| **Description:** | Trustee Board Meeting | | |
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| **Date:** | 12 December, 2023 | **Time:** | 17:30 |
| **Chair:** | Victoria Chwa | **Location:** | Google Meet |
| **Staff present:** | Ed Nedjari (CEO)  Victoria Chwa (SU President)  Lisa Ronson (Finance Manager)  Beauty Odeyemi (HR Manager)  Zainab Turay (Advice Manager)  Luca Di Mambro-Moor (Student Trustee)  Levente Bauer (Student Trustee)  Kofi Siaw (External Trustee) | | |
| **Apologies:** | N/A | | |

**Minutes**

| **Ref.** | **Item** | **Summary Points** | **Action** |
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| **1** | **Welcome and Introductions** | The chairperson welcomed everyone to the  Meeting and introduced everyone. |  |
| **2** | **Declarations and note any**  **possible conflict of interest** | There were no declarations or conflict of interest. |  |
| **3** | **Minutes from last meeting**  **and subcommittees**  **● Approval** | Chairperson asked if there were any objections to starting from the minutes from the last meeting. It was approved as it looked accurate to the Chairperson and there were no objections from anyone. |  |
| **4** | **Declarations for any other business items** | There were no other business items. |  |
|  | **Organisational Updates** | The Chairperson wanted Ed to kick off with the updated risk register and CEO report, however, Ed let Lisa give an update about Finance as Lisa had to be excused for an appointment. The Chairperson explained to the new attendees that each team in the SU gives an update and the finance team was starting first. |  |
|  | **Finance Update** | The Finance Manager stated that as a result of of inflation, staff needed to receive a salary increase. The trustees decided to invest in the staff by giving them a Cost of Living increase, despite unexpected losses due to commercial not doing well. The Finance Manager spoke on financial performance which included unexpected costs relating to maternity and paternity leaves, recruitment costs, irrecoverable VATs and the nursery having fewer enrolments. |  |
|  |  | The CEO explained how unexpected commercial losses contributed to a larger deficit budget than expected as students are prioritising their spending on specific things rather than socialising due to the cost of living crisis.  There was a discussion on how a stock audit at the year-end revealed a 4% drop in gross profit margin, with the nursery being a significant contributor. Also, how the commercial team faces budget losses, and the need to identify reasons and make changes.  The Student Trustee mentioned how student numbers have reduced drastically, attributing it mainly to the cost of living crisis. They mentioned how students who have fewer classes in a week are commuting from neighbouring countries like Germany and the Netherlands, as it is much cheaper for them. This therefore means less patronage of the café or bar. |  |
| **5** | **Updated Risk Register for 2023** | The CEO mentioned how the risk register is up to date. The financial risk register shows that the college grant has been reduced, there have been infrastructural increases and cost of living has increased as well. So there was a failure to meet the financial targets. |  |
| **6** | **CEO Report** | The CEO discussed the impact of the SU grant on the college's financial position. There will be no increase but expressed cautious optimism that the grant won't be decreased and highlighted the need for confirmation over the next few weeks. The SU’s financial auditors have officially requested confirmation of the SU grant for the next three years from the University, providing external validation and leverage for the Students Union's arguments.  The Finance Manager is going on Sabbatical so there is a plan to employ a Financial Consultant from another SU or charity to assist the interim Finance Manager.  The CEO mentioned the legal challenge from Pole Fitness. Pole fitness had used a space provided by the SU, the SU then wanted the space back for student activities. Pole Fitness were informed in September. The SU’s lawyer wrote to them but there has been no response. The person who runs Pole Fitness also put in a Data Subject Access Request which is being worked on.  The CEO mentioned how the commercial team are trying to evolve and diversify, one way of doing so is by renaming the SU Venue. Another way is to ensure the Venue showcases or incorporates Art and Culture to reflect Goldsmiths University.  The CEO spoke about how efforts have been put in to develop staff e.g. there was an anti-racism staff training. They mentioned how the SU is being scrutinised and advised staff to be careful about their words to avoid being misinterpreted. |  |
| **7** | **Voice Report - DSC, Forums and feedback** | A by-election was held in October to ensure the empty official student liberation roles (BAME, Disabled, International, LGBTQ and trans and non-binary). Three roles were able to be filled: Disabled, International, and trans and non-binary, the other roles will be vacant for the rest of the academic year. Two students are interested in the vacant roles, it might be given to them as volunteers, not elected officers, as no elections will take place. The numbers of voters have also doubled compared to the previous year but they are still quite small.  There are paid student rep roles, they are called the Departmental Student Coordinators (DSCs), and School Student Coordinators (SSCs), there are also several postgraduate research reps. They are 60 in number and work 60 hours a year. The hiring process involves putting up a rolling recruitment on the website, group and individual interviews, and a panel interview if they are successful at the written application stage.  With the College’s financial position, there has been discussions on how to restructure the DSCs to fit the new structures from the college’s transformation projects. The plan is to increase the number of SSCs, their hours and responsibilities.  There is preparation for the next March elections for the full-time positions, liberation officers, union chair and student trustees. There were some issues with the voting platform, MSL. The plans are started two months earlier than the previous year; there are more promotions, students have a longer promotion time frame and there is more education.  There was a change to governance structures. There are now subcommittees (Activities, Education and Liberation) and student forums, and a different way to pass motions. There is now a large number of people who engage and attend due to these structures. |  |
| **8** | **Comms plan/outline** | The Comms Manager spoke about this year’s KPI which is to continue developing the brand. The rebrand done by the Comms department has sort of kick-started mini rebrands within the SU. They are trying to create awareness about the SU, and when it is election time, they want more participation by students. They are also recommending internal training for staff so that staff can act as brand ambassadors.  They have liaised with other Sus within and outside London, this led to Greenwich SU coming for a visit. They are looking for ways to branch out from being just an SU but also a charity.  They have been working on reports such as the Welcome Week report. They have been working with talented videographers and photographers to create a report that is more visual and more clear on what is being reported. |  |
|  | **Officer Updates** | The University is in a deficit of 14 million pounds as a result of fewer students. Loans were obtained from some banks and there have been breaches in covenant. This is part of the reason why the transformation programme has been put in place as part of the mitigating plans and this involves redundancies. This has made conversations about the SU’s grant to be started earlier because it needs to be secured regardless.  There are also conversations about saving Associate Lecturers’ roles, which are the lowest level in academic hierarchy. The University might also try to change the academic structure by combining some departments.  The President is in talks with GCU and Unison, and demands have been put forward. They have asked the University to put up a Student’s Protection Plan, they are also planning to meet with the trustees and hold a Student’s forum early next term.  The President spoke about the Freedom of Speech bill which aims to regulate Student Unions’ Freedom of Speech. The External Trustee gave advice, stating that caution should be taken when making plans or taking decisions to protect the students and the SU. The President will continue to update everyone about any changes that happen. |  |
| **9** | **Update** | There was a vote on Sabbs pay on the basis of the responsibilities they share with Advisers and Coordinator.  The SU is working on obtaining a Sponsorship Licence as there are many International students and staff. There is a deadline to obtain it because of the Government. |  |

**Action Items**

| **Ref.** | **Action Item** | **Action / Decision** | **Action By** | **Due Date** |
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