

Board of Trustees Minutes

City, University of London Students' Union is a registered charity (charity number 1173858) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 10834450).

16:30 PM, 4 February 2020 | AG05, College Building, City University London

Members	Initials	Meeting 1 08.10.19	Meeting 2 03.12.19	Meeting 3 04.02.20	Meeting 4 tbc	Meeting 5 tbc
Tuna Kunt (President) (Chair)	TK	✓	✓	✓		
Saqlain Riaz (VP Education)	SR	✓	✓	✓		
Rania Salim (VP Community and Wellbeing)	RS	✓	✓	✓		
Nick Ratcliffe (Lay Trustee and Deputy Chair)	NR	✓	✓	✓		
Edward Pearson (Lay Trustee)	EP	✓	✓	NM		
Janet Legrand (Lay Trustee)	JL	✓	A	✓		
Alan Latham (Lay Trustee)	AL	✓	A	✓		
Clare Searle (Lay Trustee)	CS	✓	✓	A		
Rumnique Gill (Lay Trustee)	RG	NM	NM	✓		
Katherine Higgins (Student Trustee)	KH	✓	A	✓		
Emmanuel Pobee (Student Trustee)	EP	✓	N/M	NM		
Ghayathri Sivakumar (Student Trustee)	GS	NM	✓	✓		

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 (Committee Secretary)
Margaret O'Donnell	MOD	Interim SU Head of Finance and Operations
Hannah Roberts	HR	Deputy Chief Executive
Katharyn Kingwill	KK	Governance Administrator (Minute Taker)
Sophie Harrison	SH	SU Activities and Development Manager

At the start of the meeting the Board received a presentation from Sophie Harrison on the proposed student placement scheme developed with the City Careers Team. An update would come to the Board following the pilot placement in the summer. The Board thanked Sophie for the presentation and all involved in the work so far.

Formal

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from CS. The Chair welcomed Rumnique Gill (RG) to his first meeting as a Lay Trustee.

2. Declarations of Interest

(Paper BT1931)
RG noted that he was now the Director of Student Services at Kingston University.

3. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees 03 December 2019

(Paper: BT1932M)

The Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 03 December 2019.

3.2 Actions Arising

(Paper: BT1933A)

The Board noted the action arising, as follows:

- The Union continued to await the final data sharing agreement with City. The delay was in part due to the appointment of a new Data Protection Officer for City.
- The review of the Financial Procedures Manual was underway.
- The report on Health and Safety would come to a later meeting of the Board.

4. Decisions taken between meetings

There were no decisions taken between meetings.

5. Items brought forward by the Chair

There were no items brought forward by the Chair.

6. Minutes of Executive Committee Meetings

(Paper: BT1934)

The Board noted the minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings held on 02 December 2019 and 22 January 2020.

Strategy

7. Strategy Update Report

(Paper: BT1935)

The Board considered an update report on the four Strategic Operational Plan priorities. The report had been prepared in the format suggested at the last meeting. In discussion the following points were made:

- *Priority 1: Making you stand out from the crowd* was proceeding well with activities planned, as noted in the presentation the Board had received earlier.
- *Priority 2: Making the most of your money.* Work was underway to scope out what was required from a financial guidance service and the Union would be requesting additional resource to support it. A survey of Advice Service users had highlighted the necessity of this provision. The University did not provide advice on debt management or budgeting as part of its student support services.
- Signposting existing external services would be an integral part of the service. HR had held an initial discussion with Santander and City's Development and Alumni Relations (DARO) team; other financial providers would be contacted to explore what services they could provide.
- JL noted the risks associated with the provision of financial advice; PG clarified the service would provide guidance rather than advice.
- *Priority 3: A platform for driving improvements.* Information gathering had taken place and a report on the Student Voice, with recommendations, was being finalised.
- SR would be hosting a forum on the BAME attainment gap on 6th February.
- The Union was reviewing its *Study Well* activities to assess the most effective activities.
- RG suggested that the Union explore with the University the University Mental Health Charter accreditation. PG will ensure this is discussed with University colleagues. **(action)**
- SR noted that there would be meetings to discuss careers activities with employers, societies and students. GS offered to assist with this.

- The Union had arranged careers workshops previously but these had been less successful so the focus was now on resilience training.

