Trustee Board Meeting   TB28/LW/1

_____

MARJON STUDENTS' UNION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2024/25 M4
Wednesday 28th May 2025, 1400 - 1600
Virtual meeting facilitated on Teams

MINUTES *(Approved)*

_____

Invites extended to: Liam Williams (Marjon SU President & Trustee Board Chair), Dev Aditya (External Trustee & Trustee Board Vice Chair), Edmund Jacoby (Marjon SU Deputy President & Trustee), Graham Briscoe (External Trustee), Kelly-Louise Preece (External Trustee), Paul Guildford (External Trustee), Jack Dee (Student Trustee), Emily Chipperfield (Student Trustee),
Mick Davies (Marjon SU GM),
Isobella-Skye Taylor/Esther Martin (Observers)

Present:

Liam Williams (President & Trustee Board Chair)	LW
Edmund Jacoby (Marjon SU Deputy President & Trustee)	EJ
Graham Briscoe (External Trustee)	GB
Paul Guildford (External Trustee)	PG
Jack Dee (Student Trustee) ⌖	JD
Mick Davies (Marjon SU GM - in attendance)	MD
Isobella-Skye Taylor/Esther Martin (Observers)	IT/EM

All papers had been previously circulated by MD.

1.Welcome and introductions from the Chair: **LW**

LW welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies: **LW**

KP/DA Sent apologies.

3. Declaration of Interest: **LW**

There were no further declarations of interest other than those previously recorded.

4. Minutes from March meeting (TB27/LW/1): **LW**

Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

5. Matters arising: (Action grid attached). **LW**

Matters Arising:

- Explore file sharing options.
  The university's Board of Governors uses Google Drives to share files with externals.
  They also set up an email account for the chair of the board for succession planning.
  GB suggests looking at Box, a software used by professional institutes for secure document sharing and minute taking.
  LW To Action

6. Report from GM: (TB28/MD/1)   **MD**

Financial report including:

Performance against Budget Q3 Year 24/25

Cashflow Projection Year Aug/July 25

Verbal update

Performance against budget Q3 year 24/25

- Spent 75.3% of the budget, which is on track.
- 72% of forecasted income is in, slightly down, but is expected to be offset by the May Ball surplus.
- GB notes the formatting of the document is out of alignment,
  The "Budget" column is the actual amount
- MD All the figures are correct; the document will be reformatted to ensure it is complete.

- Grant income: £101,000 received out of £135,000.
- Sponsorships, fairs, and other: £9,145 over a targeted £10,000.
- Surplus events income is low at this stage but expected to increase in the current quarter due to the May Ball.

Cashflow projection Year Aug/July 25

- Budget spent is a "fraction over 75% of the total funding."
- Expectation is to end the year with a small surplus of about £600.
- Cashflow projection highlights lines where expenditure is high compared to the budget.

- Nothing is significantly over budget.
- Some things are under budget.
- Income is a little down.

- Societies/campaigns: £320 spent of a £1,000 budget, 68% remaining.
- Governance: £180 left of a £1,000 budget, 15% remaining.
- Insurances: show a slight overspend, £3,200 spent of a £3,020 budget.

- Cashflow focuses on bank transactions and cash balance forecasting.
- Includes some income items like events income.
- Year-end position estimated at £639, with a revised estimate nearing £1,000 due to the May Ball.

Verbal Update

- Finance software is now Xero.
- P&L can be migrated into Excel.
- Reports presented in the same way as before, with a two-tier approach: performance against budget and cashflow forecasting.

Requested Changes

- Request to have the report in Excel format for easier manipulation.
- Suggestion to give trustees read-only access to the Xero dashboard.
- Offer to provide the basic P&L lines with headings.
- Xero doesn't show the whole picture, e.g., pension payments are not shown in the P&L.
- MD uses an Excel spreadsheet to supplement Xero.
- MD wants a report that includes pension payments, even though Xero's P&L doesn't.
- Xero can't do cashflow forecasts, therefore an Excel document is used for this, which has proven to be accurate.

Visit and Report Template

- PG will visit with Tracey to work on a template for the report, focusing on presentation for readability.

