

Board of Trustees Minutes

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16:30, 24 May 2021 | via Microsoft Teams

Members	Initials	Meeting 1 05.10.20	Meeting 2 01.12.2020	Meeting 3 02.02.2021	Meeting 4 29.03.2021	Meeting 5 24.05.2021
Saqlain Riaz (President) (Chair)	SR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ruqaiyah Javaid (VP Education)	RJ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shaima Dallali (VP Community and Wellbeing)	SD	✓	A	✓	✓	✓
Nick Ratcliffe (Lay Trustee and Deputy Chair)	NR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alan Latham (Lay Trustee)	AL	A	✓	✓	✓	A
Clare Searle (Lay Trustee)	CS	✓	✓	A	✓	✓
Rumnique Gill (Lay Trustee)	RG	A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Katherine Higgs (Student Trustee)	KH	✓	N/M	N/M	N/M	N/M
Ghayathri Sivakumar (Student Trustee)	GS	✓	N/M	N/M	N/M	N/M
Ibrahim Hamid (Student Trustee)	IH	N/M	N/M	✓	A	✓

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

Included in the circulation	Initials	Reason and Meeting Section
Philip Gilks	PG	Chief Executive (Company Secretary)
Margaret O'Donnell	MOD	Head of Finance (Not in attendance)
Hannah Roberts	HR	Deputy Chief Executive (Minute Taker)
Ryan Ginger	RyG	Membership Insight Coordinator (Presenting)

Formal

1. Presentation: 'Term 2 Insights'

The Board received a presentation titled 'Term 2 Insights' summarising what the Union has learnt about City students during term two. The presentation was delivered by the Membership Insight Coordinator, Ryan Ginger.

- RG thanked RyG for his presentation and congratulated the Union on the Check-in calls. RG commented that it is great to see that the Union has been involved in the APP work. RG raised a concern on the report around the wait times for the SCMH services.
 - SD responded to the SCMH point, she recently met with the team and learnt more about the under resourcing of the SCMH team. SD has also raised this with the incoming City President, Anthony Finkelstein.
- NR thanked RyG for his presentation. NR shared a reflection and asked whether the Check-in Calls will be offered in the next academic year.
- RyG confirmed that the calls will happen again in September.

RyG left the meeting.

2. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from MOD and AL. The Board noted that Karim Khan has resigned as a Lay Trustee.

3. Declarations of Interest

(Paper: BT2059)

Noted. No new declarations.

4. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees 29 March 2021 (Paper: BT2060M)

The Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021.

3.2 Actions Arising

(Paper: BT2061A)

The Board noted the actions and progress made.

SR updated on the Union response to the Jewish Society complaint and reported that he has responded as President/Chair of the Board but 'the Board' have not formally responded. SD added that she has been in touch with Jewish Society about the recent Palestine statement and will be meeting with the outgoing Society President. CS prompted that the Jewish Society needs a formal response from the Union. **[Action]**

5. Decisions taken between meetings

None taken.

6. Items brought forward by the Chair

There were no items brought forward by the Chair.

7. Minutes of Executive Committee Meetings

(Paper: BT2062)

The Board noted a summary of meetings of the Executive Committee held on 24 March 2021.

7. Student Council

(Paper: BT2063)

The Board noted a summary of a meeting of the Student Council held on 23 March 2021.

Strategy

8. Strategy Update Report

(Paper: BT2064)

The Board received the paper. PG highlighted the following:

- The Union is refreshing the Priority groups from July. Both the group chairs and members will be swapped around, this is to ensure momentum and maintain staff energy.
- Priority 3 is progressing well, this is mainly due to partnership work with the University being planned for September 2021.
- There is opportunity ahead as City's senior leadership team changes with the incoming President.
- City Connects is a project that has been established by City in response to the Union's insight work. There is potential for new projects and funding through this work.

RG asked for an update on a culturally competent mental health service. SD gave an update on her campaign and what she is doing to build an evidence-base to lobby for

training, staffing and better resource for students of colour. SD shared some highlights that has been found in the research.

Executive

9. Chief Executive Report

(Paper: BT2065)

The Board considered the Chief Executive's report. PG highlighted the following:

- JO has left the Union, he has joined QMSU as a Coordinator. PG highlighted that we have recently lost some good staff who have secured promotions externally. As the Union has a small staff team it is difficult to always support progression internally.
- The CEO line manager, Susannah Marsden is leaving in July. Following communication with the Deputy President and Provost, it has been confirmed the CEO will report into one of the new Executive Team.
- PG is finishing his coaching training.
- SLT will shortly be completing an externally facilitated conversation following challenges earlier in the year.
- The student common room has been handed over to the Union. Refurbishment work is now complete, and the Communications and Business Development Team are working on branding the space. The common room has a microwave room, the Union will also be paying to build a storage space.
- The shop is being converted into an Officer hot desk space with space also for staff. The shop will be entirely online and function from Reception. It is hoped that this will change the perception that the Union is behind a locked door and break down some barriers for Officers to be accessible to students.
- CityBar progress has been slower than hoped. Communications have been working on a mood board to generate ideas for what the Union are seeking to change the space into. There is no confirmation whether City will agree at this point.
- Citizens UK affiliation is being explored but the cost is high, so discussions are ongoing.

