**St George’s Students’ Union**

**Trustee Board Minutes**

**Minutes of the 4th Trustee Board Meeting 2014-15**

**20st July 2015**

**1. Present**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dheemal Patel | DP | President |
| Natasha Lee | NL | VP Education and Welfare |
| Chris Raby  Judith Ibison | CR  JI | VP Finance & Student Activities  Deputy Dean for Students |
| Nathan Eager | NE | Student Trustee |
| Deborah Bowman | DB | Dean of Students |
| Steven Gilbert | SG | President Elect |
| Alice Walker-Earwicker | AWE | VP Finance & Student Activities Elect |
| Ruth Varney | RV | General Secretary (Clerk to the Board of Trustees) Elect |
| Michael John | MJ | Student Trustee Elect |
| Martin Gannon | MG | Student Trustee Elect |
| Tanisha Amin | TA | Student Trustee Elect |
| Roger Horton | RH | External Trustee |

**2. Apologies:**

Lucy O’Reilly – General Secretary (Clerk to the Board of Trustees)

Ian Spires – External Trustee

Kea Horvers – External Trustee

Mark Lubbock – External Trustee

Michael Lee – Student Trustee

Tom Arjomandi – Student Trustee

Mohammed Amer – Ex-President Trustee

**3. Minutes from previous meeting**

PASSED

**4. Commercial Update – Reserved Business**

**5. Finance Update and Budgets – Reserved Business**

**6. Zone Reports**

DP gave a verbal summary of his Events Zone report. DP especially commented on the high voting numbers, especially of the joint faculty students.

**President**

**Events Zone:**

Since April, we have had lots going on. We hosted our first ever SU Showcase which went down very well. We had great interest from lots of students with a variety of talents, and 10 acts were chosen to perform in the final showcase. The acts included everything from a musical performance to a poetry recital. We had over 150 people attend the event and the money raised from the show is going back into a fund which will help to improve SU facilities. The money raised from this year is going into some small games room refurbishments. The whole event was a great success and thanks must be given to our events officers who took on the role of co-ordinating and organising the event. There was a great sense of camaraderie and George’s spirit and I felt that it was great that students were able to come together and showcase their talents and show their support. I hope this event will carry on as a St George’s tradition in future years. We also hosted our annual Part V event for our final year students on the 8th May which as usual was very busy and was a great success.

**Summer Ball:**

Further to the last Trustee Board meeting where we discussed the summer ball, we have gone away and thought carefully about the viability of the event. With the subsidy that we would have to make, and also considering our financial position, we have regretfully decided that we will not host a summer ball this year in a bid to save money. We have looked into alternative events, such as having a formal event in the bar, or hosting a ball in another location, however these will still require substantial investment from the SU, which poses a financial risk to us. This summer season has a number of planned balls including the Graduation ball, Sports ball and Individual course balls, and we feel that another ball is not the most feasible idea. It is with great sadness that we have decided not to go ahead with a summer ball, though we feel that we need to take steps to protect the future of the Students’ Union.

**Website and Venue Hire:**

The website is now fully functioning and has received a warm reception from our students. Looking into the future, it is key that we keep the website up to date, and even though we do have webmasters for day-day operational administration, I feel we need to keep some professional maintenance for a short time each year. I am currently in talks with Wayne, who was our web developer, and he said that he is happy to provide support to us on an ad hoc basis.

We have also been looking into the Venue Hire prospects for the SU. We have looked at the hire models of other Student Unions such as Kings and UEA who all have a dedicated section on their website along with a brochure for venue hire. One of the Exec team has created a draft brochure which we hope to update and use as part of this venture (attached to the papers).

**Dheemal Patel, May 2015**

MJ: *Is the second webmaster position being reopened in October?*

DP said yes, the reasons it was not re-opened initially were to prevent an unfair disadvantage for the original candidate.

RV: *Can anything be done about helping joint faculty students to vote online?*

DP explained the issue is that Kingston will not allow us to have access to their students’ data.

MG explained the problem is with the system and the data sharing agreement.

