



## TRUSTEE BOARD

MINUTES FOR THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

VENUE: NTC.2.01

The quorum for this meeting shall be 50% +1 (quorum must include at least four Sabbaticals and at least one External Trustee and at least 1 student trustee if in post)).

<b>Trustees:</b>	
Samira-Caterina Monteleone - Chair	President
Callum Broadbent	VP Education
Dorothy Akuamo	VP Welfare
Isabella Ciuta	VP Community & Engagement
Nashwa Alsakka	VP International
Liv Matthews	VP Student Experience
Hannah Akhalu	VP Southend
Barry Van Eupen	Lay trustee
Lee Rodwell – Vice Chair	Lay Trustee
Chantel Le Carpentier	Lay Trustee
Verneicia Handfield	Student Trustee (Colchester)
Gerardo Palmieri	Student Trustee (Colchester)
Lily-May Cameron	Student Trustee (Colchester)
Dauda Abdulsalam	Student Trustee (Colchester)
<b>Attendees:</b>	
Craig Stephens	Chief Executive
Steve Haugh	Director Marketing & Strategy
Reeves Watson	Director Services Activities & Support
Barbara Reynolds	Director of Finance & HR
Caron Moor	Governance Coordinator
<b>Invited:</b>	
Janette Joyce (Agenda item 1 only)	Auditor – Crowe LLP
Jeni Day (Agenda item 11 only)	Student Engagement Manager
Matt Smith (Agenda item 12 only)	Health & Safety Manager

<b>Apologies:</b>	

### 1. \* APPROVAL OF TRUSTEES - S-CM

- Chantel Le Carpentier – Lay Trustee
- Lily-May Cameron – Student Trustee
- Dauda Abdulsalam – Student Trustee

**Subject matter:** Confirmation/Introduction and welcome of newly appointed Trustees

**Supporting Documents Name:** None  
**Decision or approval required:** Yes

- Chantel Le Carpentier was welcomed and approved as a Board Member in her position as Lay Trustee

➤ **\*AUDITED YEAR END ACCOUNTS**

- Crowe LLP Presentation – JJ
  - Jannette Joyce from Crowe LLP joined the meeting to present the Audited Accounts
  - There have been no adjustments made to our numbers and no unadjusted items on the score sheet
  - It was confirmed that the Audit is complete and Crowe LLP would like to say a huge thanks to Barbara/Sam/Nickho as well as the rest of our Finance Team for the effort that they put into this Audit
  - Thanks was subsequently expressed from the Trustees
  - JJ concluded that she agrees that the SU is a going concern and that the University have supported the SU with a Letter of Support
  - There are no concerns regarding our fraud risk areas
  - VAT is unrestricted funds, cost has been charged from our reserves and is ready to pay if necessary or we will get the money back if it is not payable
- Board Discussion (ex SU staff)
  - SU permanent staff (CS/BR/SH/RW/CM) left the meeting room
- University Letter of Support
- Approval and signing of Letter of Representation - BR  
 Note: Approved by Audit & Risk Committee 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and to be signed by the President on behalf of the Board
- Approval of Audited Accounts – BR
- Signing of the Accounts – to be signed by the President & Barry Van Eupen (Lay Trustee) on behalf of the Board – BR

**Subject matter:** Presentation of Audited accounts and findings

**Supporting Documents Name:** Essex SU 2021 – Final Accounts; Essex SU AFR 2021 final; Essex SU LOE 2021; LOR SU; University Letter of Support Oct 2021

**Decision or approval required:** Approval of LOR; Approval of Audited Accounts, Signing of Accounts post meeting

**2. \*ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Topic	Action	Who	Due Date	Outcome
Conduct and removal for Trustee	It was agreed that the Procedure for Trustee removal and conduct reviews (for non – engagement) would be addressed as part of the Trustee Paper.  Update 24/6/2021: Paper will be ready for the next Audit & Risk meeting	MP (2020/21) S-CM	<del>Sep 2019</del> 21/1/2021 4/3/2021 29/4/2021 24/6/2021 23/9/2021 25/11/2021	Update in meeting
SCO	<b>Agenda item 1. Student</b>	SABBS (2020/21) KH/HR	<del>19<sup>th</sup> May</del>	Agenda item 11

