DSU Board of Trustees Minutes

**Meeting Three of the academic year 2024-25**

**Monday 07 April 2025 / Adam Redfern Board Room/TEAMS**

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|  | Initials | Role | Mtg 1  15.08.24 | Mtg 2  25.11.24 | Mtg 3  07.04.25 | Mtg 4  23.06.25 | Mtg 6  07.08.25 |
| Geoff Kershaw | GK | Chair and External Trustee | ü | ü | ü |  |  |
| Phil Gilks | PG | External Trustee | A | ü | ü |  |  |
| Beverley Shears | BS | External Trustee | ü | A | ü |  |  |
| Rita Bullivant | RB | External Trustee | ü | ü | ü |  |  |
| Shreeya Dubal | SD | Student Trustee | A |  |  |  |  |
| Destiny Mazaiwana | DM | Student Trustee | A | ü | ü |  |  |
| Adetutu Fafore | AF | Student Trustee | A | ü | ü |  |  |
| Pravjoth Gill | PrG | Student Trustee |  | A | ü |  |  |
| Komal Shahzadi | KS | Officer Trustee | ü | A |  |  |  |
| Adejumoke (Fluffy) Adewola | AA | Officer Trustee | ü | ü | ü |  |  |
| Gurupriya (Priya) Karasala | PK | Officer Trustee | ü | ü | A |  |  |
| Ramish Ayub | RA | Officer Trustee | ü | ü | ü |  |  |
| Judith Olurankinse | JO | Officer Trustee | ü | ü | ü |  |  |
| Sarah Bradley | SB | DSU CEO | ü | ü | ü |  |  |
| Paula Heneghan | PH | Clerk to Trustee Board and DSU  Head of Finance, People & Central Services | A | ü | ü |  |  |
| Andy Reynolds | AR | DSU Head of Income Generation & Marketing | A | ü | ü |  |  |
| Amy Horner | AH | DSU Head of Membership Services | ü | ü | ü |  |  |
| Catherine Searcy | CS | Minutes | ü |  |  |  |  |
| Sharon Stacey-King | SSK | Minutes |  |  |  |  |  |

