

Minutes of: Board of Trustees

Location: Saw Swee Hock Board Room

Date and Time: 5th September 2023 at 4pm

Members: James Relf (Chair), Chris Adewoye, Onyeka Aghatise, Marie-Helene Blattmann-Lenoir, Helen Bourne, Joshua Goldman, Robel Iyassu, Sarah Onifade, Linea Petrela-Paiement.

In attendance: Ben Whittaker (CEO), Nick Smith (Secretary).

Item	
1.	<p>The chair welcomed members.</p> <p>There were no apologies. There was no request for additional items of business</p>
2.	<p>RI declared that they had undertaken some work for Starbucks earlier in the year. It was not felt that this was a conflict of interest in terms of the café development.</p>
3.	<p>The board approved the minutes of the June Board Meeting. There were no matters arising not on the agenda.</p> <p>It was noted that Linea had not been able to attend all of the last meeting during technical issues. In future the zoom link should be sent to all attendees even if not requested.</p>
4.	<p>The chair had signed off the rent for the quarter since the last meeting.</p>
5.	<p>There were no update items from the Company Secretary</p>
6.	<p>The board noted the Chief Executive Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The head of student communities had resigned and was moving to the University of Arts. Sarah Chowdry-Grant was thanked for her long service and innovation in student opportunities. b) LSE have agreed to increase the block grant in line with inflation which would support the cost of living allowance. Student staff were a London living wage employer which meant they had an automatic increase but permanent staff did not have this. c) A one off payment for staff from the School had not included student staff in the past. d) In addition to the election of student trustees, there should be additional links created to help students understand and input on budgets and organisational work.
7.	<p>The board noted the CEO update on the action plan including an update on risk and compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The increased work on sexual harassment awareness had lead to an increase in reporting. b) Several HR policies were still creating risk for the organisation but this was expected to reduce with the operation and knowledge of senior staff. A review the staff handbook would be brought in February. <p>Action: BW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) The School had approved a block grant allowance. d) Election rules were having an external review to ensure that they were fit for purpose. e) Any rebrand to the communications of the SU should take ensure that students were central to the discussion. <p>Café opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) Opening the SU café and improving the space was a drive for the School and was becoming a political issue with them because of the investment that they made in past years.

	<p>g) The plan was to reopen the café for the start of the academic term with a new set of offers to trial the operation. A small amount of hot food would be available. Starbucks would be used as part of their "proud to serve" scheme supplemented with an offer of bubble tea.</p> <p>h) £12,000 for the Starbucks coffee machine had been spent from the CEO budget as well as money for radios. A future paper would come to the board.</p> <p>Action: KF</p>
8.	<p>The board noted a strategy presentation and approved the strategic direction subject to later review by the board.</p> <p>a) LSE had a specific context of academic pedigree that meant the SU had an ability to affect and influence the leaders of tomorrow.</p> <p>b) The NSS results for LSE SU were poorest among the London SUs and 16th out of 23 Russell Group universities. The survey took part at a challenging time for the SU but improvements were still required.</p> <p>c) The SU should be forward looking and challenging given this content.</p> <p>d) A departmental approach to representation could be needed and the current structures in the SU were not responsive to this. Innovation within AI could also improve this. Awareness of the SU and improvements in its perceived credibility was a challenge that needed to be overcome at this departmental level.</p> <p>e) The Welcome and Fresher activity was being reviewed to start to align to some of this departmental work.</p> <p>f) A wide range of input from students, trustees, academic and school professionals would be sought.</p>
9.	<p>The board noted an end of year financial update.</p>
10.	<p>The board approved a budget for catering and 5% increase in cost of living allowance for staff.</p>
11.	<p>The board noted a scheme of delegation.</p> <p>a) Apart from changes to the staff titles this was the same as the version approved in June 2021.</p> <p>b) Some of the language should be tightened to ensure that proper accountability took place and the paper return to the next board.</p> <p>Action: NS</p>
12.	<p>The board noted a set of byelaws</p> <p>a) Byelaws changes 1,2 and 3 were noted and further clarification was needed from democracy committee.</p> <p>b) Byelaw proposal 4 "changes to Codify Governance of Student Media Societies" was not approved. This was because it did not fit into the legal requirement under the 2011 Charities Act and the 2006 Companies act which required the Trustees to be in control.</p> <p>c) In addition it was not felt appropriate to delegate responsibility for libel oversight to student volunteers.</p> <p>d) The board were keen that political accountability was able to take place and officers should speak to the media groups about the political accountability they wished to have and the mechanisms by which this could be achieved.</p> <p>Action: JR and CA</p>
13.	<p>The board agreed to postpone the appointment of a vice chair until the next meeting but agreed that Onyeka's support should be sought by James to undertake Ben's probation.</p> <p>Action: JR</p>