



**Draft Minutes of:** Board of Trustees

**Location:** Saw Swee Hock Student Centre

**Date and Time:** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**Members:** James Relf (Chair), Chris Adewoye, Onyeka Aghatise, Marie-Helene Blattmann-Lenoir, Helen Bourne, Robel Iyassu, Sarah Onifade (Items 1-5 and 7), Linea Petrela-Paiement, Vaidahi Sharma.

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

	Item
1.	The chair welcomed members. There were no conflicts of interest arising from the agenda declared.
2.	<p>The board <b>approved</b> the Minutes of the November Board Meeting subject to the following amendments.</p> <p>a) Section 10 should read “democratic byelaws” and explain in brief what the changes were.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> NS</p>
3.	There was only one chair’s action taken since the last meeting which was to pay the rent for the SU premises.
4.	The board <b>noted</b> that the requirements at Companies House for Director registration was changing but NS would monitor the requirements.
5.	The board <b>noted</b> the subcommittee minutes.
6.	<p>The board <b>noted</b> a Chief Executive Report including a compliance and risk update. The following was raised.</p> <p>a) There was no update from the Charity Commission’s investigation.</p> <p>b) No employment cases were currently being dealt with.</p> <p>c) A new president for the School has been appointed and so it was a process of change for the institution and there were a number of risks and opportunities for both students and the union.</p> <p>d) The NSS was being undertaken. The School had raised concerns that there was a campaign to rank LSE negatively and the union was aware of this.</p> <p>e) A paper on sabbatical officer support would come to the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> JR</p> <p>f) The Code of Practice with the School had not been updated for several years and JR was discussing this with them to see what they wanted included.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> JR</p> <p>g) It was believed that the eligibility criteria which the school had set for the hardship grant but this was a political decision but student members could contact the officers on this work.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> HB, LP-P, VS</p> <p>h) The board <b>agreed</b> the recommendation from the staffing subcommittee that a recent ex-Trustee should not be appointed as a staff member and that a policy clarifying the position for the future should be created.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> BW</p> <p><u>Compliance and Risk</u></p> <p>i) All statutory and legal training for staff members was now up to date.</p> <p>j) Café income continued to be a risk.</p> <p>k) The middle east conflict was taking up a large amount of staff and officer capacity.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>l) LSE had decided to set the bar for free speech very high and so it was likely the institution would allow a larger number of events than at other universities.</li> <li>m) The new laws on freedom of speech meant there would be a change of policy and processes over the Summer. There would be additional training for staff, student leaders and trustees.</li> <li>n) The union position on freedom of speech was different to the institution and there were areas the students' union could not influence.</li> </ul>
7.	<p>The board <b>noted</b> a finance update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Income was a £170k ahead of year to date budget due to budget increase of 5% from LSE in the Block Grant.</li> <li>b) Gym and Marshall income was steady and events were also very strong. There was a £8k negative variance across trading.</li> <li>c) Staff costs were under budget due to staff vacancies.</li> <li>d) The board agreed that scrutiny of the fixtured and fittings should be increased as well as the treatment of stock for internal record keeping.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Audit Subcommittee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e) A review of internal processes within the commercial services to ensure strong recording keeping was being kept.</li> <li>f) The school was aggressively seeking to increase commercial activity which meant that the opportunities for the union.</li> <li>g) A paper on the financial and ethical implications of Starbucks should come to the April Trustee Board to sit alongside the initial budget proposals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> BW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>h) Ongoing support from exchequer over the past 6 months had been poor to the point that it was now felt to be a compliance risk.</li> <li>i) Xero was being looked at as a replacement finance system which was felt to be more suitable for non-finance experts and an update would come to the next Finance and Audit subcommittee.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> BW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>j) Other SUs had managed to move over relatively quickly but a contingency would be built in to the timings so that student groups and others could continue activity.</li> </ul>
8.	The board <b>approved</b> a reforecast budget which was recorded in closed business.
9.	<p>The board <b>approved</b> the Trustees Annual Report subject to typos and minor amendments which should be emailed to BW.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> All</p>
10.	<p>The board <b>approved</b> the 2030 Strategy update including new KPIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) As an international education institution with a high level of expertise, the students' union had an opportunity to influence widely through its alumni. As such the activity the union did was of incredible importance.</li> <li>b) There was both a perception that LSE SU did not meet basic requirements from students as well as evidence that this was the case. It was acknowledged that the current levels of satisfaction were not high enough by both senior leaders and the board which is why a new strategy was needed.</li> <li>c) The ambition was to be a union today shaping the leaders of tomorrow and to support each and LSE student to realise and reach their true and full potential.</li> <li>d) The mission was therefore to be a world class institution.</li> <li>e) Activity would move to departmental level provision which would be the priority for the organisation.</li> <li>f) The Union would deepen student voice by being truly inclusive and ensure transformative education and they would be the definitive, credible advocate for students.</li> <li>g) Work by the union would cultivate and develop communities and networks that create a lifelong sense of belonging and identity. At present 65% of students at LSE were involved in an SU club or society but this engagement was not realised.</li> </ul>

	<p>h) The success measures were to be impact focused and driven by change; rigorous and evidence led; beyond outstanding focusing on excellence; uncompromising on quality; value for money and cultivating sector leading talent.</p> <p>i) The model would be to work through impact and satisfaction to participation and engaged.</p> <p>j) Tracking the impact of participation and engagement would be an important task. It was noted that activity from the School would always influence the activity of the students' union as well as the student perceptions of it.</p> <p>k) Operational activity would be developed from the KPIs.</p> <p>l) A final proposal for how the KPIs are monitored would come to the next board.</p> <p><b>Action: BW</b></p> <p>m) There should be an additional online meeting to discuss the strategy.</p> <p><b>Action: NS</b></p>
11.	<p>The board <b>approved</b> an elections review</p> <p>a) This had been undertaken by an external consultant and its recommendations approved by the Democracy Committee.</p> <p>b) Approval meant that an external Returning Officer would be appointed from 2024/25 onwards and an experienced staff member would be appointed as Deputy Returning Officers for the 2024 Winter Term elections onwards.</p> <p>c) The board agreed to produce an updated set of bye laws for the June Trustee board.</p> <p><b>Action: BW / NS</b></p>
12.	<p>The board <b>noted</b> a briefing on elected and appointed positions</p> <p>a) A paper to consider changing the Articles to allow appointed trustees should come to the next meeting.</p>
13.	<p>The board <b>approved</b> the process for appointing an additional lay trustee</p> <p>a) An additional lay trustee would be appointed.</p> <p>b) The board requested that a skills, knowledge and diversity audit should be undertaken.</p> <p>c) The board agreed that recruitment should be done internally.</p>