LSE STUDENTS' UNION

Minutes of:	Board of Trustees
Location:	Saw Swee Hock Student Centre and Zoom
Date and Time:	Wednesday 19th June 2024, 4pm
Members:	James Relf (Chair), Chris Adewoye, Onyeka Aghatise (items 1-13), Marie-Helene Blattmann-Lenoir (item 7 onwards), Helen Bourne, Robel Iyassu, Sarah Onifade, Linea Petrela-Paiement.
In attendance:	Ben Whittaker (CEO), Nick Smith (Secretary).
Trustees elect:	Tito Molokwu, Wajiha Umar, Reese Wong (items 1-15)

	Item
1.	The chair welcomed members including the officers and student trustees elect. RI noted that he was now a student of Imperial College and the board congratulated him on joining the course there. It was not expected that this would be a conflict of interest.

2.	The board **approved** the Minutes of the April Board Meeting without amendment
	    a) The board noted that the staffing committee meeting should be prioritised before the September board.
	    b) The democracy chair would be contacted in the new year by the incoming general secretary.
	    c) The Health and Safety policy changes should now be actioned.
	Action: BW

3.	The board **noted** the Chairs Actions taken since the last meeting a) There had not been an update to the partnership agreement with the School since 2016. This had been passed on to the General Secretary on the day of the meeting but would be circulated to all trustees. **Action**: JR
4.	The board **noted** an update item from the Company Secretary a) The guidance on the Freedom of Speech (Higher Education) legislation had not yet been released from the Office for Students but the issue was being carefully watched.
5.	The board **noted** the Audit subcommittee minutes a) "Legal form" should read "legal retainer".

6.	The board **noted** the Chief Executive Report. The following was raised in discussion
	    a) An encampment had been present on the campus at LSE ran by student activist groups. The School had evicted the encampment on Monday. Advice to those in the encampment was available from the union.
	    b) During encampment the union had closed its services within the building and this related to a loss of £15k but other income streams meant that this was mitigated.
	    c) There had been complaints about an alleged data breach of with information shared between different student groups. This was being investigated but was expected to be a low risk activity.
	    d) In the future all student groups must complete data protection training to have resources from the union. This is an area that should be reviewed by the Audit and Risk Subcommittee.
	Action: BW

	e) The Charity Commission had closed their investigation into a student who has signed a statement supporting a prescribed group on behalf of a students' union society. They had requested that the union review its process. **Action**: Audit subcommittee f) A commercial consultant had been requested to consider the compliance aspects of the bar and café to ensure that activity was legal. g) Across the campus there was an increase in pests and vermin and the School had been informed to take action as the landlord. There had been a movement away from high risk food – for example using pre-packaged food. h) A new venues manager was starting next week and a people & culture coordinator had been appointed. An executive assistant and projects coordinator who would support the SLT and the student officers. i) Historically retention and turnover had not been tracked but this was proposed in the strategy and should be reported to the staffing subcommittee. j) An internal people and culture plan was a key target of the head of HR. The importance of culture in an organisation was noted and should be a key strand of the strategic work of the board. k) The staff satisfaction report should come back to the Trustee Board. **Action**: BW
7.	The board **approved** the strategy. SO recorded her abstention for this vote. The following was discussed: a) It should read "inspirational environment" rather than "inspirational culture" on page 7 of the strategy. b) The strategy changes would need discussion with staff. c) Operational plans and KPIs would now be drawn up and brought to the September meeting as well as the behaviours that underpin the work. **Action:** BW d) Trustees were encouraged to engage with the big issues like the strategy throughout the year and not leave issues to the last levels of consultation. e) BW was thanked for his hard work on the strategy.
8.	The board **noted** a finance update a) The March accounts were as expected with trading income b) Expenditure was below expectations due to staff savings as well as budget savings against consultancy fees. c) The School had indicated the hardship fund could be consolidated and this work should be continued in the next year. **Action**: General Secretary d) Issues with the finance system were the reason for the later than expected monthly accounts.
9.	The board **approved** a budget a) Option 2 had been recommended by the Audit subcommittee. This would include some of the stretch targets in scenario 3. b) To optimise VAT the School would not be giving the union a space grant and applying rent. The real life impact on the union would be unchanged.
10.	The board **noted** a finance systems update a) This was a red risk for the organisation because the inability to have accurate accounts on a monthly basis had an impact on the audited accounts. The School and auditors were aware of the issues. b) All risk was contained on the clubs and societies transactions. It was believed that the transactions were being undertaken but they were not being mapped properly. c) Different systems were being considered, including 'Aquila' and 'Iplicit'. These systems could communicate with 365 which was used by the student groups. d) Final agreement on the new system would be agreed by the board but it was not felt this was possible by the end of the financial year on 30th June. **Action**: NS / BW

	e) The finance team were thanked for their hard work on this project throughout the year.

11.	The board **rejected** a proposal for appointed trustees.
	   a) An amended proposal presenting a hybrid model with appointed and elected student trustees should come to the September meeting.
	   b) This should include an appendix outlining different ways that appointment panels can be operated.
	 Action: NS

12.	The board **approved** changes to the byelaws. a) These were proposed by the General Secretary and increased the ability of officers to set policy positions separate from the student members.
13.	The board **noted** motions passed at student panels.

14.	The board **discussed** Board effectiveness
	   a) An away day would be held in November that would discuss this in depth with the new team, including the new lay members.
	   b) The proper discharging of duties was a main indicator of board effectiveness.
	   c) An external consultant should be engaged with to undertake this work.
	 Action: BW

15.	There was the following additional item. The board **noted** that responses to student democratic motions should be more clearly reported back to members. Trustees were thanked for their work this year.
16.	There was a Trustee only discussion