

Trustee Board Meeting

TB27/LW/1





***MONDAY 3rd March 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),

Present:

Liam Williams (President & Trustee Board Chair)	LW
Dev Aditya (External Trustee & Trustee Board Vice Chair) 	DA
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

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 Sent apologies, DA notified he would be 10-15 minutes late.

EC received a meeting invite, and reminders but was experiencing technical issues, a belated apology was received.

3. Declaration of Interest:

LW

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

4. Minutes from December meeting (TB26/LW/1):

LW

Minutes of the last meeting approved with one correction:

GB name spelt incorrectly.

5. Matters arising: (Action grid attached).

LW

Matters Arising

- Additional grant work within the student union is ongoing.
- Action item regarding additional grant work was incorrectly assigned to JD, should be assigned to LW.

LW To Action

- Update in the paper regarding the Violence Against Women and Girls Fund application.
- DA and PG to arrange a meeting in late January (action item from previous meeting).
- DA apologized for not arranging the meeting and will contact PG after the current meeting.

DA To Action

- Ongoing exploration of file share systems (LW /PG).

LW/PG To Action

- The university will not give out university domain accounts to external members, using Google Drive for file sharing instead.
- LW will find out the university's file sharing process and speak to the clerk of their board.

LW To Action

Requests for Any Other Business

- No requests for any other business.
- PG email regarding incorporation and trustee liability relating to the SUSS pensions deficit was discussed.
- PG suggested getting two or three quotes on costs of incorporation.
- MD reminded the board that incorporation was last raised in 2023.
- Initial discussions with Wrigley's solicitors estimated a ballpark price of £15,000.
- The board decided to try and get funding from the university, but the university announced its own "horrific situation".
- GB mentioned that Bath Spa had a relatively straightforward incorporation process and suggested seeking guidance from smaller universities that have recently incorporated.
- Mick has already reached out to other student unions.
- The board will liaise with the university and the student's union as to what options they have.

6. Report from GM: (TB27/MD/1)

MD

Financial report including:

Performance against Budget Half year 25

Cashflow Projection Year Aug/July 25

Financial Strategies

- The SU is operating on less money than usual.
- The budget is on track.
- Cash flow includes everything that is reasonably known about right now.

- The surplus from the May ball is conservatively predicted at £3,500 but could potentially achieve more.
- The SU has been prudent on spending, most notably staff hours.
- The SU has been able to restructure the ball to make it a completely different event.
- The SU is continuing to look for grants.
- The SU has exceeded targets for sponsorship.
- The SU held an accommodation fair which brought in a little money.
- The SU is constantly looking at what they're paying for and reviewing it.

Financial Policy

- The SU ensures they get the best deals on stationery and services.
- They've been able to support student-facing campaigns and give grants to societies.
- Every invoice is checked against purchase orders.
- Cash flow is detailed and mostly set in stone.

National Insurance Contributions

- Tracey will provide details in writing.

Of how NI changes affect the SU

Separation of Duties

- There should be three people involved in any payment, but the SU may only have two.
- Concerns about collusion were raised, referencing an example in a further education college.
- MD confirmed that anything over a couple of hundred pounds that is not normal operational payments is referred to the sabbatical officers.

The board complimented MD on the level of detail he presented to the board and control he oversees.

7. Report from Officers: (TB27/LW1)

LW

Student Trustees

- Jack is present as a student trustee.
- The quorum for the trustees meeting is two internal trustees and two external trustees, including the chair.

Accommodation Fair

- An accommodation fair was held in conjunction with the university on January 27th.
- It included university accommodation provider, sponsors, and free food.
- Around 100-150 people attended.
- Elias from Capitol Students provided updates on the renters' reform bill.

Renters Reform Bill Updates

- Landlords cannot charge more than one month's rent in advance.
- The rental window is now locked.
- Section 21 evictions (no-fault evictions) now apply to students.
- NUS is lobbying to remove the requirement of guarantors for student renters.

Professional Development Day

- The professional development day had low attendance due to timetabling clashes.
- Recordings, slide decks, and worksheets will be compiled and shared online.
- Topics included use of AI (by DA), digital footprint, and business/entrepreneurialism.
- A LinkedIn talk from Barclays was cancelled.
- The Vice Chancellor may timetable the content into the curriculum next year if there is enough engagement.