JI: *Do the joint faculty students use our facilities?*

DP said it depends on where they are based but Physiotherapy students do definitely used SGSU.

RH: *What is the obstruction with changing the data sharing agreement?*

MG explained the system wouldn’t be too difficult to change but Kingston are reluctant to allow us the data for protection reasons amongst others.

DB suggested that discussions should be held with Kingston to try and sort this issue.

JI: *Could the portal could be used for voting because the joint faculty students already have access to that?*

MG said that it couldn’t be used as there is not enough data for voting purposes on the portal log-ins.

CR gave a verbal summary of his Student Participation Zone report.

**Vice President Finance of Student Activities – Chris Raby**

**Introduction**

Since the last meeting of the SU trustee’s I have been very busy, in what is generally recognised as a quieter period, after the sports teams have finished their seasons and a lot of students have finished exams. I have been fortunate enough to have had more time to get necessary paperwork from the trading arm into Agresso, our financial software, so that we can be provided with more regular figures from the financial accountant. I have had meetings with each group of officers in my zone to discuss what is coming up for the remainder of their term and asking them to prepare their handovers.

**Sports Officer’s**

All of the new sports kit that people wanted to order has arrived. There was a problem with the netball kit throughout the year as the factory who was making it in China closed down, then the new one they used was closed for a fortnight for Chinese New Year, and eventually they completed the order and it was received about a month ago! The majority of sports have finished, except summer sports and year-round sports, with successes mentioned in the previous meeting. All bar one affiliation were done successfully this year – the incorrect one was the result of a lack of communication between the team and the sports officers, with only one days notice being given for it. Our balance for this year with BUCS has been settled now, with no outstanding sums left for next year.

**Societies Officer’s**

The societies officers have been very busy over the last two months with the SU awards evening coming up at the end of June. They organised awards committee, which went on for a grand total of 17 hours, but nevertheless was successful. It was the first time the event was paperless, which saved us around £1,000. They have everything in place for the ceremony, including acts and those presenting the awards. They are also making a society achievement display that will be presented in the SU for those clubs and societies that have had notable achievements this year.

**Community Project Officer’s**

It has been quite a quiet period for the community projects officers, with a lot of the community projects (CP’s) having finished now first and second year exams are looming. They have been carrying out the regular checks of the community project cupboard, ensuring that it is tidy since they cleared it out. They will be sending out grant applications to CP’s in the coming week for funding from August. This has changed from last year when it was done for January to December. We decided to change that this year to bring CP budgeting periods in line with those of all other clubs and societies.

**General Update**

Since the last meeting I feel as though I have been very productive. Following on from discussions around our finances, I am having weekly meetings with the Finance Manager to catch up on what we have done in the previous week and what are targets up for the next, as well as longer-term targets we both have. This has been much more effective and we have both been more productive as a result. I have also been in fairly regular contact with the Interim Head of Financial Management, the line manager for the SU’s Finance Manager, as to deadlines that I may not be aware of that need to be met. There is still some work to do on this arrangement, as there should still be more transparency between the line manager and the SU, as I only hear about some things via word of mouth or forwarded emails. I am fully trained at inputting all paperwork with correct codes and have got a lot faster at doing so! I have caught up a large amount of the backlog and, by the time I leave, my successor will be able to routinely input what is needed so that monthly management accounts will be available as well as VAT returns submitted on time. Quarter 2 figures were available for the most recent Student Union Commercial Services (SUCS) meeting which, so the Finance Manager should now be able to generate the 6-month trading report for reference. There has requests for club and society accounts in abundance, and I have tried my best to provide committee’s with these when requested so they can hand over to their successors and plan for next year. Another cost saving measure I have been looking at is reviewing our printing contracts. Currently we are being massively overcharged and could reduce our yearly bill by more than half, which would equate to around £8,000. I’m meeting the London regional manager of a printing firm this week, who is going to talk through everything with me. I’ve been reviewing whether the new approach to performing societies has worked, i.e. giving them a minimal budget of £40 for printing, stationary and website transactions, which has saved the SU around £5,000 this year. The first account I worked out has proved to be somewhat of a case study, with fashion show running their performance prudently and making a healthy £2,800 profit. I have also been preparing budgets for next year alongside Elizabeth for all clubs and societies. Also preparing one for the trading arm, for the first time I believe, so we can work from it and have a better idea of how we are doing next year. In essence, I am making sure that everything is completely in place, and that all glitches in Agresso are ironed out, so that my successor can hit the ground running and make the finances of the SU more transparent for students, as well as staff in the trading arm. This should also give my successor more time to focus on the student side of their role rather than getting overly bogged down by delving into the depths of financial systems to make them work properly.

