



Newman Students' Union

NEWMAN STUDENTS' UNION

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The tenth meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on:

04 March 2013 in the Board Room at 17.30

Minutes

10.1 WELCOME AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Committee and new members were welcomed.

In attendance:

NSU President – Nathanael Murdoch - Chairing

NSU Executive Member – Zoe Miles

Student Trustee – Matthew Leo

Student Trustee – Rebecca Crowther

Student Trustee - James King

In attendance:

NSU Development Manager – Rob Balding

10.2 APOLOGIES OR ABSENCE

External Trustee (from NUC Management) – Tony Sharma - Apologies

External Trustee – Elizabeth Dearn - Apologies

10.3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Minutes of meeting 09 (Document TB10-01) were approved as accurate.

It was highlighted that minor changes had been made to Driving and Health and safety fact sheet based on changes at Newman to ensure the policy matched (e.g. change of contact number for first-aider). These changes did not affect the content of the policies. ZM stated that she was in the process of getting hold of Staffs Unions' driving policy as they allow students to claim costs for mileage. Once a copy is available payment by NSU will be reviewed and the policy adapted if possible.



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Trustees were also informed new hoodies were now in stock and are now WRAP certified rather than Fairtrade.

From 9.7.5 – it was explained that the saving account is now closed however staff have not yet had time to find a new account – many banks no longer offer these accounts except for personal accounts. JK volunteered to look into options after seeking guidance from the Union Administrator.

Action required: JK

10.4 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (*TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING*)**

10.4.1 **NSU Risk Management Procedure – Document TB10-02**

RB explained that the procedure had been adapted from that used by Newman University (NU) and the risk assessment table format taken from Charities Accounting Guidance notes. No feedback had been received from those not at the meeting. The meeting reviewed the document making the following changes:

- Delete 'college' following achieving University status.
- Access to Appropriate Facilities – Control Procedure – include the proposed sports merger and input from all stakeholders in running sport.
- Being Sued – Control – include training - Monitoring – H&S committee to monitor incidents and identify areas where NSU may be liable with regards to accidents and near misses.
- Loss of Staff and experience – Control – include handovers and clear filing procedures
- Commitment of Executive... - raise risk impact to medium.
- Loss of Reputation – Raise Likelihood to Medium

It was also clarified that Individual Responsibility had been identified by a process of identifying key body who has that responsibility and then who from that body is most appropriate.

NM/RB to make changes and send out final version.

Action required – NM/RB

10.4.2 **Monitoring Strategic Plan Progress**



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Trustees briefly discussed how the work of the Executive was monitored by students, in particular against objectives identified in the Strategic Plan. It was highlighted that students do not always fulfil this role, and where Trustees also have responsibility e.g. strategic Plan, they were asked to be more pro-active in monitoring progress and raising concerns where it may be lacking. The President explained that he had begun the process of reviewing the Strategic Plan (more information to follow at a later date). The Board agreed that a 4 year period for the plan was a suitable length of time as this should allow all students to have an input into a review at least once during their time at Newman.

10.4.3 Health and Safety

It was highlighted that Health and Safety Committee has not yet met, and this is to be organised by the Vice-President. It was stated that he had been requested to organise this earlier in the year. RC agreed to email the Vice-President to raise this concern and to ensure it was dealt with. A brief discussion was also had regarding the potential for accidents, and was highlighted that the main risk area were sports and Activities. The Trustees requested that a line be added to the Activity Card form stating that by purchasing an Activity Card a student also accepts the risks involved with their chosen Student Group/Team. NM to ask Activities Administrator to update form template.

Action Required – RC/NM

10.4.4 Further progress

Following reviewing the Risk Register, trustees also requested that:

- The Development Manager and NSU Administrator to have their first annual appraisal by the next meeting
- Finance Procedures – to complete at least 1 per month
- Other procedures – to complete those which are core to roles e.g. updating scores on BUCS.

Action Required –NM/RB/LD/Union Staff

10.5 MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE MINUTES (*TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING*)



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none

Items to Receive

10.6

10.6.1 FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES (Documents TB10-03)

The minutes were received, no points of concern other than those already raised in the minutes.

10.6.2 BUDGET MONITORING (Document TB10-04)

The budget monitoring was received. Trustees were happy with progress so far.

10.6.3 PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Document TB10-05)

The Board accepted the report.

Elections were discussed. It was agreed that little else could be done to improve the process other than issues regarding accessibility for placement students with not having online voting. It was felt that the main reasons for not achieving the target was due to the lack of candidates and lack of commitment from some of those campaigning.

10.6.4 UNION CHAIR'S REPORT (Document TB10-06)

The board discussed the report, it was felt that the report should include more constructive criticism clearly showing areas for improvement whilst being fair and giving a true representation. It was noted that the lack of clear achievements of the Academic Officer in particular was concerning. It was also noted, particularly with the Democracy Officer, that standing in elections should not be included in these reports as this is personal progress and not progress within their role. The resignation of the Welfare Officer was not clearly noted in the report – in future this should be included clearly. It was also asked that when commenting on progress (e.g. well run demo.) that the Chair and/or Executive must put this into context – was it a 'well run' activity and what effect does having a half empty coach have on the opinion of it being 'well run'?

Dates of reports were also questioned – how representative are they?



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The methods for reporting back Trustees comments was questioned. Following previous discussions of the Trustees regarding mature students, it appears that suggestions/advice has not been followed. Trustees discussed the issue of mature students further, agreeing that this is the wrong grouping to use as mature students cross many courses and other groups. E.g. student with parents. It was also noted that groups such as these that are traditionally included in 'mature students' are not always mature students either. It was suggested that where groups (such as students with parents) are identified, that their issues/suggestions should be looked at in the wider context – can staff from relevant departments get more involved with these groups outside of teaching groups to improve facilities across the University Experience?

