



Trustee Board Meeting

Monday 7th July 2025, 18:00– 20:00
Amos Room, Guild of Students

Present

Ruth Pipkin, External Trustee **(RP)** (Chair)
 Syed Sadath, Guild President **(President)**
 Alex Keen, Education Officer **(EO)**
 Lara Parker, Sports Officer **(SO)**
 Ravikiran Rajashekar, International Officer **(IO)**
 Hope Aquilina, Welfare & Community Officer **(WCO)**
 Devansh Jhamnani, Activities & Employability Officer **(AEO)**
 Ritakshi Maheshwari, Postgraduate Officer **(PGO)**
 Dionne Enam Williams, Undergraduate Student Trustee **(DW)**
 Helen Stone, External Trustee **(HS)**
 Emma Wedge, External Trustee **(EW)**
 Penelope Hackett, External Trustee **(PH)**

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
 Nick Bailey, Director of Finance & Systems **(NB)**
 James Lindsay, Director of Community & Representation **(JL)**
 Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)**
 Chike Dike, Executive Assistant **(CD)** (note taker)
 Antonia Listratt, Guild President-Elect **(AL)**
 Jacob Dyke, Education Officer-Elect **(JD)**
 Abhijeet Patel, Sports Officer-Elect **(AP)**
 Simrah Inamdar, International Officer-Elect **(SI)**
 Emeline Brown, Activities & Employability Officer **(EmB)**
 Aliasgar Gandhi, Postgraduate Officer-Elect **(AG)**

Apologies

Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)**
 Mikey Brown, Postgraduate Student Trustee **(MB)**
 Mitali Gohel, External Trustee **(MG)**
 Simone Hawley, BAME Student Trustee **(SH)**
 Harshitha Naidu, International Student Trustee **(HN)**
 Abby Kenrick, Welfare & Community Officer-Elect **(AK)**
 Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement **(AS)**

The Chair welcomed attendees and the meeting began at 18:00. All attendees were introduced.

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
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0	Incoming officers	<p>The Chair introduced the incoming Officers to the Trustee Board.</p> <p>The Officer-Elects introduced themselves to the Trustee Board and noted their priorities for the year.</p> <p>The Board noted the Incoming Officers.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
1a	Minutes of Previous Meetings (12.05.25 & 28.05.25)	<p>The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meetings, dated 12th May and 28th May 2025, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>The Board approved the Trustee Board minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
2a	Matters Arising	<p>The Chair presented the Action Tracker for the Board's information.</p> <p>NB noted that they have met with PH and the first action is complete.</p> <p>NB noted that the second action will be discussed internally and updated as required.</p> <p>SO noted that the feedback on the swimming pool signage has been relayed and UB Sport has been tasked to rethink the language used.</p> <p>The Board noted the Action Tracker.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Noted</p>
2b	Declarations of Interest	<p>The Chair asked Trustees to declare any possible conflict of interests relating to the items on the meeting's agenda.</p> <p>No conflicts of interests were declared.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
3	HR Committee Minutes (19.06.25)	<p>The WCO presented the minutes of the HR Committee Meeting, dated 19th June 2025, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>WCO noted the Ethnicity Pay Gap report was presented for the first time, and this report will be shared with EDI Committee to develop follow up actions.</p> <p>WCO noted that the Staff Engagement Survey had good responses and met our KPIs, noting that an action plan is in development.</p> <p>EW joined the meeting at 18:18.</p> <p>PH asked if there are any reflections on how to engage Chinese students in student staff recruitment, and the WCO noted that we need to understand Chinese students' motivations towards part time work and why they might not be engaging.</p> <p>The Board approved the HR Committee Minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
4	Finance Committee Minutes (02.07.25)	<p>The President presented the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting, dated 2nd July 2025, for the Board's approval.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>President noted that there was a new External Member of Appropriate Skills had joined the Committee, and further noted that the Committee discussed the Management Accounts and Financial Forecast.</p> <p>The Board approved the Finance Committee Minutes.</p>	Approved
5	Audit & Risk Committee Minutes (29.05.25)	<p>The EO presented the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting, dated 29th May 2025, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>EO noted that the meeting was held in-person, and a new External Member of Appropriate Skills had joined the Committee.</p> <p>EO noted a risk involving a society and an event organised with other University society's which resulted in the society receiving a legal letter, which the Guild was now aware of and a dealing with appropriately.</p> <p>The Board approved the Audit & Risk Committee Minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
6	CEO Report	<p>JT presented the CEO Report, for the Board's information.</p> <p>JT noted a number of large events including Valefest and Grad Ball have been delivered by the team.</p> <p>JT noted that Appointments Panel have made two appointments for an Undergraduate Student Trustee and an External Trustee and noted inductions will take place over the summer.</p> <p>JT noted the Full Time Officers have had three weeks of training and are currently in handover.</p> <p>JT noted we had very good results from staff engagement survey this year and the 5 highest scoring positive response questions had over 90%.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Officers if they had any observations from the events. EO noted the student culture appears to have changed since COVID and Valefest has lost some of its cultural capital. EO added that Grad Ball is still highly regarded and there were a lot of students who stayed in Birmingham for the Grad Ball event. WCO noted that a lot of students left the University earlier in comparison to last year.</p> <p>HS asked what the date for Valefest was in comparison to last year, and JL noted that it was a week later this year as the University calendar was a week later. AEO noted that we also released the tickets earlier. WCO noted that cost consideration is also a factor. SO noted that we should review Valefest moving forward particularly given all the work that went into it and the lack of demand.</p> <p>President noted that UOBXtra is likely to have been a factor as there were other events around that time that were free to attend.</p> <p>JT noted that during the Open Day there was a protest, during which the Guild was given an Open letter, which had been shared with Trustees.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		The Chair noted that the team have put together the contextual information to help Trustees understand and noted that we will respond to the letter.	Noted
		EO noted concerns around the manner with which the letter was issued to the Guild. The President noted that a majority of the recommendations are areas that are already democratically provided by the Guild. The Chair noted that we have a duty to respond and would be able to challenge where needed.	Noted
		PH noted that a response would give an opportunity to explain our democratic processes as this suggests a lack of understanding. EW agreed and noted that our response needs to be factual and highlight where the policies originate from which is from students.	Noted
		AL noted that being transparent of the democratic processes would be helpful and many of the issues are actionable including ethical banking which is in progress.	Noted
		WCO added that a quote in the letter says the Guild has ignored a motion and suggested a better understanding of how motions are progressed is required, as well closing the feedback loop.	Noted
		The Chair noted a question from MB who asked to confirm that the society referred to in the open letter is facing the same sanctions and processes as any other group would in a similar situation. JL confirmed that this is correct.	Noted
		The Chair and President elect agreed to meet to discuss the Open letter further.	Chair/ President elect
7	Financial Forecast 2 (2024/25)	The Board noted the CEO report.	Noted
		NB presented the Financial Forecast 2 (2024/25), for the Board's Approval.	Noted
		NB noted that Finance Committee approved the Financial Forecast 2.	Noted
		NB noted that the report provides a forecast update for the remainder of 2024/25, taking account of variances reported to Finance Committee and the Trustee Board since the previous Forecast 1 update.	Noted
		NB noted that Forecast 2 reports a Net Income position of £15.3k compared to a Net Expenditure of £98.2k originally budgeted, positive by £113.5k.	Noted
		NB noted that the Room Bookings/Conferencing surplus has been revised down to £24k in Forecast 2 due to a conference booking being reduced from a two-week booking, to only one week this year.	Noted
		NB noted that Residence Life (Wellbeing) will generate savings of £12.8k and it is assumed this net balance will credit the Residence Life Restricted Reserve, to be used in future years.	Noted

