



**Trustee Board Summary Minutes**  
**Held at 1pm on Thursday 30 May 2024**  
**Held in Room BD-07-004 (Belfast) and by Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Rebecca Allen President (Chair)  
 Finola Quigg, Vice President, Education  
 Oscar Kelly, Vice President Equality & Belonging  
 Dónall Hegarty, Vice President Magee  
 Ashley Neill, Lay Trustee  
 Andrea Probets, Lay Trustee  
 Antoinette Bradley, Lay Trustee  
 Cohen Taylor, Student Trustee  
 Eoin Millar, Student Trustee

**In Attendance:**

David Longstaff, Chief Executive Officer  
 Colin Campbell, Director of HR & Campus Operations  
 Clodagh Kennedy, Director of Finance & Business Support  
 Gavin Boyd, Director of Membership & Comms  
 Reece Armstrong, Vice President Sport & Wellbeing  
 Philip Maguire, Vice President Coleraine

Meeting Notes	Action	Update
<p><b>Agenda Item 1:</b> Welcome by Chair</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted that this is the last Trustee Board for current student officer team.</p>		
<p><b>Agenda Item 2:</b> Apologies/ Quorum</p> <p>The Chair noted that there were no apologies received and meeting was deemed quorate.</p>		
<p><b>Agenda Item 3:</b> Declaration of Interest</p> <p>The group agreed that there were no declarations.</p>		
<p><b>Agenda Item 4:</b> Minutes of Last Meeting</p> <p>The minutes from the last meeting on 29 February 2024 were approved.</p>		

<p><b>Agenda Item 5: Matters Arising</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>		
<p><b>Agenda Item 6: Chairperson's Remarks</b></p> <p>The Chair provided an update regarding the following:</p> <p>Awards: LTAs were held in Titanic Hotel, Colours in the Titanic Centre and SU Awards in the Nerve Centre in Derry. They were all very well received by everybody in attendance and this year LTAs had more funding behind it from the University and this has been well recognised by staff. Everyone in attendance reflected on a very lovely event. The Chair thanked VPM for SU Awards, VPS&amp;W for organisation of Colours &amp; VPE who led on LTAs. These events were a great success.</p> <p>Beltane: UUSU held their most ambitious event for a number of years. This was led by DM&amp;C, SAM, VPM &amp; VPS&amp;W. The Chair highlighted that this was a huge piece of work in quite a tight timescale. Recognised to be a great event in the end up. For future we will aim to plan further in advance for next time &amp; endeavour to consider the deasibility of continuing with this project.</p> <p>Conferences: The Chair thanked Student Officers for attending relevant conferences. The Student Officer Team attend 3 National Union conferences &amp; sent a mix of Student Officer delegates and student delegates. We sent 5 to USI conference, 6 to NUS conference and 12/ 14 attend NUS USI conference. Special thanks to VPE&amp;B where our Childcare policy was presented to NUS USI Conference which was unanimously passed. The Chair praised VP E&amp;B for their work into that.</p> <p>General Election: The Chair explained that we are in the middle of General Election Planning at present. Rosie and Team working on that. Discussions around branding/ online &amp; in person events we can run now that students are off campus &amp; starting into their summer months as well.</p> <p>Free period products: The Chair highlighted that she is wrapping up a scheme that will see sustainable reusable period products made free of charge to students for the next academic year and some funding has been presented for this. Will try to get products ordered and items ready for big launch in September 2024.</p> <p>SAA Awards: This is an event run by the Union of Students in Ireland in Dublin. UUSU had 6 nominations, UUSU were shortlisted for 4 and brought home 2. The Chair praised our Rep from the</p>		

School of Sport who won academic representative of the year, which is a huge achievement across all of Ireland, noting this award was very well deserved.

Irish Language: Work done by VPM was recognised and the Chair congratulated all who were involved with this throughout the year.

**Agenda Item 7: Chief Executive's Report**

CEO noted that the biggest highlight were the Leadership Election results and that it is a testament to the work that has been going on over the past 18 months re: more front and centre in terms of engagement with students and this is reflected in how they engage with us. CEO referred to some of the figures of the elections. Over 19,000 votes were cast and this is 100% increase on the overall votes that were cast in 2023. The notable thing from UUSU perspective was the unique voters which was 4,500 which was a massive increase from 2023 and over 17% of the membership. CEO referred to comparative data from other Student Unions we had explained to Trustees that those top performing Students Unions are in and around the 15-20% mark in terms of turn out, we are in middle of this and a great platform for next year. CEO congratulated all who were involved with those elections, and highlighted that it is a collaborative effort led by DM&C and SV Team.

CEO referred to the block grant which will be further discussed in DF&BS'S report. This report is based on best estimate in terms of what funds UUSU will receive from the University. There is a potential for Clodagh's budget to be enhanced by additional funding or possibly become tighter.

CEO advised that UUSU are ready to proceed with the next stage of the sports transition from UUSU to Ulster University but we are just waiting for the paperwork from the University.