payment	<p><b>Community Officers Report:</b> Feedback to next SU Parliament and open up dialogue to agree on how this could be implemented. Work with SCO to see what this would look like.</p> <p>Update 4/3/2021: Move to next financial year in August/September for 22/23 budget</p>		<del>21/1/2021</del> <del>4/3/2021</del> <del>23/9/2021</del> 25/11/2021	
NSS support or boycott	<p><b>Agenda item 5. Chair Report:</b> Board discussion on SU's stance to support NSS or to boycott</p>	MP (2020/21) S-CM	<del>23/9/2021</del> 25/11/2021	Update in meeting
Information within Agenda and agree final approach	<p><b>Agenda item 10: Action Log-Governance Review:</b> Add information within Agenda for November meeting and make decision on preferred approach</p>	CM	25/11/2021	Complete
Joint meeting with University Council	<p><b>Agenda item 10: Action Log-Governance Review:</b> Add date into diaries for joint meeting with University Council and the SU Board</p>	CM	<del>23/9/2021</del> 25/11/2021	Waiting for dates
Health & Safety Committee to be established	<p><b>Agenda item 3: CEO Report:</b> Health &amp; Safety Committee meetings to be set up to run ahead of the Audit &amp; Risk Committee</p>	CM	29/9/2021	Complete Barry to join committee
Health & Safety Action Plan	<p><b>Agenda item 3: CEO Report:</b> Provide Trustees with an action plan on how the Health &amp; Safety issue will be addressed</p>	CS	25/11/2021	Agenda item 12
Outcome of risk assessment	<p><b>Agenda item 3: CEO Report:</b> Update Trustees on risk assessment outcome or if it is not done by Wednesday 29th September 2021</p>	CS	29/9/2021	Complete
Update Article of Governance with rotation	<p><b>Agenda item 9: Rotation of Deputy Chair:</b> Article of Governance to be</p>	CS	25/11/2021	Complete

of deputy chair	updated and approved with the change to Deputy Chair rotation and procedure to be put in place for a review every 2 years			
Term 1 Student Feedback	<b>Agenda item 10: National Student Survey (NSS) Feedback:</b> VP Education to give feedback/progress update in future Board meeting	CB	25/11/2021	Agenda item 13
NSS Survey Update	<b>Agenda item 10: National Student Survey (NSS):</b> Keith to give a written document regarding the main points of the NSS Survey for circulation to the Board	KR	29/9/2021	Complete

### 3. \* APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021 AND MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LOG (10 mins)

**Subject matter:** Approval of minutes from the last Trustee Board

**Supporting Documents Name:** Minutes – Trustee Board 23<sup>rd</sup> September

**Decision or approval required:** Yes

- Minutes were approved

### 4. \* CEO REPORT (20 mins)

**Subject matter:** Update from Craig Stephens, CEO on relevant events since the last meeting

**Supporting Documents Name:** Chief Executive Report November 2021

**Decision or approval required:** No

- The CEO report was circulated ahead of the meeting and CS summarised as follows:
- Umii has been a game changer during the pandemic, and we are working closely with the company who make the app
- Umii is an app designed to bring students together based on interests
- There has been loads of mixers and great events that have been going on
- COVID - testing is still on campus and recommended for twice a week, 120 isolating in any week. University have only broken the OSS requirement of 25 only once
- Question: Will the University plan to keep testing open? Response: PCR testing will eventually go but art exchange will remain
- Question raised: Has the changed level of concern for COVID had an impact for in person teaching? Response: They are not worried about face-to-face teaching
- Question raised: With regards to International students who have been jabbed but not recognised in this country or those that do not want to be vaccinated what is the position re Healthcare placements? Response: CS will raise at COVID meeting but it is a Government rule so they would not be able to do placements

