HUSU Limited Board Meeting (including HUUS Ltd Directors) - Minutes

Thursday 21st January 2021, 10am-1pm

Held online via Microsoft Teams

Present: Sara Webb - Chair (External Trustee, SW); Stuart Ferguson (External Trustee, SF); Evie Kyte (President of Inclusivity & Diversity, PID); Nguper Orduen (President of Education, PE); Sian Doherty (President of Sport, PS); Ellis Leonard (President of Activities, PA) Ryan Ward (Student Trustee, RW); Anotidaishe Manjanja, (Student Trustee, AM); David Brammer (HUUS Ltd Director, DB); Sarah Adams (HUUS Ltd Director, SA); Gaius Powell (Trustee, and HUUS Ltd Board Chair, GP); Alan Bolchover (External Trustee, AB); Jane Stafford (Chief Executive, CEO); Andy King (Commercial Services Director, CSD);

Attending: John Harrison (Head of Student Future, UoH, JH) – for Items 1-4; James Schadla-Hall (Executive Support Co-Ordinator, ESC) – Minutes.

Apologies: None Received.

Agenda item

1 Introductions and Welcome

Chair

SF declared the meeting as quorate and formally announced that he is standing down as Chair of the Trustees. CONFIRMED that SW will be taking the role of Chair of the Trustee Board, as previously agreed by Trustees via email, beginning with this meeting.

SW placed on the record the Board's appreciation and thanks to SF for his work as Chair of the Trustees Board, the fact that he will be able to continue in his role as a Trustee is greatly appreciated by the Board and HUSU.

2 Apologies for Absence

Chair

LP and DB have both provided advance notice that they will have to leave the meeting early - time to be noted at appropriate point in the minutes.

3 Declarations of Interest

Chair

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- PRES, PID, PA and PS are all considering running for a second term as Presidents (related to Item 7 President Team Elections for HUSU), so will not be voting on Item 7.
- SA is an employee of Rollits who provide legal advice to HUSU
- GP is the Chair of HUUS Ltd Board and GP, DB and SA Directors of HUUS Ltd.



John Harrison, Head of Student Futures. UoH



JH was welcomed to the meeting, and gave a presentation on the work of Student Futures, the University of Hull's Careers and Employability Team.

Chair thanked JH and asked Meeting if they had any questions.

- DISCUSSED - which group groups of students are eligible for trusts and grants. There is an increased appetite from alumni and donors to contribute towards the employability agenda.

The Ann Watson Trust provides grants for educational purposes to young people in need under the age of 25 who live in the East Riding of Yorkshire or who attend a school in that area.

The Pittaway Law Trust fund concerned with widening participation in the law, and is evolving.

These are currently the main two funds that Student Futures is working with – Trusts and Grants work is constrained by what donors wish to contribute to.

 DISCUSSED – Student Futures is aware of potential issues around provision facing International Students. Internships are promoted to all graduates, and there is engagement from international cohorts. Have recently had four international students engaging with internships.

Student Futures are also working on developing the area of Employment Fairs. Traditionally larger employers, who are more likely to sponsor visas, have not traditionally seen Hull as a recruiting area. Work is being done to engage with more National Employers and provide more virtual fair options.

A bespoke Employment Fair to offer more International Student internships is also being worked on.

- Student Futures is continuing to work on Student mobility and offer more options to Students and encourage them to look at more jobs nationally- the growth in remote working has increased mobility options.

JH thanked the meeting for their time, and invited attendees to send him any other questions they may have. JH left the meeting.

Items for Decision/Approval

5 Minutes of last meeting Chair

APPROVED.

NOTED that the minutes of the Extraordinary Board Meeting of 4th June 2020 were APPROVED via Email.

6 Matters Arising/actions Chair

No matters arising or actions outstanding.

7 President Team Elections for HUSU CEO

Chair introduced this item and asked Board Members to note that this relates to the 2021/22 academic year only. It is separate from the President Reform work, which is planned to take effect for the 2022/23 academic year.



NOTED - that the meeting should consider the effect of changes on HUSU's ability to meet its charitable objectives. Also, that any changes will take place within a context of low student engagement.