CEO explained that UUSU have also approached the Charities Commission re slight change to one of our objects which has been received by them but they haven't commented yet. In principle not anticipating any major issues as requesting a tweak and not a fundamental change. CEO advised once the Charities Commission are content with change we will start the process of communicating and consulting on that change with wider bodies of membership etc.

CEO discussed lottery applications: Lottery applications are now in and UUSU have bided this week for lunch programme for students next year as we received positive feedback on breakfast programme. 1,200 students were surveyed; 33% had access to breakfast across campuses, which was great and 93% surveyed were keen to see a lunch. Lunch hopefully will increase that 33% figure based on feedback received which pointing to timings of students on campus.

CEO noted that UUSU's contract with Hazaar is coming to an end. CEO attended a meeting today re Ulster University taking over the funding of this and conversations are ongoing. CEO highlighted that to pull the funding would impact around 1000 student users and around £5,000 in payments to student ambassadors and volunteers that essentially work under Hazaar banner but come from UUSU membership.

The CEO discussed the Business Development Placement role: this recruitment is live and the successful candidate will plot a plan to link to our strategy and resources in terms of delivering any funding. There has been a good response to this recruitment so far with encouraging number of student applicants.

CEO provided information re Covid-19 Inquiry. Inquiry Team had been on campus facilitated by UUSU. They were keen to get student views on how the pandemic impacted them. During the pandemic; students were very vocal on missed opportunities i.e. lost learning etc. Opportunity to feedback what had gone well/ less well re handling the pandemic, both externally and internally and within the university landscape.

**Agenda Item 8: Director of Finance & Business Support's Report**

DF&BS advised that there were 2 parts to the report including Budgets for 2024/25 and Pensions.

**Budgets:**

Deficit: DF&BS highlighted on her report a deficit of £129,000. This deficit is because sport has been overspent in the year and we only receive a block grant on a monthly basis so therefore the money is spent before we receive the block grant allocation. DF&BS reminded the group that Sport is a ringfenced amount.

Projections: they are showing a surplus of around £12,000 which was expected position by the end of the year. The accounts from last year are what was anticipated.

Block Grant: DF&BS advised that we are estimating a block grant of just over 2 million and that's a 5% increase on last year. CEO will meet with UU's Director of Finance next month to agree a budget.

Sundry income: remains same as last year around £2.166 million; including payroll as our largest cost. Budgets have been prepared on assumption that UUSU Sport will move over to UU from 31 July 2024.

Employee Benefits: DF&BS included an amount for Staff Benefits package; as this is an ongoing project which was discussed at the latest Staff Meeting and will hopefully transpire within the year.

Cost of Living: Cost of living allowance estimated at an average 3.5% increase. DF&BS advised that this has not been confirmed and has to be negotiated with unions nationally.

Staff training and recruitment: remains similar as last year and UUSU Sport 2% inflationary increase and Societies given an additional £1,000 & marked increase in Voice.

Advice Bureau: cost is running the software, people costs and advice activities. They have also been given a significant increase on last year as Advice bureau is essential re engaging students.

Campaign Costs: reduced in comparison to current year as no longer funding Haazar.

Motor/ Travel: Increased use from current year so accommodated for increase in budget.

Cleaning: substantial increase because current contract with Noonan is due to expire at end of year so we expect to be a significant increase in cleaning costs.

Marketing: our website contract has expired and expect this will be a substantial increase. Screens will be purchased for Magee and Coleraine to facilitate digital promotion. Laptop upgrade: all staff will have a laptop that is less than 3 years old in new financial year.

In summary: this year's budget is in a surplus of £12,000.

**Pension:**

DF&BS advised that SUS AGM took place in March 2024. DF&BS provided a summary of key points. DF&BS advised SUSS was a defined benefit scheme that we had and we closed that in 2011 because it was no longer sustainable but we are still committed to pay the costs towards peoples pension.

Investment strategy is moving as planned however multiple unions have left scheme including Manchester, Queen Margaret & Exeter. DF&BS explained that there are two ways of leaving the scheme. One option is that we would move to an Ulster University scheme however Ulster does not have a standalone scheme as far as DF&BS is aware and CEO will check this.

Covenant questionnaire: annual questionnaire sent out to unions looking at our financial stability DF&BS advised there is no concern at present.