Executive

8. Chief Executive's Report (Paper: BT1936)

The Board noted the Chief Executive's Report. PG highlighted the following:

- The team would be recruiting for two positions in the Activities and Development team.
- The participation of TK and PG on the Courtyard Café Management Board had resulted in an improved food offer with some low cost choices.
- Accommodation continued to be an issue for the team and if staff numbers grew this would become more acute. The new Common Room for students would provide better facilities for students (discussed under item 11), however, the Union had been asked to relocate the Societies' storeroom to College Building which was some distance from Tait Building.
- PG had attended the *NUS Strategic Conversations* meeting in January. The NUS was now two legal entities, NUS UK would focus on campaigns and NUS Charity would focus on support. There would be a reduction in the membership affiliation fee which would offset some of the loss of income from the *Totum* discount card.
- PG had also organised and chaired the London SUs CEO network. The meeting had been positive with many unions on an upward curve, including City.
- The Union had been asked to look at possible provision at Bunhill Row as part of the plans to refit Cass accommodation in Finsbury Square and Bunhill Row including a proposal to relocate Cass Year Three Students from Northampton Square. Two options were being explored, with the preferred option being the transfer of the resource currently located in Cass into the Union. Both options would be positive for the Union as an opportunity to merge separate services and provide better oversight of activities. GS offered to assist with this opportunity; GS and PG would discuss. **(action)**
- TK and PG would be providing a presentation on the Union Strategy to the City Council Away Day on 7th February.
- PG reminded all Trustees that the Awards Evening would take place on 26th March and invited all to attend.
- Following the Race Equality Charter Away Day held on 3rd February, PG would put together a Small Group to look at issues within the Union. He would circulate some background information from the Away Day and invited Trustees to participate in the Group if they wished. **(action)**

9. Advice Service Annual Report (Paper: BT1937)

The Board considered the Advice Service Annual Report which provided an overview of activities. The report highlighted a number of issues which the Advice Manager would take forward in discussion with the University. The majority of cases related to appeals and extenuating circumstances. In discussion the following points were made:

- There was a significant number of students submitting late claims for extenuating circumstances, so the Union was arranging a series of 'pop-ups' to provide further information at different sites.
- Delays in claims were also caused by peaks in demand for advisors during the exam period which meant that some students missed the seven-day deadline for submission.
- The Board asked whether there was data available on advice provision at other unions. HR would ask the Advice Manager to provide a summary report for a future meeting. **(action)**
- The Board thanked the Advice Manager for the report.

Finance, Risk and Audit

10. December Management Accounts and Reforecast (Paper: BT1938)

The Board received the December management accounts and reforecast. The board was also asked to approve a resolution to change the mandate in accordance with the section Authorised Signatories. In discussion:

- MOD had reviewed the accounts with budget holders in order to produce the revised forecast.
- A stock count had been undertaken for the shop and the Union was considering a new system for the shop to improve its management. A sale was planned of old stock and a policy on writing down would be developed.
- All debts had been collected with one exception.
- As the forecast was showing an improved position, it was proposed to allocate £10k towards the refurbishment of the Student Common Room (see item 11).
- In order to improve cash management MOD was setting up new bank accounts. As the current authorised signatories were no longer members of the Board, a new resolution was required to approve authorised signatories to be PG, HR, plus two Lay Trustees.
- PG and the Board thanked MOD for all her work to improve the financial management of the Union.

Decision

The Board **approved** a resolution to change to the authorised signatories for the Union, the signatories to be, Philip Gilks, Chief Executive, Hannah Roberts, Deputy Chief Executive and two lay Trustees, Nick Ratcliffe, Deputy Chair, and Alan Latham.

11. Releasing Reserves: Student Common Room (Paper: BT1939)

The Board considered a proposal to release reserves to resource the refurbishment of the new Student Common Room. The new space would provide improved facilities for students and allow more flexibility for student led events. It would be managed by the Union and would be bookable in the evenings. The University had provided £20k and £10k had been allocated from the reforecast budget (see item 10), however there remained a shortfall of approx. £23k plus the cost of furniture. The Board was therefore asked to approve an allocation from Restricted Reserves of up to £35k. In discussion:

- The Union aimed for a three-month provision in Reserves; the current position exceeded this, although the release of the proposed amount would mean that this target would be missed in the short term.
- MOD was looking at the VAT position to see if any could be recovered.
- Procurement was assisting with the process and PAF providing advice on standards required.
- It was hoped that the work would be completed in time for the Examinations Period.

Decision

The Board **approved** the release from reserves of a maximum £35k to provide additional funding for the new Student Common Room. The Board noted that it was important to move back to a three-month provision in Reserves as soon as possible. The Board congratulated TK on her efforts to secure the Common Room as a new space for students.

Governance and Related

12. Sabbatical Officer Salary (Paper: BT1940)

The Board **approved** the sabbatical officer salary for 2020/21, to be equivalent to City Grade 3, spine point 18 plus benefits.

13. External Speakers Update (Paper: BT1941)

The Board received an update on review of the External Speakers Operational Process. A new Policy would come to the next meeting for approval. The University was also reviewing its Freedom of Speech Policy; the aim was to align all guidance and processes to improve efficiency. As an interim measure the Union was using Monday.com to track progress with speaker approvals, which was working well.

14. UCU Strike Update (Paper: BT1942)

The Board noted an update on the UCU Strike Action. There would be a new period of strike action of 14 days commencing on 20th February until 13th March. The Union had extended the election period so that voting would not take place during the strike period. There would be some impact on Union activities if staff members took strike action.

Other**15. Any Other Business**

It was necessary to rearrange the March meeting. PG would send out a proposed date. **(action)**