|  |
| --- |
| **Trustee Board** Date: **Thursday 21 September 2017**  Time: **5.30pm** Number: **32**  Venue: **Room 202 High Mill, SBC Campus, Galashiels**  |

**In the Chair**: Stefan Kay, Trustee (SGK)

**Also Present**: Brian Hay, Trustee (BH)

Stephanie Harper, Trustee (SH)

Paul Travill, University Trustee (PT)

Diarmuid Cowan, President (DC)

Aashna Bakshi, Vice President Wellbeing (AB)

Jay Clifford, Vice President Community (JC)

**Apologies:** Samantha Forsyth, Trustee (SF)

 Lucy Graham, Vice President SBC (LG)

Philip Wiltshire, Student Trustee (PW)

**In Attendance**: Gail Edwards, Chief Executive Officer (GE)

Jamie Nutter, Head of Corporate Services & Depute CEO (JN) (via Skype)

Fiona Hall, Finance Manager (FH) (via Skype)

Denise McCaig, Student Engagement Manager (DMcC)

Gillian Fortune, Executive Assistant (Minute Taker)

**ACTION**

**4.9.5 November Deadline for G4S Assess Change Needs FH**

**10.6 Set Up Remuneration Committee GE**

**10.7 Agreed to Cost of Living Increase in Salaries GE**

**12.1 Write Thank You letter to Jonathon Kean GE**

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, at SBC Campus.

1.2 Apologies were received from Samantha Forsyth, Lucy Graham and Philip Wiltshire who were unable to attend the meeting.

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

2.1 No factual corrections were noted.

2.2 The Minutes were approved and duly noted.

1. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no conflicts of interest noted.

1. **FINANCE UPDATE**

4.1 FH gave a brief explanation of the July accounts. Overall performance was good. Discussions had continued about Shop margins and wages. The Commercial Managers were now taking a more active part in management and rotas for staff and time sheets.

4.2 Shop refurbishment made quite a difference to the sales figures, we had predicted 40% of trade would be affected when in fact it was 60% affected and for a longer period of time.

FH answered various questions put by Trustee Board members.

4.3 BH asked about catering figures. FH replied that the margins were better than anticipated, staff costs were being controlled better. We had seen an increase in sales to the workmen on site for various building projects on campus. We were currently looking at what we offered and everyone had various ideas on what should be offered. JC gave a brief update on what has happened so far.

4.4 FH gave a verbal update. The Shop has traded below last year’s figures. FH stated that total control system was helping to look at what was happening in the sales. We would continue to look at the margins and make it work better.

4.5 Freshers Week at the Union was a great success. Bar sales were slightly higher than previous years. Catering was down from last year. Last week catering bounced back, but catering was still down. Staff and students were now coming back and using the facilities.

4.6 Last week the bar sales were down. Warm Up Wednesday made a difference to sales. FH would be checking with the Bar and Events Manager about the difference in sales. The Bar and Events Manager has lots of ideas to improve sales, he had organised an Oktoberfest. The Student Union was busy overall, which was good, and sales of food had picked up. Snapshot, we felt comfortable, details from total control helped and we would now look at the numbers and better support the Shop and Bar.

4.7 SH asked if student numbers were down on previous years. BH answered that no they weren’t, student numbers were up. PT stated that broadly speaking the numbers were the same.

4.8 BH asked if progress was being made on the catering offering. There would soon be two new catering venues opening on campus, the Innovation Centre and the Marriott Hotel. GE said they would probably not be student orientated more for staff. BH asked if this had been taken into account.

4.8.1 DC stated that the offering in the Innovation Centre had been pushed back to just a coffee outlet. The hotel would be finished in November, so the workmen would be here a bit longer than expected. No one knew what the offering would be from the hotel catering facilities.

4.8.2 GE said that she doubted the hotel would offer a cheaper burger and beer offering than us. Perhaps we could capture some guests from the hotel. FH agreed that our breakfast offering could prove popular. We would need to think about the opportunities.

4.8.3 PT didn’t feel the hotel would attract many students. If Oriam put in for a license for alcohol, this may prove popular with students. DC agreed this could prove a threat and we should keep a watch on what was happening and when.

4.8.4 GE agreed we needed to speed up our service, this was now next on the list to be looked at, as well as vegan and healthy options. GE stated that we would be look at long shelf life on these options to make them viable for our outlets. DC stated that the salads from the University catering outlet were better than ours, students and staff actually sat in Libertys with these salads, rather than buying our offering.