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

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| **Formal** |

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| Item | Discussion | Actions |
| **1. Introduction/Apologies for Absence/Conflict of Interest** | A prompt warm welcome, Judith our Deputy Chair will be Chairing today’s meeting. Apologies from RA, AA and AH  No COI register updates. | None |
| **2.**  **Minutes of the previous meeting (5 minutes)** | No comments/amendments.  Minutes of 25.11.2024 approved by all. | None |
| **3. Action Log and Matters Arising (5 minutes)** | SMT are asked to report on progress made against their actions.  SB – one action paused - timelines for additional spaces - SB will pick up in the CEO report | None |
| **4. CEO Update (10 minutes)** | SB – Term 2 CEO report – updated and on track for most objectives – 2 on pause. Attention drawn to risks – merger of 2 faculties at DMU (CEM and ADH) – no update on the faculty name which will go to vote of students and staff – AA and RA have been on academic board and have been well prepped regarding student voice on this merger – faculty lead reps will be elected for the merged faculty. Block grant – waiting on approval – fairy certain will get the majority of what we asked for – includes DMU London activity – DSU Pantry – REDACTED. DMU London – visuals included in the trustee pack – launch Sept 25 – numbers not looking strong, but DMU confident this will pick up after April. Had to increase the risk on officer effectiveness - some challenging candidate behaviour over the elections period – UK wide issue – DSU need to put in mitigations – mild candidate vetting – probationary period in officer contracts – officer inductions will include these updates - DSU have a new approach to DMU Board of Governor student governors – email will go out from SB with recommendations on candidates.  PG – faculty merger – seems an odd merger – 2 opposite faculties you wouldn’t put together? Also, elections point - I understand – CEO UEL – he introduced a candidate vetting process last year via a panel (PG sat on the panel) for similar reasons – could send an intro email.  SB – that would be helpful thanks  PK – not sure what it will be like after the merger – not sure what is happening – voting on the name of the new merger.  DM – I sit on Academic board – quite a few courses in CEM should be sat in ADH anyway – students didn’t realise it was happening – I do see some benefits – less courses and less students in ADH now – so makes sense to merge them – will be restructuring.  PG – is there a sense of belonging of students to their faculty – or more their course – will students notice?  DM – will depend on whether DMU are going to merge cross over modules – collaboration could improve and new ways of teaching – students have more of a sense of belonging to the course and building rather than the faculty.  PG – DSU have put in a request for more funding in the block grant – there is no other financial exposure for DSU on DMU London is there?  SB – no  GK – cycle of recruitment – does seem quite late – if DMU London does not happen – any knock-on risks for us?  SB – market is international post grad – end of April all energy will go into post graduate marketing - aiming for 75 students – recruited 23. Just secured a contractor – risks for us – there are none – our activity will be pop ups – can collaborate with other SUs such as Trent and Northumbria.  GK – when does our duty of care as an SU start? Contingency – for exceptional circumstances do we want a position as an SU – is there any proactive support we could or should offer?  BS – DMU responsibility rather than DSU – agree with the duty of care consideration though – DMU are confident of getting the student numbers – just voted number 1 for international students – new students in a new campus – does not impact on current DMU students – 23 offered a place. On the merger of the faculty – DMU have going through the correct processes eg consultation of students and staff – been approved – organisational change been done in the right way.  RB – interested in data – how has the Power BI project gone. Is asana being used?  PH – Power BI only used for the mgt accounts not further – written by a consultant.  SB – yes Asana being used by everyone – some behavioural areas to look at – when AH returns will do a feedback session  PrG – do we have demographic report on the elections – how many people are nominating themselves – what is the diversity?  SB – annual elections report will be presented at June board | None |
| **5. Exec Officer Update (10 minutes )** | Presentation Tabled  AA – prep for stress awareness session in the summer – working on self-care bootcamp – international student check in.  PK – worked on varsity, culture clash (upcoming event), BUCs bye law amendment  JO – aim to increase visibility – posting on social media – campaigns – student council engagement – student council used to be held on Campus but now online and hybrid – also student accommodation workshop – attended NUS conference last week – what the government needs to look into it (NUS England) – COL and bus fares main topics.  PK – collaboration projects – are doing lots of panels – fee policy to go to leadership board – flexible futures payment plan – liberation officer led  PG – varsity – saw the socials – where do students want to see sport sitting – split in the sector re Uni or union led?  PK – As a student I didn’t see the SU and DMU as different – only the committee members realise the difference – sports teams go and talk to DMU Sports rather than DSU – a bridge is missing between the 2.  PG – flexible payments plan – is that for fees for international students? I have a research report on it that we did last year – also an archive article on WonkHE – really good article which will help (PH shared the WonkHE report in the team's chat)  DM – last year DMU said part of reason they have less payment dates is DMU get charged more when they spread out the payments – are you considering that?  PK – yes this is being considered in the meetings  PrG – How are you covering the other 2 exec roles – how are you doing it?  PK – the committees and panels are being split by the 3 of us? Projects – are on pause – campaigns – Voice team is taking over  JO – looking at the priority of tasks too | None |
