course lecturers when raising issues, to reps attending DMU meetings as a student/DSU representative, being recognized by DMU staff as a voice/view.</p> <p>MD – focus on belonging and representing. PG recommended EnhanceUK for training and breaking down barriers info/ideas.</p> <p>AS – SMT vision has helped us all. Lack of space, engaging more students in new ways are the focus. Employability Committee is headed up by Sophie Calverley from DSU and we are trying to see if we can merge with DMU employability. PG asked what the role of DSU is in that? AS- we have student staff ourselves, work closely with Unitemps, and have quick wins we can achieve.</p>	

	<p>AI – awareness is main focus and working with DMU and other groups closely to improve. GK asked how we can measure ‘knowing’ your student voice? AI hasn’t begun the planning for this yet but looking at getting more info on student engagement.</p> <p>PG asked if there is data in the annual survey about ‘empowerment’? EH agrees that is a good suggestion for when reviewing and then measuring that year on year. BS noted that often the people involved in working groups are the same each time, so how can we reach more? AI is planning to have different themes each month which should attract different attendees. PG recommended looking into software that can help track this type of data easily and that is not very expensive.</p> <p>AI is also looking at graduation costs to students.</p> <p>AK – running lots of events to support mental health and wellbeing. Working with the University of Leicester to write to local councillors a letter regarding the cost of living. Looking into distributing food and sanitary products to students as needed. Also a clothing bank/swap.</p> <p>PG noted that if you can get 250 students to complete the NUS survey there are incentives/rewards available to DSU <b>TEXT REDACTED</b>. Suggested trying to streamline process for students needing to access help.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b> <b>Freshers Update</b></p>	<p>Verbal update for now as report not yet completed but key headlines -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4200 international students (over DMU expected)</li> <li>• 4500 home students approx. (approx. 200 below DMU target)</li> <li>• Saw at least 5200 through our Freshers fairs</li> <li>• We ran a commercial fair (Tuesday), opportunities fair (Wednesday) and wellbeing fair (Thursday)</li> <li>• Exec led events were very well attended</li> <li>• ‘making friends’ events very popular</li> <li>• Big thank you and well done to Execs</li> <li>• Students want somewhere to socialize and study</li> <li>• Approx. £13,000 down on event sales</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not yet seen Native figures</li> <li>• AR &amp; SB are already discussing plans for The Union</li> <li>• Full report for December 22 Board meeting</li> </ul> <p>BS asked how the Executive Officers found Freshers? NN felt it went fantastic! Held a table tennis tournament and students are coming in and liking our set up. They want events regularly. MD noted lots of positive feedback following outdoor film night. SB noted that we are grabbing all the feedback we can from students. We can run events such as the outdoor film night all year as we now have the licence for that.</p> <p>GK asked who owns the event calendar within DSU? SB confirmed that Membership Services do. EH: normal service now resumes that was in places on hold over freshers as we over offer during Freshers but cant support that level of activity staffing wise all year round. Want to discuss with DMU that they fund more events that we are running.</p> <p>GK asked if there were ideas to increase the footfall in the building? Fantastic to see the building so busy today.</p> <p>SG is now working <b>TEXT REDACTED</b></p> <p>AI noted that DMU comms team pushed our events well to the international students particularly. Are we doing enough to push our events? GK feels this is two questions – 1) pushing the event but 2) the relevance of events to students?</p>	
<p><b>8. FHRC Update</b></p>	<p>Meeting held recently – PG gave an overview –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update from People &amp; Culture working group received</li> <li>• Update from People Report and conversation around the value of that in its current format</li> <li>• EDI audit update – this is coming to December 22 Board meeting but again, a discussion had around the value currently without any evidence to support statements</li> <li>• H&amp;S update</li> <li>• Freshers update</li> </ul>	

## Substantive items for consideration

<p><b>9. Audited Accounts and Audit Findings Report</b></p>	<p>Gareth Jones (GJ) and Laura Taylor (LT) from RSM joined the meeting via TEAMS. GJ ran through the Audit Finding Report (circulated before the meeting) and there were no questions from any in attendance.</p> <p>GJ then ran through the draft audited Accounts (circulated before the meeting).</p> <p>BS: with regards to the pensions scheme, what is the expectation going forward with regards to it going up or down?</p> <p>GJ: it very much depends on the Government actions. An indicator from the higher education sector is that they are starting to see further reductions. We assume the interest rates will remain higher for longer then the employer contribution is results in a smaller liability. Interest rates may not counter inflation so employer contributions may need to go up. At this minute, are starting to drop, but longer term we couldn't say.</p> <p>AI: With reference to credit control improvements DSU has already made since the last audit, are there more checks we could do?</p> <p>GJ noted that they were satisfied that credit control had improved for example the chasing of overdue debts and audit trail.</p> <p>GJ believes that with a few minor amendments already discussed with PH the accounts can be signed off soon.</p> <p>GK thanked GJ and LT for being in attendance today and they then left the meeting.</p> <p><b>Formally minuted that the Trustee Board approves the accounts for 2021-22.</b></p>	
<p><b>10. 22/23 Financial Update</b></p>	<p>September 2022 management accounts are due out 13/10/22 but PH has some figures to share on income.</p>	