Election Report (TB28/MD/LW/1)   **MD/LW**

- The election report confirms the elections were fair and valid, in line with NUS guidance and relevant laws.
- Student engagement dropped, but changes were made to hustings to make them more accessible.
- The campaigning window was increased to give candidates more chance to engage students and boost voting turnout.
- Hustings were changed to be more accessible, influenced by the Natasha Abrahart case at Bristol University.
  - o The first hustings was pre-recorded with pre-submitted questions.
  - o Candidates could have someone speak on their behalf at the live hustings if they were not comfortable presenting themselves.
- There were three candidates for the election, but seven had initially expressed interest.
- The decrease in candidates was due to:
  - o Two candidates pursuing their PGCE to become teachers.

- o One candidate stating the SU money wasn't enough, as they could earn more with their osteopathy degree (£40,000).
- o One candidate feeling the role wasn't right for them after receiving more information.
- Lower candidate numbers typically lead to lower voter turnout because fewer student groups are interested.

Student Engagement

- Difficulty engaging with all registered students, especially those who don't visit the campus.
- The number of registered students has increased, but on-campus engagement hasn't, affecting voter turnout percentage.
- A challenge is how to engage students who are registered but not regularly on campus.

Funding and Registered Students

- The university receives payment for registered students, but this isn't reflected in the SU grant.
- The number of eligible students increased significantly (e.g., from 2,704 to 3,838), but there aren't that many more students physically on campus.
- It's necessary to investigate who these extra students are and whether they are already represented elsewhere.
- The SU grant isn't based on a per capita basis but on local negotiations.

Unresolved Partnership Agreement

- There is no finalized partnership agreement with the university, despite ongoing efforts.
- There's reluctance from the university to finalize the agreement.
- The SU needs this agreement to move forward and may seek advice from the National Union of Students.
- The need for a partnership agreement has been communicated to the university.

Election Report

- 3,838 invitations to vote were sent out automatically by the university's information management systems.
- There's a concern that this number includes partner students who already have representation elsewhere.
  There is a need to filter out students from partner institutions.

MD included the figures as they were for transparency, but the number can be reconciled to provide a more accurate voter turnout percentage.

- Election week has been static, but there's no written rule preventing it from being changed.
- This year, the election coincided with the university varsity competition.
  This negatively impacted election turnout.
  MD has already voiced concerns with the sports department and will also raise it with the university.

- This meeting is the last trustee board meeting for LW, but he has one final board of governors meeting with the university.
- The board is happy to approve the report to go to the university board of governors.

7. Report from Officers: (TB28/LW1)   LW

- A professional development conference had low physical attendance, but the recorded content has received almost 800 views online.
- This shows that digital resources can reach a wider audience than on-site practices.

AI and Education

- 92% of students surveyed agreed they would use AI in their studies.
- 88% of those students will use AI in assessments, believing it will improve their grades.
- Only 36% of students felt adequately equipped to use AI without being flagged for malpractice.
- The university is collaboratively working on an AI policy for assessments and general conduct to avoid penalizing students for exploring AI skills while also drawing a line against misconduct.
- Working with the university on integrating AI into assessment.
  - o Considering how to upskill students' digital and technological skills.
  - o Transforming assessments to assess a person's ability to use AI properly.
  - o Some assessments should be built so AI can't interfere (physical, practical exams, written/spoken pieces).
- Sports Awards held in collaboration with the Sports Federation in April.
  - o Celebrated the success of over 300 students.
  - o 15% of students on campus are engaged in sport.
- Staff and Student Awards in May.
  - o Received just under 200 nominations from students for staff awards.

- o Around 600-800 nominations in total.
- o A way to strategically work together with the university.
- Anti-exam stress awareness campaign in collaboration with student wellbeing and support.
  - o "Ways to wellbeing" initiative: a poster board where people could write down ways to de-stress.
  - o Samaritans, Mind, and potentially CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) were present.
- Random initiatives during exam season.
  - o Brit Challenge: students and academics had an hour to do physical activity.
  - o Pop-up games and colouring books in the dining area.
- A student representative has been elected to the university's UK student panel.
  - o Will raise issues such as the percentage of students working, accommodation issues, and engagement in student life.
- Six months into the new strategy, an overview of progress on each priority is given.