4.9 **Change Delivery Update**: FH stated that at present we had a very difficult relationship with the bank. G4S were inept at picking up and dropping off cash, the service was very bad, anything out of the ordinary and the system completely crashed, causing massive inconvenience and ourselves having to come up with time consuming solutions. FH had informed them that they would be finally judged on their performance during Freshers Week. The service needs to be more flexible and was certainly not 100% more like 50% successful. We had to visit the bank ourselves during this very busy time to get change. GE had sent an email requesting the bank sort the problems and this level of service could not continue. The RBS branches were good, but the product RBS offer is not good enough and G4S did not produce a good level of service.

4.9.1 FH had met with the Relationship Manager and Customer Services Manager, who were trying to talk us out of going elsewhere for this service. FH would look at this and GE would investigate a refund of costs incurred while we sorted problems they had caused. FH reported that any telephone call complaining when something went wrong had resulted in a 37 minute wait one day and on another occasion it had taken her 1½ hours to resolve the issue she was calling about. FH would try and get in touch with the University and see if we can learn anything from them.

4.9.2 GE conceded that her email had been very blunt and she would keep the Board informed of any progress made. We required large sums of cash for our business and the service had not been good enough. GE had asked for a refund of costs, time of senior managers and telephone costs. The Board would be kept informed about any tenders they sought, G4S would not be invited to tender.

4.9.3 FH gave a brief overview of other banks and what they offered. FH reported that branch closures had caused any open branch to be busy and unable to cope with the rise in business. FH needed to see how much other service providers would charge. GE will talk to the University and see what their experiences have been.

4.9.4 SGK asked how long we were going to allow G4S to have to make improvements. Further discussion ensued on how to progress and what to do next. There had been a big increased by students in the use of bank cards for payment rather than cash, 75% of transactions in the Shop were by card.

4.9.5 It was decided we would wait until November before we started a Bank Tender process. FH will continue to provide updates on the cash services. FH will look at our usage of change and how this could be improved. The Trustee Board agreed on this timetable.

4.10 FH informed the Board that she was waiting on word about going into hospital for a hip replacement operation, which would mean an absence of at least six weeks. She would be preparing for such an absence until such time as she was called in for the operation.

4.11 SGK asked JN for an update on Total Control. JN gave a brief report. All had gone very smoothly and the changeover had proved very successful. Freshers Week had gone well with no trouble. JN was thanked for all his help in making the change so successful.

4.12 JN reported that we now had a new phone system, linked to the University system. New phones had been installed and so far everything was good, in fact an improved service, with direct dial available as well as voice mail, for each member of staff.

1. **NSS RESULTS**

5.1 DMcC was asked to give her report, which had been a joint effort with herself and DC. A copy of the report had been circulated with the meeting papers. DMcC informed the Board of the background to the NSS Survey and how the results could impact on the University.

5.2 The Board were informed that this year the questions had changed, a separate question had been posed about student unions for the first time and the impact this had on the survey results. HWU was now rated 6th in Scotland. We would like a higher satisfaction rating than 54.48%. DC and DMcC have put together a list of actions and activities they think will improve the rating (included in the written report). A meeting was planned with other student unions throughout Scotland. Also students really need to know which University Committees the Sabbaticals here sit on, so they know how engaged and active we are on University decision making.

5.3 The overall Student Voice section satisfaction rating is 66.72%. We have already looked at this but several ideas were listed and we needed to do more. DC gave a brief overview of how this could work and how this should help the University know what’s needed to improve.

5.4 DC had spoken to the Principal of the University about the work that needs to be done to stop falling rates. At present the University was “research” focussed and not “teaching” focussed, there needs to be more focus to ensure we were ready for Brexit onwards.

5.5 Several questions were asked on several points of interest. All questions were answered.

5.6 Overall study space was getting better. Discussion ensued on the improvements and how to let students know about the work we had done on this issue. DC informed the Board that NSS looks at car parking and lots of other concerns, no other survey covers such details. PG and UG have no direct student experience. Price rises within the University are done with no thought of the impact they will have. DC stated that these decisions need to be made more formally, rather than one person being able to do this on their own. Hopefully this will get better.