- Staff recruitment: some staff have left during the pandemic. CS ran through the summary of staff members that have been recruited. Most posts have now been recruited for
- Bounce back better: taking it forward into a year of more blended engagement with students.
- Item added to Action: Deputy Directors to present Term 1 achievements at the January Board meeting
- Item added to Action: Bounce back better plans to be circulated to new trustees
- Greenhouse café: has been hit by many delays, we have had to use some of our other capital to cover this project beyond what the University gave us. 7<sup>th</sup> January is the date for the launch
- Question raised: Were there any financial projections shared with the trustee board ahead of the project starting? Response: We know that students want this space as a non-alcoholic event space. Cost of building this space was estimated at around £90k, project became £160k project of which the University funded for us
- Question raised: As a non-alcoholic venue will it be advertised as an alternative to sub-zero? Response: Yes, it will be open until 9:00 and can be extended later than 9:00 for private hire by Societies and Clubs
- Question raised: Can Starbucks be advertised as child friendly space? Response: Yes, it will be
- Pensions: pension deficit is much larger and will result in strike action being taken
- Question raised: Regarding Fire safety certificates it was felt that there was a lack of reporting on this and that a separate report was expected? Response: Recognise that this is required and report will be circulated before the next board
- Item added to Action: Fire Safety Certificate/Health & Safety Report to be written and circulated before the next Board meeting in January

#### 5. \* CHAIR REPORT VERBAL UPDATE (10 Mins)

**Subject matter:** Update from Samira- Caterina Monteleone, SU President and Chair of Trustee Board on relevant events since the last meeting

**Supporting Documents Name:** None

**Decision or approval required:** No

- Chair report was circulated post meeting via email due to overrunning of meeting

#### 6. MINUTES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

- Union Performance – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021
- Human Resources – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021
- Audit & Risk – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- Tackling Racism – 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- Essex Student Lets – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021
- UESU – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**\*Resolution of Changes for Committees:**

- Dauda Abdulsalam has joined the Tackling Racism Committee and Chantel Le Carpentier will join Tackling Racism Committee and HRC from January
- Lily-May Cameron has joined HR Committee

**Subject matter:** Minutes from Sub-Committee and Board meetings that have been held since the last Trustee Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

**Supporting Documents Name:** Minutes – Audit & Risk 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021; Minutes – ESL 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021; Minutes – HR Committee 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021; Minutes – Tackling Racism Committee 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021; Minutes – UESU Board 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021; Minutes – Union Performance 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Decision or approval required:** No

- **\* FINANCE UPDATE – BR**

- Period 3 Accounts
- Forecast

**Subject matter:** Update by Finance Director of Period 3 Accounts and Forecast

**Supporting Documents Name:** Financial Perf Review P3; Summary Man Accts 2021\_22 P3

**Decision or approval required:** No

- Currently only £36k behind budget mostly due to services who are £160k behind budget due to lack of University staff because of hybrid working and students on campus; mitigated to £36k due to underspend of £66k staff vacancies and £59k underspend for activities and support because no heirloom event this year
- Services: £101k surplus year to date and short of the £160k behind budget as it assumed normal trading which has not happened; supply chain issues in retail; recruitment challenges in hospitality / Sub Zero; building project delays for Greenhouse Cafe; equipment repairs and replacement costs which have affected contribution
- Stock issues for the Bar is looking good as we now have a permanent stock shift controller; also had delayed recruitment savings
- Bars and catering; kitchen sales running at 57% of budget due to reduced footfall; top bar sales at 55% of budget due to reduced opening hours of Fusion; SU lounge 38% of budget due to lack of students on campus, lack of large classes but good range of events have been run; Loughton café 53% of budget, had a new menu and now selling inhouse sandwiches but sales have been down mainly due to local competition; SU Bar sales are £8.3k ahead of target but behind year to date as normal trading was assumed; Greenhouse Café launches delayed until January 22; MOA closed due to recruitment issue of chef
- Venue and SU Homes: bar sales exceeded budget by 3% but ticket sales down by 19%; Base capacity issues and remains shut; CINE10 had 9 shows against a budgeted expectation of 12 with average attendance of 34 against budgeted 60 per screening; SU Homes have had a challenging year, year to date commissions are 45% short of budget
- Retail: sales down in some areas like the Store/Extra Store due to lack of University staff and large lectures reducing footfall; mini store sales for period 3 are 1% ahead of target mainly due to having tradesmen coming in; Eco store was launched at the start of period 3 had a lot of hype on social media and welcomed the addition of environment store but still recording a loss
- Student Activities and Support: net underspend of £59k due to no heirloom event this year and some staff vacancies; we had a successful fresher's fair; launch of big plan, Connect & Reconnect; as well as a wide range of welcome events, we had 2805 society members/2552 Essex blade members and 11 VTeam projects launched in period 3
- Enablers: recording net saving of £66k due to staff vacancies and maternity leave; new facilities manager appointed; saving in finance due to internal promotions in finance; Key events: student staff bootcamp; marketing for start of term/refresh of new signage
- Forecast: net deficit of £275k which is £399k behind budget, due to capacity issues and reduced footfall the University funding is expected to be £300k rather than £399k; reduced income in retail/SU lounge/Loughton; reduced property lets for SU homes; delayed opening of Greenhouse Café; continued closure of MOA and Base
- We have the support letter from the University, and they are fully aware of the impact that their decisions have had on us
- Question raised: Southend lounge long term, what can we do? Response: it is underperforming again at around 50% of their sales due to lack of footfall
- Question raised: Re Loughton, do we have separate data to compare when they have had events? Response: they did well under Freshers but then it slipped as soon as Freshers ended, discussions are needed on the Loughton bar