| **6. Student Council Update (10 minutes)** | PK gave a verbal update on council. 2 councils this year – last one was March – 5 motions – not able to pass them as not quorate. Changing student council officers – motion to add more spotlight to student council – to get more engagement. Another motion – for a new officer – parent, carer and mature student. Next council is in May - on campus and online to achieve quoracy – hope to get 25 voting members.  DM – motion to combine mature, parent and carers – did we have a motion for parent and carers as their own liberation officer?  JO – yes  DM – makes more sense to have mature student liberation officer and then parent and carer as separate – as could have different experiences of those groups. Parent and Carer liberation officer was only just recently introduced – combining it with mature may not be a good idea – have them separate?  SB – a good discussion – need to encourage student trustees to debate these items in council – council members to encourage other council members to join so can be quorate  SB – student council chair would like to attend to give this item going forward – GK agrees as chair. | None |
| **7. C&D subcommittee Update (5 minutes)** | SB – last meeting was 10th March – regular standing items – update on academic year – event engagement is increasing – AR gave a project click update – Chartwells contact – DSU will be part of the tender process of the units in our building – DMU timeline – they have an interim director of estates – deputy recently left – timeline not confirmed for the tender process. Awaiting research document to be sent over  DMU are giving nods that DSU could take over the coffee hut space on the ground floor - nothing official. In May DSU have lots of private hire bookings. Block grant update – no update since C&D. | **None** |
| **8. People and Culture Sub-Committee update (5 minutes)** | Verbal Update - main focus was item 09 | None |
| **Items for discussion** | | |
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| **9. Pay Review Work** | Paper Tabled. External consultant Vicky Hossack (Paragon People) joined to present the work. This has been scrutinised and approved in principle at P&C Subcommittee.  VH – reports have been circulated. Process was to review DSU pay scales and make recommendations to future proof them. 2-part process – 1 was to review published data on charity sector pay – current external environment – lots being shared around pay – living wage and Real Living Wage going up – interesting period to do the work in SU and wider charity sector. Secondly to do own primary research sampling of the roles in DSU structure to come to a position compared to the markets. Recommendations are to change pay grades by introducing pay progression over time – to continue to attract exceptional people and keep them.  VH - Benchmarking report included data on published surveys. General picture is market is seeing interesting increases to technical salaries (finance & marketing – those requiring a technical specification or qualification) – growing salary increases in those roles. DSU pay was aligned with public and private sector, results showed that due to the annual COL awards the core salary was holding up really well – 1/3 of the roles are ahead of the market data. However, a lack of progression in the bands to move through a pay grade means the spot salaries are that – stand still – compared to SUs and charities – its relatively unusual – also when looking as a band – not holding up as being too competitive. Recommendation is to introduce a banding; this doesn’t require any immediate cost to the organisation and introduces an element of pay progression which is subject to performance and review of their PDP as well as consideration of core behaviours. Then award increments set at a % set by the board via the budget setting process as such not a traditional public sector pay spine – there are no fixed increments where you just move up the spine regardless of performance. The increment % can change dependent on financial results with the pay budget being set each year. It could be 0% if required – as trustees you decide the % figure.  VH - set an illustrative band of 12% - bottom to top – applied to all pay bands – consistent and transparent. Once staff reach the top of your band there are no further increments unless the role changes. Recommend Exec officer pay and CEO to sit outside the framework and be reviewed by the relevant subcommittee – the picture on those roles does change – I would recommend keep them out.  BS – P&C covered this in a lot of depth – very supportive – P&C do recommend it to the full board  PG – also support this – students unions don’t traditionally do performance related pay – has any thought or guidance been thought as to how we do this well – data shows that black staff can be disproportionally impacted in civil service for example – how do we support the managers.  VH – lots of research that underrepresented groups don’t re negotiate on salary or enter into those conversations. As part of the policy to support staff there will be a clear guidance – during recruitment salaries won’t be a negotiation except to consider previous experience – that will sit with the CEO to have that discretion. For performance review DSU have created really clear guidance for managers which removes remove subjectivity. Will develop the managers and behaviours also considered and weighted, check and balance via the panel who will review the recommendations – the leadership can look across the organisation – use the PDP process – checking the mgr recommendations.  LH – have extensive guidance notes for staff and in particular managers and developed a framework to explain how to grade the PDP. If you are exemplary performer the framework outlines what that looks like. We will train the managers before role out as well as looking regularly at other areas such as 121s being carried out, 6-month PDP review. Manager support to ensure all staff are being given the same opportunity to progress. Our training budget sits centrally, keep an eye before the annual review.  SB – We will make sure we report back to trustees – add to the schedule of business – demographic overview of pay awards for P&C.  JO – do the board approve the items – the new pay scales and the new policy  **ACTION: SB schedule of business to include demographic review of pay awards for P&C.**  **Policy and Pay scales approved by the trustees** | **ACTION: SB schedule of business to include demographic review of pay awards for P&C.** |

