

University of St Andrews Students' Association

Minutes of the Students' Association Board Meeting

Held via MS Teams on 28th October 2020, 5:00 pm

Present: Debbie MacCallum (lay trustee), Avery Kitchens (SSC Senior Officer), Dan Marshall (Association President), Tom Groves (Association Director of Events and Services), Gavin Sandford (Association Director of Student Development and Activities), Amy Gallacher (Association Director of Education), Emma Walsh (Association Director of Wellbeing), Andy Goor (University-appointed trustee), David Scott (lay trustee, Chair), Joe Horsnell (SRC Senior Officer), Clare Peddie (University-appointed trustee), Will MacFarlane (lay trustee)

In attendance by invitation: Iain Cupples (Secretary to Board/HR Manager), Jillian Cowan (Management Accountant/Deputy General Manager), Christine Miller (Clerk to Board/Administrator), Sophie Tyler (Athletic Union President), Chris Clarke (Operations Manager), Dave Whitton (General Manager)

1. Chairperson's Business

1.1 Apologies for Absence

None.

1.2 Acceptance of Minutes of Students' Association Board Meeting of 30 September 2020

It was noted that the Finance, Audit and Risk committee had only provisionally approved a limited contingency spend for capital expenditure, apart from one item to be actioned immediately. All other capital would be placed on hold until further financial updates were provided. The minutes for the 30th September 2020 meeting would be amended to reflect this.

1.3 Matters Arising

(Covered under other points.)

1.4 Chairperson's Update

There would be a private informal discussion of the trustees only, following the formal business of the meeting.

2. COVID-19 Operations: Board Working Group

- ##### 2.1 Update from Board Working Group
- Progress and achievements
 - Key risks and challenges

Debbie MacCallum (DMac) reported that the group was working well with more trustees attending. The Can-Do initiative from the University was applauded though improved co-ordination with the Association could benefit students. The Can-Do group were looking at

the situation for students who may have to stay over the Christmas break. Dan Marshall (DM) noted that there was a survey running on students' intentions for the Christmas break. The risk of students not returning after the break was discussed: this could not be ruled out as a possibility, though it was recognised that this would be influenced by any position taken by the the Scottish and UK governments..

Chris Clarke (CC) updated the Board on efforts to maximise the available safe, usable space in the Union Building while maintaining compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. Hundreds of hours of study space bookings were now available for students. Outdoor space was being utilised as far as possible: the help of sponsors was being sought to provide suitable equipment to help. Housekeeping and maintenance activity in the Barron Theatre was being undertaken.

The challenge of meeting student needs without additional funding to replace lost commercial surpluses was raised as a particular concern. Steps have been taken cut costs in the delivery of commercial services but there was no short term prospect of surpluses from the commercial services being at the level required to cover all operational costs as there would be in a normal year.

In light of the urgent need from students for usable activity spaces, there was a discussion about whether to continue making 601/STAge and the rehearsal rooms available as teaching space for University use in semester 2. Clare Peddie (CP) noted that for the University, STAge was rare in that it was a significantly sized, usable teaching space that was fully accessible and the University therefore regarded that space as critical to face-to-face teaching provision. Solutions were proposed including using the space for student activity in non-teaching hours, though there were operational difficulties to consider. The issue of financial compensation for the use of these spaces could also be raised. CC would follow up with the University, inquiring about usage data for the other spaces, and report back. Following discussion it was agreed that for semester 2 it is appropriate for 601/STAge to continue to be used for teaching purposes.

The group would also consider what steps might be taken by the Association in the event of a second lockdown.

Action point: CC to ask for data on space usage in semester 1 and follow up discussions with University over semester 2 usage, including financial considerations.

Action point: Working group to consider steps to be taken in the event of a second lockdown.

3. Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Business

3.1 Update on current financial position and cash flow projections

Jillian Cowan (JC) updated the trustees on material changes since the 30th September meeting. Restraint in expenditure and maximisation of income including government support meant that the Association was in a better position than compared to budget approved at the previous meeting. Quarterly accounts would be available before the next Finance, Audit and Risk meeting.