## 7. **\*DISCUSSION ON PROPOSAL AROUND COMMUNICATION WITH UNIVERSITY - CS**

**Subject matter:** Trustee discussion on proposal of communication with University

**Supporting Documents Name:** Protocol for sharing of information on public statements to be issued by the University

**Decision or approval required:** Yes

- There have been several issues that have taken place over the last few years due to strict process in statements that they send out which go through the legal team, they have asked us to do the same and the University will pay for this. They want a protocol on sharing information with them
- It is written that we need to reach out to tell the University before we put out statements and it is felt that this should not be justified as a legal obligation
- We should not agree to this but should look at what we can do to satisfy the University requirements in a different way
- It was agreed that controversial items would be shared with the University, but it was not agreed that we need to be bound by this proposal
- The Trustees agreed that we do not support this, therefore CS to work with Bryn regarding sharing information and that we continue to act within the law, proposal to be sent back to trustees for next board meetings
- Item added to Action: amended proposal around communication with University to be brought back to January Trustee Board meeting

• **\*APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS – BR**

- Audit & Risk Committee approved Auditor's appointment for a further 1 year

**Subject matter:** Confirmation of Audit & Risk decision to appoint Auditor's for a further 1 year

**Supporting Documents Name:** None

**Decision or approval required:** No

- We would normally go out to tender to reappoint Auditors but as we are considering Incorporation the Audit & Risk Committee felt that it was not appropriate at this time and Crowe have therefore been reappointed
- The Board approved the 1-year reappointment of Crowe

8. **\*SCO PAYMENT – JD**

**Subject matter:** Proposal to Pay Student Community Officers presented by Jeni Day, Student Engagement Manager

**Supporting Documents Name:** Proposal to Pay SCOs November 2021

**Decision or approval required:** Yes

- A paper on the proposal to pay SCO's was circulated ahead of the meeting and Jeni Day joined the meeting to present on the subject
- Question raised: Why do we have 20 SCO's and would they all be paid? Response: We currently have 23 positions but not all are recruited so currently have 20 positions from communities that need to be represented to be heard
- Question raised: Would they be employed or is it broader? Response: They would have to be employed
- Question raised: there are also VTeam that are not paid, are their roles so different? Response: Vteam deliver projects and volunteering hours, SCO's represent their communities and respond to student feed back
- Observation: We were very supportive of the idea before however cost needs to be a consideration and what does transition from volunteer to employee entail and mean for us
- Question raised: How will the people doing the roles manage hours? Response: it is flexible

as they may work longer during certain periods, but they would not go over the financial allocation

- Question raised: Rather than pay individual could we pay for the project itself? Response: money is available to support projects; we have had motivate individuals in the past, but they cannot do what they want to due to time restrictions
- Other issue to consider is that they could be voted out of their role but potentially they would still be employed as they hold an elected post and an employed post
- Could it be a grant or bursary rather than being employed? Response: students could claim they were paid below minimal wage if they put in more hours
- Could there be less SCO e.g., liberation groups only?
- Could they be named something different as a paid role and the rest SCO's
- A vote was taken on the proposal and question was asked "would you be in support of the proposal as it stands"? Response: 3 in favour/4 abstain/7 not in favour