NOTED - that HUSU has often functioned without the full complement of five Presidents, for example due to role holders standing down early.

The current financial position of HUSU should also be considered – can expenditure on five roles be justified in the current financial context?

CEO presented the report, highlighting the following:

- Nicole Steele, Student Voice Manager, has looked at timescales. One would be nominations opening on 22nd February and elections finishing 22nd March. This would mean the majority of PTO elections may have to be held in the next academic year (2021/22). Other potential dates would be between 15th March and 15th April. There would be some planning issues to resolve around, for example, Student Council, with any date changes,

DISCUSSED that current engagement levels with members are very concerning, and delaying the elections would allow more time to work to address that as well and hopefully hold elections with more information from the government on the position in relation to Covid.

NOTED - the majority of SUs appear to be delaying their elections. In-line with its bye-laws HUSU can run the President election anytime within Trimester 2, but elections do have to be held, as stated in the Articles of Association. It would be extremely difficult to move elections into the next academic year.

DISCUSSED the main concerns would be a low number of expressions of interest, and potentially low voting numbers which is turn would be an issue in terms of mandates for successful candidates.

DISCUSSED Student Priorities - employability; representing Students and value for money; improving academic success and improving the Student experience.

CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on three President team make up options and proposal to reduce number of roles for 2021/22.

DISCUSSED that the driver behind these proposals is not necessarily financial, but build on previous Board comments. This is the only opportunity that Trustees have to consider changes for 2021/22 and it would be remiss if options were not presented to the Board.

DISCUSSED amount of work to reduce number of roles for a single year and the likelihood of continued financial pressures depending on status of social distancing for the rest of the year meaning that HUSU budgets, including on the President Team, should continue to be monitored closely and cost savings identified where possible.

DISCUSSED concerns about democratic mandates if levels of engagement are low.

AGREED - Paper proposal 1 - To delay the election process until April and after the Easter break.



AGREED - Paper to be circulated on Proposals 2 and 3 to be circulated for decision via email by Tuesday 26th January. Trustees who have made Declarations of interest are excluded from voting, but their views are welcomed.

8 Business Continuity Plan VI.1 CEO

Report presented by CEO.

NOTED that this report has been reconfigured based on the recent experiences with the pandemic.

NOTED that this is the first time the Business Continuity Plan has been presented the board, in the future this will be regularly submitted to the Board.

DISCUSSED - possible issues around cyber security.

NOTED in the event that CEO is unavailable SLT will take on those responsibilities in the Business Continuity Plan - this will be made clear in future versions.

9 Risk Management Policy FHRD

FHRD introduced the item.

NOTED - that this report was approved for submission to Board by the Finance and HR Committee (FHRC).

Recommendations AGREED with no changes.

10 Financial Statements (from FHRC) Chair of FHRC

GP presented report to the meeting. These were presented by Simon Turner (Audit Partner) of Armstrong Watson to the Finance and HR Committee on 17th December 2020.

GP thanked the Senior Leadership Team for their work on the audit and providing increased commentary to Trustees and Directors.

A decision also needs to be made on whether to recommend to AGM that Armstrong Watson be retained as auditors.

All Recommendations AGREED:

- the Financial Statements 31st July 2020 approved.
- that the Chair signs the letter of representation to Armstrong Watson
- that the Chair signs the letter of support for HUU Services Ltd to Armstrong Watson.

Recommendation from Board to AGM to continue with Armstrong Watson as auditors AGREED.

11 Investment Objectives Chair of FHRC

GP presented the report to the meeting. This report is the result of an extraordinary FHRC to specifically discuss investment objectives. FHRC is comfortable with the recommendations from an ethical perspective. - comfortable from ethical perspective.



Recommendation to approve Investment Policy as presented in this paper AGREED.

12 Reserves Policy (Update from FHRC) Chair of FHRC

GP introduced this report, that revisits HUSU's current reserves policy, as reviewed by FHC on 17th December 2020. revisiting reserves policy.

APPROVED the Reserves Policy as presented in this report.

