

University of St Andrews
Students' Association Board Meeting
29 September 2022

AGENDA

Present:

AK Schott	Association Director of Education
Lucy Brook	Association Director of Events and Services
Sam Gorman	Association Director of Student Development and Activities
Emma Craig	Association Director of Wellbeing and Equality
Juan Pablo Rodriguez	Association President
Andrew Keenan	Lay trustee
Jen Munro	Lay trustee
Jonathan Jones	Lay trustee
Will MacFarlane	Lay trustee
Alasdair Richmond	Student trustee
Anna-Ruth Cockerham	Student trustee
Christopher Milne	University-appointed trustee
Professor Clare Peddie	University-appointed trustee

In attendance by invitation:

Jillian Cowan	Deputy General Manager (Finance)
Chris Clarke	Deputy General Manager (Operations)
Dave Whitton	General Manager
Iain Cupples	Secretary to Board/HR Manager
Christine Miller	Clerk to Board/Administrator
Ailsa Martin	Athletic Union President

Apologies:

None

1. Chair's Business

As this was the first meeting of the year, the post of Chair was vacant. Per the Operating Procedures, the Secretary to Board, Iain Cupples (IC) would administrate the election of Chair. However members agreed that this should be preceded by the appointment of Jonathan Jones (JJ) as a trustee to ensure the election included all trustees.

1.1 Appointment of new trustee

Anna-Ruth Cockerham (ARC) had been on both the interview panel that had spoken to JJ, and the Governance, Nominations and Staffing meeting that had recommended JJ's appointment. ARC therefore recommended appointment to other trustees. This was **approved**.

1.2 Election of Chair

IC reminded trustees of the eligibility criteria and asked for nominations. Andrew Keenan (AK) nominated himself: Will MacFarlane (WMac) seconded. No other nominations were received and no objections were raised. AK was therefore appointed as the Chair of Board for academic year 2022-23.

As chair, AK discussed the importance of the work of subcommittees and working groups and the need for momentum in the Board's activities in the current climate. AK also noted the importance of working in partnership with the University, stressing the key role of the Association in the student experience in St Andrews in both commercial and non-commercial activities. AK also discussed the importance of forward focus and the addition of a standing item on the agenda to this effect.

1.3 Apologies

None.

1.4 Minutes, actions and matters arising

The minutes of the June meeting were **approved**. AK noted that the matters arising and actions would be covered under other items.

2. Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Business

2.1 Update from Finance, Audit and Risk Meeting 23 September 2022

Jillian Cowan (JC) reported that the meeting had considered the year end figures compared to budget. In summary, the Association had a turbulent year with many unexpected changes in trading conditions due to COVID and weather disruption. On the positive side, there had been two graduation balls and additional summer trading due to the Open Championship. Increased heat, light and wage costs had become an issue and would be expected to continue through the new financial year. The challenge would be to balance these increased costs against the financial pressures faced by students. The need to minimise any price increases in trading operations was recognised. Dave Whitton (DW) noted several key steps being undertaken by the management team to try to offer value for money and avoid price increases, including regular reviews and reforecasting.

The budget for the year had been approved. It was noted that student spend in absolute terms had been maintained despite ongoing financial pressures. However with more student subcommittees and increasing activity this would be kept under review.

Investments and cash flow were discussed, noting that FAR would discuss investments in the January meeting. Proposed capital expenditure was **approved**, though it was noted further expenditure on sound equipment would be forthcoming.

Christopher Milne (CM) asked about funding to support development of the strategic plan – JC confirmed this would be taken into account when reforecasting the budget, though the expenditure would not be significant.

Action point: JC and Chris Clarke (CC) to progress sound equipment expenditure and seek approval from trustees.

Action point: JC to include strategic plan support in budget reforecasting.

Action point: FAR committee to discuss investment in January meeting.

2.2 Risk Register

CC discussed changes to the register including the higher rating for event cancellation following the recent Royal death which had occurred during Freshers' Week. CC also noted the increased risk on governance issues, given the resignation and departure of trustees over the recent past, and on building integrity failure, as there had been two potentially serious near misses relating to this in the last couple of years. Building condition checks by the University's Estates department would be increased in the light of these. The prospect of another Scottish independence referendum had been added.

AK noted that increased cybersecurity risk and changes to employment law should also be updated as risks on the register. ARC suggested the addition of student volunteer disengagement as a risk. CC would add these to the register. CM suggested an issues log should be created. CC would action this.

Given the need to review the register and the system of assessing risks, CC would organise a risk register review meeting separate to the next FAR meeting.