May Ball

- The May Ball is set for the 17th and will follow the same format as last year.
- Licensing police were happy with the event's proceedings.
- 159 more tickets need to be sold to reach the cash flow prediction of £3,500.
- There is capacity to sell 250 more tickets.

Although this could be subject to change

Emily Hoult Shout Out

- Emily Hoult has been organizing a quieter evening for students on the ASD spectrum for three years.
- This is a safe space for students to gather, watch films, and have snacks.

Jack's Social Run Club

- Jack set up a social run club that meets every Thursday at 6pm.
- It is open to all students, regardless of pace or ability.
- The goal is to provide a safe space for students to run together.

Violence Against Women Fund

- The Violence Against Women Fund has been approved, and the final amount is awaited.

Nightcaps Campaign

- Requested £1,000 with a core cost of £840 for a campaign giving out free, reusable, anti-drink spiking nightcaps to students.
 - A promotional leaflet will accompany each nightcap, highlighting safety measures in Plymouth's nighttime economy.
 - Plymouth is "one of the safest cities for a night out" and many of its practices are adopted nationally.
 - The aim is to reassure people about safety precautions.

Promoting Plymouth

- Promote Plymouth as a university and student union to prospective students.
- Incorporate this information into applicant day talks and welcome talks.

Elections Week

- Elections Week is scheduled for March 17th-21st.
- Mick is organizing the elections committee, which will primarily communicate via email.
- A potential issue is that Elections Week coincides with Varsity Week.

Varsity Week

- Varsity Week involves sports teams competing against Plymouth University.

- Money raised from ticket sales will be split, with a portion going back to the student unions for student support projects.
- Marjon will host Varsity, with the main events on the main campus.

Sabbatical Positions

- There's interest in both sabbatical positions, with four packs picked up.
- Only one voluntary officer position has garnered interest.
- There may need to be a review of the voluntary structure.

Freedom of Speech Regulations

- Freedom of speech regulations for student unions have been rescinded.
- The decision was made because the regulations would cause unnecessary administrative and financial burden to student unions.
- The focus is now on ensuring equality, diversity, and accessibility of speakers without strict financial implications.

8. Deputy Vice Chancellor Update:

Professor Michelle Jones, Deputy Vice Chancellor at the university.

Business and Operations Plan

- Claire requested information related to the business case.
- Red objectives are due to unfulfilled part-time officer positions or campaigns related to those positions, and the frozen block grant.
- Overall society growth is down, but growth of academic and professional societies is up. • Amber targets are campaigns planned but not yet completed.

Block Grant Discussion

- MD is to provide a business plan for block grant negotiations by March 25th.
- SU staff have now had a pay freeze for 28 months.
- The SU contributes to the overall marketing of the university.
- The SU is important to students' decisions on where to study.
- The SU consistently ranks high in student surveys.

Block Grant KPI

- The SU provides out-of-hours services.
- The business plan should highlight key points about the SU's importance.

Return on Investment

- Publicize the SU's top 10 ranking with a smaller budget compared to other universities.
- Focus on the return on investment to encourage more funding.
- The SU could be a free marketing agent for the university.

Funding per Student

- The direct grant equates to about £32 per student.
- The SU only has a small percentage of the 4,196 students on its system.
- Most students are paying the £32 but not actively engaging with the SU.
- Registered provision (students registered with Marjon but not taught on the Plymouth campus) has now superseded the taught population.
- There are more registered students than physically taught students.
- 1800 on campus.
- About 2400 with partners.
- Digital marketing should target students not on site.
- £18,000 was raised, which is £4.30 per student.
- The Vice Chancellor never used to attend these meetings.
- The Student Union has maintained a top 10 position for a decade on £135,000 a year.
- There is not much facility or provision for registered students.
- Need extra support in reaching registered students.
- Need to listen to what they have to say before making a move.
- Steve Hall is on the board of Plymouth CAS.
- Steve Hall is keen on health and safety and is doing support work for a new charity that's building property in Plymouth for ex-naval, health and safety people.
- The next board meeting is on May 28th.

- Registered students are higher than the proportion of students on campus.
- Need to look at more things that can be done virtually or out of hours.
- There are different levels of arrangements.
- Some that leave those students technically the university's responsibility, others that don't.
- Numbers are counted according to the agenda.
- Michelle will be able to answer questions about registered students.
- Michelle will give an update on Marjon 2030 progress.