Break for Refreshment (15 minutes)

Items for Update/Discussion

13 Budgets and Finances - RESERVED FHRD

FHRD introduced the report,

NOTED that the Charity excluding Student Groups is just about breaking even. The Trading company has been more seriously affected.

NOTED that the Job Retention scheme has made a huge difference. If it does not continue beyond April this will be an issue.

Scenarios have been redrawn as appropriate, with the funds from the Job Retention scheme not taken for granted.

NOTED - no loans have been applied for at this time - security would have to be supplied and an ability to pay back demonstrated as part of any application.

NOTED - FHRD will be investigating the area of Business Rates Relief in greater detail.

NOTED that there is currently a moratorium on expenditure with all expenditure approved by SLT. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has protected jobs, but if it is used any more then services would start to be affected. The staffing base will be looked at in the event that conditions do not improve by next year.

NOTED - the Reserves policy will continue to be reviewed.

NOTED that no further claims can be made from the Business Interruption Insurance.

DSICUSSED - what the reserves position would be under the worst-case scenario, and the possible position in December if there was still no ability to generate income. Services could be considered for mothballing or discontinuation in this scenario.

NOTED that any decision about reducing services would have to be made in discussion with the University.

DISCUSSED that the picture across the sector is mixed - with some Student Unions making large number of redundancies.

NOTED that SLT are putting together a more detailed timetable and if necessary extraordinary Board Meetings will be held. Further items will be going to the next FHRC and then to April Board. Trustees and Directors can attend the next FHRC as observers if they wish to.



As per the recommendations in the report:

- Financial position to date NOTED.
- The potential financial position for the year based on the three scenarios provided in this report NOTED.
- NOTED the financial support received so far and the potential for further support and that these will be looked into and progressed where possible.

14 SLT Report and Performance Pack CEO

CEO presented report and thanked Nicole Steele, Student Voice Manager, for the excellent work on the University Staff Survey. Work will continue with the University on communications for future staff surveys.

CSD presented on the commercial aspects of the report. Welcomefest is next week with everything online. There is a full calendar of events and have been working closely with the University.

DISCUSSED stamp duty on the lease and changes to accounting rules on leases. Solicitors have been retained to go through the lease. ACTION - FHRD to look at this and discuss with SF as appropriate.

RW will email questions on the survey to CEO outside of the meeting.

NOTED - that the current low engagement rate has affected the level of responses.

DISCUSSED - that the narrative in the pack will be increased as areas are worked through.

On behalf of Trustees and Directors Chair thanked SLT for their work on this report - the changes are positive in supporting the work of the Boards and Committees.

15 President Update President Team

PRES introduced the update, with President Team providing updates on their areas.

Updates NOTED, Chair thanked the team for the updates.

Items for Noting

16 Agreement on the Grant to HUU Services Ltd

Report NOTED - this has been unanimously AGREED via email before this meeting.

17 Health & Safety Report

CSD

FHRD

CSD introduced the report.

ACTION - CSD to ensure that any data is appropriately anonymised in the future.

DISCUSSED - support to staff, all furloughed staff have been contacted and staff have been offered equipment to support working from home if needed.

Report NOTED.



- 18 Finance and Human Resources Committee Minutes Chair of FHRC GP presented the minutes to the meeting. Taken as read and NOTED.
- 19 Appointments and Governance Development Committee Minutes
 Chair of AGDC

PRES presented. Taken as read and NOTED

20 Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee Minutes Chair of EDIC

SF - presented. Taken as read and NOTED.

Issues raised by PID to be addressed at the next meeting.

21 Union Executive Committee Minutes

Chair of UEC

PRES presented. Taken as read and NOTED.

AGREED that the summary sheet format to present the minutes was a useful format that can be used in the future.

Any Other Business

22 Any Other Business

Chair

Chair asked for any comments on Board meetings to be shared with Chair, CEO or ESC.

Review work on current committee membership is being undertaken, if anyone has any comments please share with Chair, CEO, or ESC.

AGREED that meeting membership to be added to Agendas, with pronouns.

Next meeting: Board including Away Day, 22 April 2021 (Format and venue TBC)