5.7 PT was asked for his views and knowledge of the NSS survey. PT had noted that questions and focus had changed in the survey. This had benefited some universities but most in Scotland had dropped down the tables. Several factors had influenced the results for HWU, the problems faced by the former School of Life Sciences where students were transferred to new Schools last year. Psychology students had moved to new facilities and their resources were better, but communication and the way students were formed of changes needed to be improved. Also if students weren’t happy the issues needed to be seen to be addressed and any solutions or improvements broadcast, case in point was the car parking situation. PT stated that he had no experience in other universities, therefore had nothing to compare HWU with. Car parking at HWU was free and had been improved, but students didn’t seem to realise this was a bonus to them and the subject kept coming up again and again. Better marketing was needed to make students more aware that improvements had been made and where they were better off than other universities. PT felt that perhaps the Green route was the way to go. Get people to use public transport, car share, cycle to work. He was aware that several areas which had been highlighted as needing improvement were scheduled for in depth action for next year. Some discussion ensued on what’s proposed and what the improvements would be.

5.8 BH observed that on paper 6.2 the middle groups were the institutions which had moved on the tables. The higher and lower places had not changed. There didn’t seem to be a reason for this change. PT stated that comparisons for Schools over the years indicated that they had not improved as much and these did need to be improved. SH asked about the scoring system, this was explained. SGK stated that the Student Union really needed to stay on top of this situation and keep pushing for improvements.

1. **SOCIETY AFFILIATIONS**

6.1 JC went over highlights of the report which had been circulated with the papers. He informed the Board of why we had removed the Societies Officer from the elections and how he was going to set up a Societies Council which would be run by the societies for the societies. JC stated that we still had difficulty knowing how many students were engaged with each society and how this could affect sponsorship deals he may be trying to engage. We really needed a database structure to see each society membership and how many students engaged with the societies. The use of the funding available was also a concern, do we need to make this easier to access or do we just need to tell the students more about it. JC would be looking at making societies more inclusive and have them participate in Give it a Go.

6.1.1 A discussion ensued on the subject of societies and how they impact on the Student Union. PT thought that we need to provide more publicity to tell students how many societies we had and how to participate as this could impact on NSS.

6.1.2 A discussion ensued on how the Student Union help societies access the Alumni Fund and how this is beneficial to the University. DC explained that the process had been made more difficult this year. GE explained the background and the process to the Board. PT offered to help improve the retention with the funding committee.

1. **SHOP REFURBISHMENT UPDATE**

7.1 The report had been circulated with the papers. GE gave more details and reported that the Shop looked significantly better than before. We now needed to have better sales. Consultants and help agreed and brought in to service from NUS did not materialise. NUS let us down, which had cost implications.

7.2 We had great help from the Gordon Bell Group which had spent two days visiting to see what happens in the Shop. They had made a plan of support as to what we require. We then asked them to run a development plan about the student market etc. The margins were better although sales were down. All signs appear to be doing well. We planned a priority tidy up of stock holding and total control needs to be cleaned, there are about 10,000 product lines.

7.3 There had been problems with the hot food offering. GE gave more details on this and how we hoped to improve the methods.

7.4 SH asked some questions on the meal deals on offer. GE explained how we wanted to get more deals in place that would appeal to evening shoppers as well as lunchtime shoppers, when we had more time to organise these.

7.5 DC informed the Board that the signage was being made at this moment.

7.6 BH asked if it was too late to consider providing microwave ovens for use in the Shop. GE said we could look at this option, but it would have VAT implications. DC stated that a microwave would soon be available in Elements.

1. **SABBATICAL REPORTS**

Each Sabbatical present had submitted a written report which had been circulated with the meeting papers.

8.1 **President**: DC gave more details on several points which had been updated very recently. He is meeting with the people from the “Money for Life” campaign. We were to be the pilot for this project, which was not covered in schools at present.

More work was needed to help the Presidents and students at the Malaysian and Dubai campuses with their Constitutions and Elections. Both President would now sit on the major L & T committees which was a really positive and helpful step and was ahead of other Scottish universities.

The new strategy for the University was underway. The Principal could now participate and play a key part.

8.2 **Vice President Wellbeing**: AB reported in more detail on updates about the Street Assist charity which had helped us during Freshers Week. They had helped with 25 incidents throughout the Week, nothing major. The Secretary of the University had liked the fact that Street Assist had been invited to the Student Union to help. Security on Campus would be improved by a new anonymous reporting system, which had been added to other methods of reporting incidents to the Security Team. More good results had been noted in the area of mental health. The University had appointed a Mental Health Officer who would be starting soon in the new Wellbeing Centre. AB had given a presentation on mental health to the Global Learning Committee UK, all campuses in HWU were now working together on this issue.