NR asked for an update on the Clerk for the Board. PG has found two suitable candidates who have come recommended by other unions.

NR also asked whether there was a name for the new common room. PG responded that it still needed to be decided.

Finance, Risk and Audit

10. Covid-19 and Return to Campus

(Paper: BT2066)

The Board noted the update. PG highlighted the following:

- A considerable amount of attention has been given to this piece of work as last time the Union returned to working from site the process was not supported by all staff.
- The Communication and Business Development Manager has met with all staff to discuss return to campus, following this a report has been produced to agree an approach.
- From September the union needs to be on site to support students. There is support from staff across the union for this. Most people are looking for a 60/40 split.
- There are some concerns about not returning to campus until they have been vaccinated. Assuming that people take the vaccine, this will change shortly.

- PG is looking for an feedback and guidance with the outlined approach as presented to the Board to support staff to return to site.
- Staff will return through a phased approach to mitigate a shock to returning. In June staff will be invited to voluntarily return to site, from July staff will be asked to work 1-day a week from site, from August staff will work their normal working pattern. Staff will be expected to be on site at least 60% of the time.
- The Union will be following the university's guidance on health & safety when the return begins.
- PG has shared initial thoughts with staff and it was welcomed. Subject to feedback, the recommendations will be put in place on a trial from August – November to test and see how we can move forward once the union are in normal business.
- Site is now open, and staff can use site if they wish, no staff are being told to return.

NR sought clarification on whether there was sufficient office space for the proposal and whether officers would also follow the proposal of spending at least 60% on site. PG confirmed there was sufficient space with the proposed changes and whilst all proposals will apply to officers, they will be encouraged to be one site as much as possible to be accessible to students. SD believes that the officer team should be on site more.

RG added that it is difficult to plan for September at this stage. RG gave a comparison of Kingston: Kingston is a place-based institution, this means it needs to deliver the business. RG asked can a 60/40 model deliver the business of the Union and can we sufficiently support our students with this model? RG recommended that the Union should leave enough space to manoeuvre.

CS agrees that the core of this is that the union needs to support students. CS agrees that the union should not put a number on the hours to work on site. There may also be staff who have health concerns or caring responsibilities, this needs to be considered when supporting staff to return. Following clarification from SD, CS added she has experience of delivering frontline services do have people who work remotely. CS recommended that any decision should be caveated with a weekly review.

IH shared some reflections from his student experience, and the experience of international students across the year. The Union needs to take into account that online services will also need to be prioritised in a blended year.

PG thanked the Board for their feedback and would revisit the proposal based on the feedback of Trustees.

11. Management Accounts May 2021

(Paper: BT2067)

The Board noted the update and discussed. PG highlighted:

- The Union are presenting a similar position to previous meetings, there is a surplus.
- The Union needs to ensure it is spending its funding.

13. Budget 2021-22 (Confidential)

(Paper: BT2068)

The Board discussed the budget which included a block grant of £985K, an increase from £956K. This increase covers the cost of changes made in the year. The Union will need to cover additional costs such as increments and COLA, which the Union is budgeting at 1.5%.

There is also some additional ring-fenced funding for the Micro-Placement Program work, this is £43K inclusive and is allocated outside of our block grant.

PG also presented several changes to staff roles and updated that the City process would be followed. Trustees had several questions which PG responded too.

NR asked whether the outlook for 22/23 'Other Income' shoots up from £10k to £44k, PG responded that this reflects the Employability Coordinator. This was due to a late reply from City and has since been updated.

Decision

The board **approved** the Budget 2021/22.

Governance and Related

14. Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer Appointment (Paper: BT2069)

HR left the meeting due to a conflict of interest.

PG presented the paper.

Decision

The board **approved** the appointment of Peter Robertson (NUS) as Returning Officer and Hannah Roberts (the Union) as Deputy Returning Officer.

15. Board of Trustees Dates 2021/22 and Business (Paper: BT2070)

The Board received an update on the board dates for next year, along with the cycle of business:

- The annual cycle of business is shown in the table. This includes the AGM, subject to SD's approval when she takes post as President.
- The policy lapses have been included in the cycle of business. There are quite a few front-loaded but it is hoped that this will make subsequent meetings more exciting.
- The dates have been set around exams and assessments with our student trustees in mind.

RG asked for the format of the meetings to be reconsidered to maximise the ability for board members to contribute to the direction of the organisation. It was agreed this would be discussed at the Trustee Away Day and for Trustees to share alternative models. **[Action]**

CS asked whether policy approvals could be done via email circulation as and when they have been reviewed and written. RG supported this point. PG responded that the Articles allow for decisions between meetings, he is happy to action this but added that it will require trustees to respond in good time.

Decision

The board **approved** the dates and business.

Other

24. Any Other Business

SU Away Day 2020/21

The Board agreed moving the Trustee Away Day to Monday 2 August.

Lay Trustee Update

Following the resignation of Karim Khan, PG asked the board what their preference would be for filling the empty post. The Board agreed to approach the next appointable candidate from the recruitment process.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the board meeting will be the away day on Monday 2 August.

25. Trustees Only Business

Discussion with Trustees only, with no attendees present, and which was not minuted.