Ensuring students feel represented and supported.

- Student Experience Council (SEC) forum.
  - o Created a virtual forum for students who can't attend in person.
  - o Extending to Teams meetings to make it more accessible.
- Moving forward, looking at ways to allow any student to share their experience, not just student reps.
- The Student Union will take back ownership of the SEC forum.
- Working with the marketing team to create a landing page on the university website for online resources.

Meaningful, fun, impactful opportunities.

- Secured the Violence Against Women grant.
  - o Project plan to deliver starting in September.
- Revamped the society funding scheme to include match funding.
  - o If a society raises 50% of what they need, the SU will provide the other 50%.
  - o Will help societies with fundraising events.

Supporting students with their professional development and their employability.

- This priority has taken a "back burner" at the moment.

- More technical aspects such as student leadership badges and working with the university's curriculum framework.

Developing the sustainable SU.

- Revised the yearly business plan to align with the strategic objectives.
- The business plan now has four sections, one for each priority.
- Helps keep everyone accountable for moving the strategy forward.
- Student engagement is continuously declining, with no signs of increasing.
    - Collaborative efforts are needed to mitigate negative impacts like mental health, work, and placement commitments.
    - Ensure everything is accessible asynchronously or virtually (recordings, resources, Teams links, online forums).
- International students:
    - Currently less than 3% of the student population.
    - The university aims to increase international student numbers through a recruitment partner, targeting a variety of locations.
    - The goal is to increase variety in student life and community on campus.
    - Expect a 100-200 increase in international students over the next 2-3 years.
    - Need to consider specialized support for international students (welcome packages, briefing books).
- Money and time are significant factors affecting students.
    - Students are financially stretched and need to work, taking time away from university life.
    - The Student's Union has limited financial resources to support students.
- Incorporation:
    - Currently on the back burner due to budget proposals and other priorities.
    - Costs range from £2,000 (doing it in-house) to £10,000.
    - Reviewing the memorandum and articles is necessary.

- Finance Committee:
    - A decision was made to keep all financial matters within the main body due to the organization's small size.
    - Working groups can be established as needed.
    - The constitution should be reviewed to determine if a finance committee is mandatory or optional.
- Policy Review:
    - Policies are being reviewed and grouped to stagger review dates.

- o The question of the Finance Committee in the Constitution will be examined and circulated via email.
- Constitution Review:
  - o The constitution was reviewed and updated two years ago (related to corrupt change).
  - o It must be reviewed every five years, with the next review due by 2027.

- Suggestion to bring recommendations for changes to the board.
  - o The board recommends a change, which then goes to a further meeting.
  - o The process is "quite long winded" and has to go to the university.
- The constitution has been reviewed several times in the last three years.
- All policy documents, including the most current constitution, are on the website and accessible to the public.

Farewell to Liam

- MD thanks Liam for his work as Deputy President and President.
  - o A certificate will be prepared.
  - o MD will see if he can get a letter of recommendation translated into Chinese.
- MD expressed "You've been exceptional throughout your two years here."
- GB agrees and wishes Liam all the best.

8. AOB
- GB is interested in the manifestos of the new colleagues.
- IT and EM start their first induction meeting on Friday.
  - o They will gradually be brought on board and will join various meetings.
  - o Their first formal meeting is in September.
- MD will contact PG and GB to see if they'd be happy to take part in some trustee induction over the summer (online).
  MD To Action

- Tracey had sent out the meetings for the year in January, but this needs to be checked.
- Due to an IT restriction, the papers were sent out as Word documents, causing distortion.
- The papers will be sent out as PDFs once Tracey is back next week.

9. RESERVED BUSINESS
- IT/EM are asked to leave as they are not yet trustees.

Close 1600

Action		By Whom	Date
5.	Explore Gmail account for chair and investigate Box software	LW	Asap
8.	Contact PG/GB To arrange online trustee induction	MD	Asap