<p>DF&amp;BS asked the group if they are happy to approve the budget. The group were content with figures and approved the proposed budget.</p>		<p>24/25 Proposed Budget approved.</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 9:</b> Director of Membership &amp; Communication's Report</p> <p>DM&amp;C discussed the following items:</p> <p><b>Beltane:</b> Festival held in Magee led by SAM, VPM and VPS&amp;W. DM&amp;C explained that this project was planned in a very condensed time scale with money that came from Campus Life/ Riverside Theatre. It was noted that it was very positive engagement with key stakeholders including; Derry/ Strabane City Council, Stephen Kelly, Stendhall etc. There was a good variety of music and comedy acts/ activities. Key learning included consideration re; noise pollution, licencing, security, first aid, food and drinks on site. Stressor points included the ticket sales. For future it is recommended that we have a longer run in period as this may facilitate more ticket sales. Good to see several students coming from Belfast despite issues with transport on the day. SE agreed that it would go ahead next year, subject to available funding.</p> <p><b>Incoming Officer Team 2024/ 25:</b> DM&amp;C advised that they have started planning induction for incoming officer team for July and discussing the training in Kerry organised by USI. Current officers are working on their handovers. The handovers this year are different in that they are a survey of questions to highlight the important duties/ tasks for incoming officers.</p> <p><b>Freshers:</b> DM&amp;C explained that the planning for Freshers 2024 has started. The learning point from last year was that having 2 days for Magee and 2 days for Belfast was challenging in terms of staffing and also the organisations who would like to attend. There is also limited space in both Magee &amp; Belfast this will encourage us to make strategic decisions about who can attend Freshers and this may in turn result in less space for those that are not able to provide something tangible to members on the day.</p> <p><b>UUSU Elections:</b> long term voting trends highlight the large increase in voting this year. DM&amp;C noted that this is a result of following factors; Officers visible on campus and very good at engaging with students. More candidates this year and the candidates reminding students of their role as a member and purpose of SU.</p> <p><b>LTAs:</b> Awards ceremony held in Titanic Hotel, Belfast. Thanks to SV Team and VPE for organising event and in organising the nominations for both Academic &amp; Non- Academic Staff. It was a very entertaining and well received event.</p>		

Advice Bureau: The advice bureau is very busy this year with around 200 students using the service. This in turn raises around 600 actions as some students come with multiple concerns/ issues. These include; academic appeals, course delivery issues, Finance/ Fees, Cost of living, Visa & Compliance and some complaints towards UU also.

Sport: A lot of success and activity this year. There is growing concern re: investment in sport due to the overspending that is required. The overspending in Sport is structural and is not as a result of frivolous/ reckless spending from Club or UUSU side.

Marketing Team: Thanks to UUSU Marketing team especially at short notice re: Beltane, LTAs, Elections, SU Awards & Colour and now in their preparation for Freshers as well as developing the Impact Report.

**Agenda Item 10: Director of Human Resources & Campus Operations Report**

DHR&CO highlighted the Impact Report which includes Society events, Beltane & SU Awards etc.

Working on Green Impact submission and this was submitted early May 2024, with an audit on 17 May. Due to receive final score and recommendations at end of June/ July.

DHR&CO provided list of varied tasks HRA has completed over past six months. HRA completed 40+ meetings with Coaches & several Student staff in relation to expiry of their fixed term contracts. This is a time consuming project as includes 3 step procedure and timely correspondence.

HRA has completed Investigation & Conflict Management Training provided by HeadsTogether therefore she is in a position to get involved if the need arises.

DHR&CO advised that review of policies are in process and we will bring them for Board oversight at our July meeting.

DHR&CO provided overview of absence. Figures are high and DHR&CO advised that this is a result of a couple of long term absences, rather than regular absences across the board.

AN queried re if we are actively managing the Staff Absence Policy. DHR&CO advised that we will need to review and ensure there robust processes are followed. We are also exploring options of HR

Software which would inevitably improve our recording of absence and better capture absence figures/ trends.

**Agenda Item 11: Board Annual Effectiveness Review**

It was noted that not all external Trustees were in attendance but are due to meet again.

AN provided an overview of Trustee Board expectations and role of a Board Member. She highlighted that this is a space where we must be objective, honest & accountable.

The aim of this discussion was to discuss Trustee Board effectiveness and there was a proactive session with Student Officers.

The group agreed that the Board works well but there is room for improvement. The Chair highlighted that she had a good understanding of roles and responsibilities of board especially from her training at the start of her tenure. VPM explained that there is often a crossover between committees including SE/ SC/ Trustee Board and advised that understanding/digesting this is one of the biggest challenges for officers coming into the role.

The Chair and Student Officer group agreed that they are hesitant at times to ask questions but consensus is that this is a collaborative group. The Chair noted that it might be useful to use the skills of Vice- Chair and she will recommend this to the incoming President.

The group agreed that they receive high quality reports in a timely manner and decisions are followed through.

It was recommended that there should be more information regarding Trustee Board functions and a document/ training on this would be useful. VPM suggested that a brief synopsis of long standing issues may be helpful and examples of issues/areas that Trustee Board deals with would be helpful for future Board Members/ Student Officers.

VPE & VPM suggested that information re how to apply for grant application or How to Write a Paper i.e. Papers/ How to Guides would be extremely helpful.

The group agreed that 2 hour slot for Trustee Board is sufficient.



<p>AN highlighted the importance of raising any conflicts of interest as it is important to capture this.</p> <p>AN encouraged all board members to contribute during their time on Trustee Board and highlights that this is an opportunity to feedback, network and learn from others areas of expertise.</p>		
<p><b>Agenda Item 12: Any Other Business</b></p> <p>VPM discussed the long term development strategy plan that himself and DM&amp;C have been working on from August 2023. This plan aims to support Irish Language student groups; it is a detailed report and will be presented at another board.</p> <p>AN noted on the success of the Elections, as she had viewed the live stream, and the encouraging participation of students and candidates.</p>		
<p><b>Agenda Item 13: Date of Next Meeting/ Close of Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Thursday 25 July 2024.</p>		