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| **10. Q2 Review and Term 3 Outlook** | PH gave an overview of the paper tabled – Q2 results for 6m ended 31st Jan 25 had gone to P&C committee – this was an update for the 7 months to Feb 25.  SB – at C&D the trustees asked Sarah to clarify about the level of DSU reserves they would be comfortable with – DMU confirmed they are happy with 4-5 months costs for reserves  BS – question re the under spend in Advice due to flexible working – what is the impact on that to students – do we need more staff, customer driven?  SB – we are pro flexible working requests – organisational burn out and customer need must always be considered – all very well managed in Advice – every FW request does also have to go through an area of org need – no impact on Advice team – but other teams may be a different conversation.  GK – Saw on Instagram – street food event – looked great – do we generate any income from that?  AR – commission based on sales – Korean food took £2k (most popular) – 10% commission – some we didn’t get commission on as they didn’t take enough – we make £200 – not a lot of work – can build on. Key thing is getting the pricing and the stall right  GK – given where we are with the downstairs – working to DMU timeline – can we do those 3 days a week inside and outside?  AR – can only do it 3 times a year at the moment due to licenses for a market – will ask the council – if on DMU property can we do it more often, but the public have access to it which may be the blocker.  GK – looked great on social media – let's explore it and find out what the blockers are – Devra will have a vested interested in helping us  AR – vendor selection needs to be right – 2 worked 3 not so much due to price point.  PG – is there a threshold for when it becomes a market – so up to 2/3 stalls?  AR – will ask them – 5 or 6 so stall holders hit their numbers – may need a street license?  GK – can we look into this and take it forward?  **ACTION: AR to look into rules and regulations for street food market and impact on licenses and number of stallholders** | **ACTION: AR to look into rules and regulations for street food market and impact on licenses and number of stallholders** |
| **11. Welcome Re-Fresh and plans for next year** | Report Tabled  AR - Increase in welcome attendance for fairs and events, 6 free events rather than 3 – help students with COL  AR presented the slides for Welcome 2025 plans – 400 wristbands – 7% decrease on 2024 sales to reflect fact that recruitment of DMU students is down, price £25 – 11% GP, to try and increase engagement, aim 5377 – increase on last year 10% LVL 1 to be open for the welcome period for visibility | None |

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| **Items for receipt** |
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| **12. Risk Register Updates (5 minutes)** | SB - Paper Tabled - new risk added and some changes to notify to Trustees  SB - Draw attention to a new risk being global politics and influences eg trade relations and global conflicts which impact on HE research such as China, US and UK. Also, Russia /Ukraine conflict – we might see staff and students who volunteer for the armed forces – we are monitoring that as a risk. Another risk is that AR is in the army reserves so we have updated policies to support. Officer effectiveness risk as mentioned before due to behavior in elections, have increased the likelihood increase but have mitigations. Will review risk register before every board. Also advertising partners' risk has increased (native) – not following through on the payments plan – AR working with an external consultant to review the S&A offer. | None |

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| **13. Trustee Board Schedule of Business 25/26** | SB - Paper Tabled - already approved but will add to P&C re pay review and review of the demographics for increment increases  BS – I did notify DMU about being the safeguarding trustees – they were happy | **None** |
| **14. Future Meetings** | * 23rd June 2025 Trustee Board * 7th August - Trustee Board (mini) and annual away day * 25/26 meeting invites have been sent out |  |

Meeting closed