LOR not present to give a verbal summary of her Communications Zone report.

**General Secretary**

The 18th-22nd June was Use Your SU week – everyday I was outside the Library with a stall that promoted the SU. People answered questions about the SU and gave feedback. As Top 4 we have reviewed the written feedback, which highlighted that cohorts such as the Midwives don’t feel very connected to the SU. We also promoted the new Website and Elections – encouraging people to consider running for a role.

Following a meeting with the Media Officers they decided to quit their role. Due to how close Summer Elections are it was decided to not reopen the elections. At a recent Exec meeting there were some constitutional changes made including the removal of the co-opted members of Exec, Council and Senate Elect, and a new two-person role of Representations Officers has been created. The aim of this role is to attend the Council and Senate Meetings and communicate to the Student body what has been happening within the Executive team.

The SU AGM will be in two weeks (15th June) – I have asked the Exec team for year reports and we will be asking them to submit written handovers for the Exec handover meeting on the 23rd June.

NL gave a verbal summary of her Representation Zone report.

**Representation Zone**

In my last report I mentioned that I had made progress organising a summer ball. Since then all of Top 4 had a very difficult decision to make. We could not justify making a loss of that amount as we do every year. We need to secure financial stability to the SU and holding a ball on that scale would have hindered that. We communicated this to the student body via the senate and council meetings.

One of the big campaigns the SU run is the Wellbeing Week campaign.

SGUL prides itself in looking out for students’ welfare and provides some excellent support and advice services for students.

It is my role to educate and promote these services to students all year round so they understand what support is available for them if needed.

The week ran very successfully and included yoga classes for both students and staff, a pet therapy room, life drawing classes and a few workshops and sessions. Some SGUL staff kindly were able to give talks and run workshops and it was wonderful to see the staff involvement in the week as well as students.

Before the launch of the website a lot of work needed to needed to take place on the advice section. It was previously disordered and very hard to navigate. I was able to make this section much more streamlined so that the most important information was easily accessible such as academic advice and the counselling service.

With regards to the support of students I have had to represent students on various panels ranging from disciplinary to complaints, as well as providing them with exam and pastoral support.

#### The other big projects my zone were working on was the Green impact award. Green Impact is an environmental accreditation and awards scheme run by the [National Union of Students](http://www.nus.org.uk/). In the past the SU have tried for the bronze award but unfortunately have not been successful. This year the Environment and Ethics officers worked extremely hard and we have been awarded the Green Impact bronze award.

#### The Equality and Diversity officers in my zone have been screening and watching all of the SU society show to make sure that they all comply with the SGSU no platform policy. After the departure of SGUL’s equality and diversity manager they were unsure of who their point of contact was in SGUL however they have now met the new Equality and Diversity officer Rochelle. I am currently working with them and we are hoping to hold a mental health information stand sometime soon.

Lastly the international officers in my zone have been working on a housing and accommodation advice booklet for international students as they have witnessed first-hand some of the difficulties international students have with housing and accommodation.