	<p><b>Function Rooms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £17,000 behind on wristband sales</li> <li>• Individual ticket sales are up - need to consider the wristband going forward or to have package or individual sales instead or in conjunction</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> year way from Univibes agreement - no high ticket item draw this year</li> <li>• PH is expecting approx. £8000 hit</li> <li>• AR – average spend per head was down from last year (£9 to £6). Feedback has been that international students didn't often know how to order food/drink/what was on offer etc through cultural differences</li> </ul> <p><b>Supplies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2000 behind but expect to be ok due to profit margins on items sold eg clothing</li> <li>• Online shop hasn't yet launched but is a priority</li> </ul> <p>PH: October 2022 is a big budget. Have some figures up to 10/10/22. We need Injunction Wednesdays to be hitting £4.5k each night. Had a strong start to Supplies for October and The Union too. Native contract is for <b>TEXT REDACTED</b> or the year which is guaranteed income and Dominos and other commercial agreements we have no concerns about.</p> <p>GK: understands everyone's disappointment. Not moving fast enough for the change in customer base – we need to get ahead. It's a worry that it is down but what is the comparison to previous year/s? Loads of wins but we just need to be relentless about why etc.</p> <p>AI commented that it doesn't look promising for hitting wet sales for October. PH expressed being cautious for now. EH: we're already having reactionary conversations with AR. Membership and Execs are looking at bringing people in so need to convert to them then spending whilst here. AR noted that we have lots of positives – new team, footfall high, links to clubs and societies and are maximizing those at speed.</p>	
<p><b>11. Elections Report</b></p>	<p>Kit Messinger, Student Voice Manager, joined the meeting to give an overview of the elections to all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DSU had 12.5% turnout – NUS average is 12.3%</li> </ul>	



- Starting to track above covid times now
- NUS found that there wasn't a significant correlation between the number of candidates and the number of votes
- NUS found that cash prizes were the preferred incentive by students

DSU are looking to split elections into three strands going forward –

1. Candidate support and wellbeing
2. Communication and promotion
3. Election governance

There will then be a reporting meeting where the Chair of each strand is in attendance for planning.

Trialing student group elections at the same time but taking out the NUS election and trialing running this in Nov/Dec as it was felt that March was too late in the year for that role.

Looking to evaluate how we manage the candidate budgets, incentives to students to vote and providing manifesto writing support but would support the Executive Officer induction for successful candidates.

PG congratulated Kit and EH on no complaints being lodged with regards to elections. With regards to the view on reimbursement to candidates and cost of living, have to take a strategic position. Encourage innovation with ideas and campaigning. PG suggested discussing incentives with Native and ask new Execs what they would like to see?

Al agrees that it's a great idea to move the NUS election as more time then before the annual conference to be in role. Kit is hoping to launch this at the Student Council but it would be an open meeting.

GK asked that abbreviations be included in reports going forward for those not aware of all the language used. Queried where the additional stats are from as were not in the report distributed before the meeting? Kit confirmed that the NUS report came out after the papers were distributed.

GK noted that the benchmarking really helps. Where do we aspire to get to for turnout? Priority on recommendations? Quick wins? And how can we apply these successes across the whole of DSU?

	<p>PG commented that all recommendations are good but flip it on its head and ask if we do need to do some of the things e.g. manifestos? Be more radical in approach.</p>	
<b>12. People Report</b>	<p>PH: Had expected the EDI audit to be further along than it is but we need to speak with Koreo to request some further information from them. Their recommendations will inform the strategy going forward.</p> <p>BS: Is it important to get more info to Board sooner rather than later? Also the staff member who was assaulted, what steps have DSU taken since then for staff safety? PH confirmed that the incident was reported to police at the time and it was dealt with by them and DMU Security. It wasn't a night time occurrence. PH not sure there is much else we can do – highlight safety at induction, safe taxi scheme, DMU Security.</p> <p>Question asked as to why a high percentage of staff do not disclose a disability? PH stated that DSU asks at induction but staff do not have to disclose one. We ask so we can modify access for example or support them through the recruitment process, but we will be looking into this further.</p>	
<b>13. Annual Leave Paper</b>	<p>All DSU staff left the room whilst discussion and voting took place. PG took notes of the discussion and outcome.</p> <p>Trustees felt it was a positive to track against the sector and that the positives outweigh the negatives of the outcomes. Trustees were supportive of the additional days.</p> <p>All Trustees support the recommendation, including ensuring student staff receive the same leave entitlement. Trustees felt that the proposal may not be ambitious enough and should be reviewed against in 12 months.</p>	
<b>14. AMM Planning</b>	<p>Planning has started. AI is the Exec lead and Kit. Its about bringing members on board. Agenda is part of the byelaws so set in stone. Planning on date of 30/11/2022 and running both in person and online. All on track.</p>	
<b>15. Board of Governors</b>	<p>SB has preemptively emailed trustees who can nominate themselves. An additional place has been</p>	

	<p>secured on the DMU Board of Governors. Have also been discussing moving the student voice item up the agenda under the VC's update, with the Clerk of the Board. This all shows just how far DSU have come. SB has received one keen expression of interest and asked those interested to say something about their reasons as to why they feel they would be the right person to take on the role.</p> <p>BS spoke about the reasons behind his nomination.</p> <p>AI asked BS how he feels he will be able to successfully manage his various time commitments alongside this role? BS feels he is very methodical in his time studying and then things such as this role and his NUS role are 'extra curricular' so he focuses on those on an evening/weekend. Isn't a role he takes lightly.</p> <p>SB asked if anyone else would like to be nominated and therefore speak? No other expressions were made so BS was successful.</p> <p>LM commented that he would have loved to have nominated himself for the role however doesn't have the capacity currently to do so but well done to DSU for getting this second position and well done to BS.</p>	
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<b>Other Items for discussion</b>		
<b>16. Meeting Review</b>	No comments.	
<b>17. AOB</b>	<p>AK asked if trustees would be happy to meet with DSU teams and SB reminded all that the trustees have already done so but will continue to do so as really important.</p> <p><b>Deputy Chair vacancy</b></p> <p>Add to the agenda of the next meeting.</p>	PH

**Meeting closed**

**Items for receipt (not discussion)**

### **Future Meetings**

- 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022
- 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023
- 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023
- 20 June 2023