8.3 **Vice President Community**: JC reported in more detail on recent updates. The subject of a Student Union based in the City Centre, keeps cropping up, but while it would certainly add to the Student Experience it is a bad business risk that the Student Union cannot afford to take. The Haunted House was going to be a big event which would hopefully kick off the Charities Week.

8.3.1 DC gave a brief update on the situation with students who had been housed in city centre accommodation due to the lack of accommodation on Campus. A discussion had taken place with Thomas Day, Commercial Services Manager for the University at the Management Board of the University. In future focus will be on first year students being given places in Halls. PGT, PGR and UG students would be given rooms if possible but first year students would be prioritised.

PT stated that the reason the rooms were allocated to returning students was that it had appeared that only 50% of rooms had been allocated, a huge shortfall, so they had been given to PGRs at that time.

Now we realised that more students had been transferred from Dubai etc. This hadn’t been accounted for before. The University were looking at the priorities which were needed.

DC stated that an in depth analysis needed to be done. A discussion ensued on the details of the situation. PT reported to the Board on the University point of view and how they had tried to help.

8.4 **SBC**: DC gave a brief overview of Freshers Week etc at the SBC Campus. They were currently recruiting School Officers, trying to do better than last year. Freshers Week had been successful with the same amount of events as the previous year. A couple of events were scheduled as part of Diversity Month.

8.5 The Sabbaticals were congratulated on all their hard work and the variety of subjects they were covering.

1. **CEO REPORT**

The Report had been circulated with the meeting paper. The CEO gave a report on the highlights and recent updates.

9.1 Jayne MacLennan had been asked to review the commercial operations at the Student Union. The report had been received. The good news was that there was nothing wrong with the Student Union, its staff were dedicated and loyal. We are continuing to work with Jayne to take this forward.

9.2 GE was continuing to make a business case for a new build Student Union as opposed to a refurbished building.

9.3 SH questioned the performance related pay and how it would be calculated. GE explained in detail the current position and what plans we had made to put this into action. Discussion ensued on how to benefit staff and allow GE and Senior Managers to do other important work.

1. **COST OF LIVING REPORT**

10.1 GE explained about the HERA Adjustments and why they had been needed.

10.2 SH asked some questions on responsibilities re overseeing commercial staff etc. Discussion ensued on consultancy costs which should be kept in budget.

10.3 DC asked about the Sabbatical salaries and how they were not on normal pay scales. He felt this should be a campaign for NUS to work on, as he knew there were many Sabbaticals concerned with this issue.

Discussion evolved on how to assess and give a fair salary across the board for different staff.

* 1. GE continued her explanation of the background to the issue of salary increases and the way forward from now. They should be cost of living and performance related from now on.
	2. SGK asked the Board to look at the options. Sabbatical posts were not career jobs, the salary was a form of stipend. Equalisation should happen. SGK asked that the Sabbaticals be given 2.4% increase. Discussion continued re the living wage and comparison to University pay scale and other viewpoints to be considered. The scale would be linked to the University this year only.
	3. A Remuneration Committee would be set up for subsequent and performance related pay increases to take account of circumstances from there.
	4. The majority of the Trustee Board voted to increase the salaries as given in the report. SH requested her vote against the proposal be minuted. The Sabbaticals would receive the amended rate of 2.4%.
1. **GOVERNANCE, LEGAL AND BREXIT**

11.1 GE informed the Board about a proposed NUS Commodity price increase of 7% on some products. They were holding prices as present but could not continue to do so. Did we continue to hold prices or did we pass on the rise to students, when the prices increased for us? SGK pointed out that in the current economy devaluation was a slippery slope. The situation would be monitored.

1. **AOCB**

12.1 **Resignation**: Jonathon Kean had tendered his resignation as he was moving on with his career and would no longer be at HWU. SGK informed the Board that JK had sent a really nice email. GE was asked to send an email to Jonathon to thank him for his time as a Trustee.

12.2 **Student Trustee**: We would hope to fill the vacancy after the Big Student Elections. SGK explained how the voting worked and what usually happens.

12.3 **Data Protection**: SH asked if we were aware of the new Data Protection rules. GE confirmed that JN was working closely with the University to make sure we were in line with current rules

1. **DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

13.1 The Trustees would next meet for the Trustee Planning Away Day on Wednesday 8th November, lunchtime onwards. Venue and timings to be confirmed as soon as possible.

13.2 The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for Tuesday 12th December at 5.30pm in Committee Room 1, here at the Student Union, Edinburgh.