#### 9. \*HEALTH & SAFETY ACTION PLAN – CS

**Subject matter:** Update from Matt Smith, Health & Safety Manager

**Supporting Documents Name:** None

**Decision or approval required:** No

- Matt Smith joined the meeting to give an update on Health & Safety based on what he has done in the few weeks that he has been employed with the SU
- There are some gaps but mostly good
- Some communication breakdowns, gaps in training but things are not so bad but certainly things that can be improved on
- MS is creating a plan and the University will do an audit on our processes
- Everything needs to be reviewed but that is not saying that things are in a bad place
- Alarm activated, lights come on and announcements made over PR system. Door staff and key supervisors go to centre and encourage people out, university patrol officer come and more students away from the scene

#### 10. \*STUDENT FEEDBACK TERM 1 – CB

**Subject matter:** Callum Broadbent, VP of Education to give update on student feedback from term 1

**Supporting Documents Name:** None

**Decision or approval required:** No

- Report was circulated post meeting via email due to overrunning of meeting

#### 11. STRIKE UPDATE – S-CM/CS

**Subject matter:** Verbal update on latest news/action regarding Strike Action

**Supporting Documents Name:** None

**Decision or approval required:** No

- UCU strike, we have come out publicly to support the strikes
- Held an event on Tuesday where students could ask them why they were striking
- Withenhoe event, online and pop-up events, asked SU to put on fun stuff during the three days
- We are passing out information to student as received
- We will be doing pop up events
- We are putting out social media posts as well as working with SU Advise
- Lectures own the performance rights and UCU do have the right to delete it



- We do not feel that the comms are enough

## 12. SAUL – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- Regulatory change letter for SAUL employers with USS Oct 2011

**Subject matter:** Circulation of document for Trustee reference regarding SAUL employers with USS

**Supporting Documents Name:** None

**Decision or approval required:** No

## 13. \*POLICIES FOR APPROVAL WHICH WERE RATIFIED BY HR COMMITTEE – BR

- Trustee Removal Policy
- Employing Sabbatical Officer after year in Office

**Subject matter:** Two policies for Trustee Board approval which had previously been ratified by the HR Committee

**Supporting Documents Name:** Draft Employing Sabbaticals and Trustees After Office; Draft Trustee Removal Policy July 2021

**Decision or approval required:** Yes

- Policies were circulated post meeting via email for approval due to overrunning of meeting

## 14. \*LEADERSHIP RACE TIMELINE APPROVAL – CS

**Subject matter:** Confirmation of the Leadership Race Timeline

**Supporting Documents Name:** Leadership Race timeline

**Decision or approval required:** Yes

- Leadership race timeline were circulated post meeting via email for approval due to overrunning of meeting

## 15. \* POLICIES PASSED BY PARLIAMENT – CS

- Nothing to report

## 16. \* BOARD DISCUSSION (TRUSTEES ONLY)

**Subject matter:** Opportunity for Trustees to meet/discuss without SU staff being present. Decision required on use of subject matter/supporting documents/decision or approval required to be detailed as a separate document (as presented in September Board) or as part of the Agenda (as presented in November Board)

**Supporting Documents Name:** None

**Decision or approval required:** Yes – preference of formats

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### Next Meeting

27<sup>th</sup> January 2022

### Actions arising from this meeting and Cfdw

Topic	Action	Who	Due Date	Outcome
Joint meeting with University	<b>Agenda item 10: Action Log-Governance Review:</b> Add date	CM	<del>23/9/2021</del> 25/11/2021	

Council	into diaries for joint meeting with University Council and the SU Board		27/1/2022		
Term 1 achievements	<b>Agenda item 4: CEO Report:</b> Deputy Directors to present Term 1 achievements at the January Board meeting	Deputy Directors	27/1/2022		
Bounce back better plans	<b>Agenda item 4. CEO Report:</b> <i>Bounce back better plans to be circulated to new trustees</i>	SH	1/12/2021	Complete	
Fire Safety/Health & Safety Report	<b>Agenda item 4. CEO Report:</b> Fire Safety Certificate/Health & Safety Report to be written and circulated before the next Board meeting in January	CS/RW	27/1/2022		
Amended Communication with Uni proposal	<b>Agenda item 7. DISCUSSION ON PROPOSAL AROUND COMMUNICATION WITH UNIVERSITY:</b> Amended proposal around communication with University to be brought back to January Trustee Board meeting	CS	27/1/2022		