Marjon 2030 Update

- The university strategy was approved and launched.
- Approved in July 24.
- Launched externally in October 24.
- The majority of the implementation is through delivery of four annual priorities.
- Gross Student Numbers.
- Curriculum Framework.
- Commercial and research and knowledge exchange income.
- Operational excellence.

Gross Student Numbers Plan

- Agreed and will be implementing from September 26, a contextual offer scheme for applicants and have revised entry tariff to ranges.
- A contextual offer scheme is important for the university's mission to end social inequity.
- It takes into account the context from which the learner has come.
- Enables them to enter with a slightly lower tariff.
- Will also be offering a Getting Ahead program to help them be successful when they arrive.
- Working hard on converting students but also retaining the students that they do have.
- There's been lots of work from a retention and engagement action group to improve early recognition and intervention when things are going wrong for students.
- So far this year, they have lost fewer students than they normally would have.

- Growth of degree apprentices continues to be a priority.
- £440,000 from the office for students to Pump prime some of those developments for degree apprentice development funding.
- In final contract negotiation with international student recruitment partner.
- Growing transnational education students.
- Visited Exeed in Dubai and AIC in Sri Lanka.
- More registered undergraduates than taught undergraduates.

Curriculum Framework

- Eight pilot projects running.
- Developed and will be rebranding the Marjon attributes.
- Those are the things that they want every single student to leave with.
- Working on transition, trying to support students not just into, but through the different phases of the course.
- Mega (Marginal Educational Gain Activities).
- Trying to say that what they do for students is not just what happens in the curricula.
- It happens through the events of the student's union, it happens through the co-curricular activity, the sports clubs, the work that they do to earn a living.
- Trying to find ways of recognizing that.
- Trying to improve assessment and make it inclusive from the outset.
- Developing students' competence in utilizing AI, but protecting and safeguarding assessment against misuse of AI.
- Interviews just done for peer tutors.

Challenging Concepts & Models

- Peers will be trained and paid to support other students in challenging modules.
- Leveraging partners for employability opportunities.
- Student journey is being mapped and streamlined.

IT Systems

- The university has 60 different IT systems and spends £1 million on them.
- Goal: Consolidate IT systems to improve communication and efficiency.
- There have been teething problems along the way.

Financial Strength

- Financial strength is a prioritized enabling theme.
- The university is working on a five-year financial model.
- A voluntary change program is open to reduce costs before the next financial year.

Executive Team Structure

- The executive team structure has been streamlined, reducing the team from seven to four roles.
- This includes a review of management levels underneath.
- Goal: Deliver margin on 2030 in a lean way.

Student Numbers

- Student numbers are tracking ahead of budget.
- Taught student numbers are up by about 50 from a population of 2,000.
- Registered and TNE student numbers are tracking even further ahead.

Applications & Conversion

- Applications for next year are slightly down due to less spending on marketing.
- Focus on conversion, especially for interviewing courses.
- Interview processes have been improved to avoid delays.

Local Students

- About 70% of taught students come from the wider southwest region.
- More students are commuting due to affordability issues.
- The university needs to better support commuter students.

Curriculum Feature

- One of the eight pilot projects in the curriculum feature is Learning Design.

- Goal: Improve scheduling to support commuter students.
- Diversifying the way the student's union works with students to offer online, twilight sessions.

Student Union Activities

- Align student union activities with school welcome events.
- Example: Host a fresher's fair from 3-6pm after school welcomes are done by 3pm.
- Provide asynchronous content to improve registered engagement.

Working Together

- Leverage resources through collaboration.
- Consider lunch activities.
- Ensure the Marjon stays in the top 10 of student activity.

Liam's Role

- DA reminds LW to influence as much as possible in the pilots.
- Gather intelligence and make notes for his successor.
- Restructure reports to include more general information.

Efficiency & Coherency

- There is more of a central point of workflow rather than numerous different points.
- Student services are becoming more efficient and coherent.
- People aren't working in silos as much anymore.

MD Update

- MD thanks everyone for their continued support.
- The incorporation debate is being reopened.
- Other options are being considered.

9. AOB

10. RESERVED BUSINESS

Close

Action		By Whom	Date
5.	Continue to explore additional grants for project work.	LW	Ongoing
	Contact PG to set up a meeting with Devon Mind	DA	Asap
	Explore file sharing systems	PG/LW	Ongoing
	Contact University clerk of Board, ref their file sharing process	LW	Asap