**7. Financial Improvement Plan and Risk Register**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **How are going to achieve it?** | **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)/Measure** | **Owner(s)** |
| **Financial Improvement Aims:** | | | |
| Reduce unnecessary spending by clubs and societies | 1. Annual review of the Sports and Society Budgets  2. Regular bi-monthly meetings of the SU Finance Committee | 1. Quarterly spending reports presented to the Trustee Board | **VP Finance and Student Activities and Finance Manager** |
| Have a platform to be able to successfully advertise our facilities for hire and look for sponsorship opportunities | 1. Implementation and constant update of a venue hire brochure  2. Ensuring its visibility on our SU platforms such as the SU website. | Interest being shown by external parties wanting to hire our facilities or sponsor our organisation. | **President and Commercial Manager** |
| Ensure we invest in our AV Technology to cope with breakages and future demands | 1. All Societies wanting AV Tech for their productions will have to pay a waiver of £100 (CPO events will have their fee waivered) | Annual review and audit of AV equipment to be undertaken by the Tech Officers, President and VP F&SA. | **President** |
| Ensure our events are cost effective | 1. Ensure that advertising for events is done well in advance  2. Carefully ascertain the level of Security and Cleaning required  3. Carefully monitor the entertainment budget that is given to the events officers | 1. Looking at the revenue and expenditure figures after each event.  2. Figures to be presented to the Trustee Board. | **President** |
| To reduce spending in unnecessary areas as a whole and find areas to increase revenue | 1. Sabbaticals to work closely with the Financial Accountant to highlight areas where money could be saved  2. For the SU to work in conjunction with the Bar Managers, Shop Staff and commercial Manager to look at new ways of increasing revenue | 1. Quarterly accounts to be presented to the Trustee Board for review and discussion  2. New ideas and ventures to be discussed and reviewed at SUCS and at the Trustee Board | **Sabbatical Officers** |
| Consider the financial viability of SU investment in individual non-SU run events such as T-Year Dinner and Grad Ball | 1. Outline the financial risks of any event. If there would be significant risk in investment, the money would need to be collected upfront to ensure numbers are not extrapolated to cause an unnecessary loss. | 1. Numbers of tickets sold  2. Review of annual budgets for such events | **VP Finance and Student Activities** |
| Ensure that annual budgets for year beginning August - July are prepared in advance of the year | 1. Ensure that all SU income and expenditure is recorded onto Aggresso within a 1 month period  2. For the VP and FM to outline and set the budget prior to the beginning of the academic year start. | 1. Review of management accounts  2. Reconciliation of budgets into Aggresso. | **Finance Manager and VP Finance** |

DP wants to make the financial improvement plan a standing agenda item as to keep track on it.

RH: *Why are dinners and balls run by year reps being specifically mentioned?*

DP clarified that anything not made back is picked up by the SU if the cost is not covered by ticket sales.

RH: *Do they ever break even?*

CR explained it is very variable.

RV clarified it varies due to the year reps elected and whether they organise events their cohorts want to go to and can afford.

RH: *Are there are any repeat offenders?*

DP suggested summer ball.

MG raised concerns that year reps might end up putting their own funds forward and this is not something we want to promote.

RH: *Could these events not be held in the SU?*

NE explained that students don’t want to go to events at the SU but to fancy venues for low prices.

MJ suggested that we have one venue that we can use for all these events.

DP approved of this suggestion.

NE pointed out that this worked for Sports ball and Kingston Lodge Hotel.

NE: *Could the report include a breakdown of exactly where the subvention grant is being spent?*

CR doesn’t see why not.

MJ: *Could Exec budgets be published, as the clubs and societies’ budgets are?*

CR says they could do.

NE suggests that last year’s attendance to events and figures could be used to provide more information and provide set budgets to teams like Events before they start.

DP said that Top 4 can vito expensive suggestions.

MG said that we need to be transparent about the technical fee that we are charging performance societies to protect our equipment.

MJ suggested the wording for this section be changed to clarify what equipment is being referred to.

DP explained the purpose of the Risk Register is to keep track on our financial risks and what we are doing about them.

DP would like this to also become a standing item.

**8. SGUL subvention grant proposal – Reserved Business**

**9. Lay Trustee Proposal**

DP explained that we would be taking on another external trustee with accounting expertise as was passed at the SU AGM.

JI has advertised this on a website.

The board agrees with this.

**10. AOB**

None