Trustees discussed the governance risk issue, noting that GNS had discussed this and that consideration would be given to steps such as creating a dedicated trustee role of Chair of Board rather than electing a Chair annually, making provision in the Constitution to extend trustee terms in exceptional circumstances, and providing additional training for student trustees.

Action point: CC to arrange separate risk register meeting.

Action point: CC to update risk register as above and create issues log.

3. Governance, Nominations and Staffing Committee Business

3.1 Update from 16th September meeting

WMac noted that some outstanding legal issues meant the corporate trustee structure had not yet been implemented but these were unlikely to cause anything other than a short delay.

IC updated trustees on the possible implications of a recent Supreme Court decision on annual leave for part year workers.

Trustees approved the recommendation to make the contracts of two staff permanent.

4. Strategy working group update

Juan Pablo Rodriguez (JPR) updated trustees on progress to date. Trustees again reiterated a willingness to provide additional resources for this work. JPR would present a short 'road map' with key dates for the next meeting.

Action point: JPR to provide 'road map' for next SAB meeting.

5. General Manager's Update

5.1 Senior Management Report

Work on recent elections by University and Association staff was commended. Trustees noted the additional cost of living payment for permanent staff.

6. President's Business

6.1 Update from President

JPR discussed recent accommodation shortages and the impact on students, including increased vulnerability to fraud and rent increases. Progress was being made on the revisions to the environmental and ethical policy, which would be circulated to trustees once approved by internal committees. In connection with this point, it was noted that an internal policy register would ensure policies were regularly reviewed: Alastair Richmond (AR) and CM would explore how this could best be done.

Action point – policy register to be created.

7. Director of Student Development and Activities' Business

Sam Gorman (SG) discussed issue encountered with volunteer recruitment for Freshers' Week. SG also noted ongoing issues with storage and access experienced by Mermaids despite the memorandum of understanding with the University on this issue. CM asked about risk assessments for Race2 activities: SG explained how these were handled.

8. Director of Wellbeing's Business

Emma Craig (EC) gave an update as follows:

Both last year and more recently, there have been issues in a subcommittee involving allegations of sexual harassment that led students to feel unsafe in participating in a particular event. With guidance from the DoES and DoSDA last year and myself this year, temporary solutions to these

situations were found, but this does raise a policy issue about how we can best safeguard students in these situations where formal reports to the Union or University have not been made, and allow them to participate in an environment they feel is safe.

I have witnessed and heard of very similar issues popping up in societies, sports clubs, and hall committees as well. This is a major issue that I know really impacts on students feeling comfortable and safe and being able to engage with student activities. Committees often want to take action to make their group a safer space and respond to members' concerns, but do not have avenues to do so (such as removing a student from their group).

Trustees recognised that this was an important issue but not one that could be fully addressed in the current meeting. AK and EC would discuss further.

Action point: AK and EC to discuss issues around subcommittee participation and allegations of harassment.

9. Director of Education's Business

9.1 Update from Director of Education

AK Schott (AKS) discussed elections and training for academic representatives, and efforts to integrate the work of academic representatives with other student representation. AKS discussed the 'reimagining representation' initiative being conducted with the University with assistance from SPARQS to create more inclusive and resilient student representation in the University, elevating student representatives below the sabbatical officer level and recognising the work of these officers.

AKS also raised workload issues within the role of Director of Education and noted the stress these had created personally, in particular expectations from some University staff. On behalf of the University, Clare Peddie (CP) noted that work was under way and would continue to try to reduce this workload wherever possible. Trustees agreed that support for the Director of Education role should be kept under ongoing review by all concerned and increased where appropriate.

10. Director of Events and Services' Business

10.1 Update from Director of Events and Services

Taken as read.

11. Association updates

11.1 Sabbatical Officer pay

Deferred until next meeting due to lack of time.

11.2 SRC Report

Taken as read.

12. Forward Agenda

Deferred to next meeting due to lack of time.

13. AOCB

None.

14. Date of Next Meeting

3/11/22

MATTERS ARISING/OPEN ACTIONS

Ref	Description	Owner	Target Date
290922.01	Sound equipment capital expenditure to be progressed and trustees updated	JC/CC	3/11/22
290922.02	Strategic plan support to be included in budget reforecast	JC	3/11/22
290922.03	Finance, Audit and Risk committee to discuss investments	FAR	1/23
290922.04	Separate risk register meeting to be arranged	CC	11/22
290922.05	Updates to risk register and issues log to be created	CC	11/22
290922.06	Road map for strategic plan to be circulated	JPR	3/11/22
290922.07	Policy register to be created	AR/CM	1/23
290922.08	Support for DoEd role to be reviewed and considered	AS/CC/IC/ CP	Ongoing
290922.09	AK and EC to discuss subcommittee concerns	AK/EC	3/11/22