Progress on the risk register was continuing.

Thorntons had been contacted regarding a possible transition to SCIO status: JC would update DS and Will MacFarlane (WMac) shortly.

Trustees noted the improvements in the short term financial position and operational delivery of services in the building but also the fundamental underlying strategic challenges posed by the pandemic and by longer term changes in student needs. It was recognised that in light of these challenges conversations may need to take place with the University over the the overall funding model. In the meantime, the planned review of finances in December would go ahead.

Action point: JC to take quarterly accounts to next meeting of FAR.

Action point: JC, DS and WMac to meet to discuss SCIO status.

3.2 Timetable for year end audit

The audited accounts for the 2019-20 financial year were expected to be ready for the December meeting of Board.

Action point: JC to bring audited accounts to December meeting.

4. Governance and Nominations and Staffing Committee Business

4.1 Update from Governance and Nominations and Staffing Committee

Emma Walsh (EW) reported on the recent meeting which included discussions on strategic planning, government job support, a policy repository and the recruitment of a new lay trustee.

Trustees agreed that the recruitment of a new lay trustee should be paused pending an update to the skills matrix, further information about transition to SCIO status and the financial review in December. Active recruitment of a lay trustee would therefore be expected to commence in the new year.

Action point: skills matrix to be updated by end of November.

Action point: GNS to set timetable for recruitment of new lay trustee beginning in January.

5. General Manager's Business

5.1 Update from Management Team

DS thanked student officers, volunteers, management and staff for their efforts. Potential use of the retail unit to be vacated by Blackwells was discussed: DW and CC would take this forward.

Action point: DW and CC to consider usage of vacant retail unit.

6. Association President's Business

DM discussed the issue of a larger than usual number of students having to remain in St Andrews over the winter break. The University had pledged to keep halls open over the break at no extra charge: consideration would be given to what events and other support could be offered over this time.

7. Director of Events and Services Business

Tom Groves (TG) thanked CC for work on items raised at the last meeting.

8. Director of Student Development and Activities Business

8.1 Update from Director of Student Development & Activities

Gavin Sandford (GS) noted that a report on the website would be brought to the next Board.

Action point: website report to be circulated for December meeting.

9. Director of Director of Wellbeing Business

9.1 Update from Director of Wellbeing

There was discussion of mental health support from both student peer support groups and Student Services in light of the ongoing coronavirus situation. The success of the Rectorial election was also noted, with EW attributing this to very strong candidates and campaign teams.

10. Director of Education Business

10.1 Update from Director of Education

AG, the Proctor and the Deans were working with Directors of Teaching in Schools to respond to concerns over hybrid classes expressed in the Association's recent survey. AG noted that there was now a facility for students to ask for classes to be moved entirely online.

11. Association Updates

11.1 SRC/SSC Updates

An updated version of the Laws was presented: trustees asked for a version with tracked changes to be circulated. IC would pick this up with the Association Chair.

Action point: IC to contact Association Chair regarded tracked changes to Laws.

12. AOCB

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

9 December 2020

ACTIONS

Ref	Description	Owner	Target Date & Status
281020.01	Usage statistics on teaching space in Union building to be gathered, discussions with University over potential use of space in S2 to be held	CC	12/20
281020.02	Steps to be taken in event of second lockdown to be considered	COVID working group	12/20
281020.03	Quarterly accounts to be taken to FAR committee	JC/FAR	11/20
281020.04	Update and discussion on SCIO advice	JC, DS, WMac	12/20
281020.05	Audited accounts to be brought to Board	JC	12/20
281020.06	Skills matrix to be updated	IC/GNS	11/20
281020.07	Timetable for recruitment of new lay trustee to be considered	GNS	11/20
281020.08	Options for usage of vacant retail unit to be considered	DW/CC	Ongoing
281020.09	Website report to be brought to Board	GS	12/20
281020.10	Association Chair to be asked for tracked changes to Laws	IC	11/20