Trustees requested that the Vice-President create a strategy for engaging and informing these less engaged groups further, including identifying these groups, then to begin following this strategy and report back to the next meeting of Trustees on the strategy and evaluate its implementation to that point.

The board also wished to note that there was a strong feeling that the Executive Committee put on activities that they seemed to have a personal interest or benefit from, rather than activities to suit the wider student population and this needs to improve.

10.6.5 DEVELOPMENT MANAGER'S REPORT (Document TB10-07)

The Board received the report. RB highlighted that the budget format would be changed in future following the discussion at the last meeting to look into automating some of the data entry. Trustees requested that when this happens to also back date monthly monitoring to enable comparisons to be made with future budgets to the current year.

10.6.6 POLICIES PASSED AT UNION GENERAL MEETING/STUDENT FORUM

None.

Items for Report

The President explained their work regarding the Course Representative Review:



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Feedback/input had been sought from :

- 500+ Students
- Key NU Staff
- Senior Management
- NUS
- Other Unions

All were in favour of the review.

The main change being proposed is to add in 'Curriculum Reps' who would work for 4-6 hours a week collating information and supporting other reps. This is to improve the Academic side of the system which has proved to be inconsistent in previous years, however to make this system fully work would require financial backing in order to pay the Curriculum reps. The long term goal would be to merge these student jobs into a Course Rep. Co-Ordinator post full time within the Union.

Initially the main change would be to ensure something visible to let students know who they're reps. are – a current problem. NM is in the process of having a Moodle Module created for this and is arranging for training in the use of it for appropriate people.

The review has been collated and a paper sent to Academic Standards Committee – and will be forwarded to the Trustees for information.

The Scope of the review is to improve representation through the system, not to completely re-design it. It is strongly felt that more of a balance needs to be created in the work NSU does between representation (particularly Academic) and the more social activities such as sports i.e. to increase work and effectiveness of representation systems, not reducing other activities. This will require new funding rather than taking it from areas such as Sports and Societies.

10.7

10.7.1 REFEREDNUM/ELECTION RESULTS/BYE-ELECTION REQUEST

The meeting received the election and referendum results (NSU to remain part of NUS by large majority). The President stated that he had received a petition from students requesting that a bye-election be held before summer to fill remaining positions. RB/ZM and RC declared a personal interest in this and agreed to leave the room after the discussion whilst a decision was reached. The Board discussed the proposal and alternative options:



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Pros to filling positions:

- Elections have sparked interest in students to stand – take advantage whilst they are engaged
- Full Exec. team would mean remaining positions would not need to be covered by those elected relieving some strain.
- All members can be trained fully together
- All positions have time over summer to plan rather than some starting last minute with little training

Cons:

- To run an election fully requires a large amount of resourcing – staff time, funding etc.
- By the end of the campaigning students were becoming annoyed with elections – running another election so soon would make this feeling worse
- Some unfilled positions (notably Academic) have not had 'major' successes previously – not a great loss
- Other positions (Sports/Societies) core jobs could be covered by NSU staff with decision making responsibility taken by one of the Sabbaticals.
- If all roles were not filled a third election would still need to be held in September/October repeating work.
- Some of those showing interest or future people may be 'encouraged' by current elected officers to stand to fill roles – commitment is then questionable – those committed to standing for the roles would stand regardless of when the election was held.
- Waiting until September would allow candidates to be drawn from a new year group – improved chances of filling positions.

Options:

It was noted that options were:

- Run a full bye-election with full resourcing
- Run a 'token election' to fill positions to allow those interested to be elected but with minimal resourcing
- Wait until September
- Alternative – 'co-opt' those interested through AGM – questionable whether these would be fully elected representatives and so should they have voting rights at Executive meetings? Other than that could



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fill the role with delegated responsibility for area with close monitoring by the Executive. Could be trained with the rest of the Committee and act as a full member of the Committee as agreed by Trustees. Could be further elected through cross campus ballot in September Bye Elections and stand a good chance of being elected by basing campaigns on already having been trained and filled the position for the three months leading up to the ye-election. The Constitution does not currently have co-option as an alternative option.

Those with a conflict left the room whilst a decision was reached.

It was agreed that remaining positions would be co-opted at the AGM, the process being to submit manifestoes in advance as normal, and to include a 'husting session' during the meeting. Those co-opted would have full speaking rights at Executive meetings, however would not have a vote in decisions. Budgets etc. could be delegated subject to the Executive monitoring spending. To be included in Executive training in May, this to be arranged following the AGM and those standing to understand this as a condition. A full –bye election to then be run in September/October as usual, with at least one week dedicated to training those elected who have not been trained following AGM.

Action required: NM

10.8 TRUSTEE APPOINTMENT

It was highlighted that following the acceptance of constitution changes previously, a further student trustee and external trustee will now need to be recruited, along with the original three student trustees for the following year. appointments committee to meet asap to arrange for recruitment process and advertising in time for final decision to be made at AGM in May.

Action required: NM

10.9 AUDIT REVIEW (Document TB10-08)

The meeting reviewed the Audit Follow-up paper. It was highlighted that:

- Whilst progress has been made regarding financial procedures (all those involving use by students now complete e.g. invoicing/ordering), 'instructions' in completing day to day jobs is still on-going.
- Signatory list is up-to-date, however bank signatories not yet changed. It was explained this was due to final document being submitted to the



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bank, who then re-requested a previous document that they could no longer find. Following this they have requested a different mandate to be completed stating that they now require a different form as NSU is now a registered charity. The Union Administrator is working towards this, however completing the first end of year SORP accounts is the current priority.

- Other actions either complete or accepted risk by NSU as previously stated to Auditors.

10.8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

Meeting ends 21.00