		<p>NB noted that the central vacancy savings provision was reduced to £38.9k in Forecast 1 and this has now been fully removed within Forecast 2, due to savings reported across multiple areas.</p> <p>NB noted that compared to the original budget, the Guild will have a gross core staff cost savings of £230k and a £44k student staff cost saving before allowing for the original vacancy savings provision of £109.9k.</p> <p>The Board approved the Financial Forecast 2 (2024/25).</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
8	Long Term Financial Forecast	<p>NB presented the Long Term Financial Forecast, for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>NB noted that the forecast is updated at least annually, and the presented forecast is updated as of June 2025.</p> <p>NB noted that an original 5-year forecast in 2022 that supported the 5-year block grant request, and this forecast has been updated every year and rolled forward by one year annually, now to 2029/30.</p> <p>Similarly to the October 2024 update, the forecast highlights an almost break-even Net Income/Expenditure position each year, that does not generate cash surpluses.</p> <p>NB noted that this forecast reflects a very different position to the February 2022 version. NB added that the negative impact in Venues trading and pay cost increases will result in us not being able to meet the 2022 financial plan although we are ahead of that plan to date. NB confirmed that we are trying to resolve the long-term position.</p> <p>NB noted that the forecast shows a decline over time in our cash balances and unrestricted reserves position due to those issues.</p> <p>NB noted that the pension deficit is being valued at June 2025, and it is unlikely that payments will be reduced in the short term as the Regulator will prefer that the deficit be cleared more quickly.</p> <p>PH asked at what stage should we be having the discussion around the potential option to withdraw from the scheme, and NB noted the previous work completed in this area.</p> <p>The Board approved the Long Term Financial Forecast.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
9	Strategic Update & Year 4 Operating Plan	<p>EB presented the Strategic Update & Year 4 Operating Plan, for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>EB noted that we have split the objectives into the work already completed and new work in Years 4 and 5.</p> <p>EB noted that some recommendations have been made to bring online new KPIs which is facilitated by the development in our Systems and</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>Data reporting work. EB noted that an update will be brought back to the Board in September.</p> <p>EW noted some concerns about changing KPIs especially two years before the end of strategic plan and noted it would be better to indicate how we are measuring the KPIs. EB confirmed that we are not suggesting removing any KPIs but there are now areas we can measure within those metrics to bolster each KPI. EB to present this work at the next meeting.</p> <p>The Board approved the Strategic Update & Year 4 Operating Plan.</p>	<p>EB</p> <p>EB</p> <p>Approved</p>
10	Internal Audit 2025 Report	<p>JT presented the Internal Audit 2025 Report, for the Board's information.</p> <p>JT noted that UoB Internal Audit reviewed if the Guild KPIs are tracked and monitored appropriately and that our data is sufficiently robust.</p> <p>JT noted that the University team met with SMT and the System Manager and have reported positively on both risks.</p> <p>JT noted that suggested improvements include featuring the Dubai work, strengthening Sustainability and ensuring there are robust data points in place moving forward..</p> <p>EW noted that the Internal Audit is a very positive report and noted the actions raised were primarily improvements.</p> <p>The Board noted the Internal Audit 2025 Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
11	Good Governance Update	<p>JT presented the Good Governance Update, for the Board's information.</p> <p>JT noted that we have recently completed the Board Effectiveness Survey which delivered very strong results.</p> <p>JT noted that there are some actions have been brought forward and some lower scores from the survey that have been reviewed, which were only low in comparison to the overall high scores.</p> <p>The Chair noted that some of the actions will be informing the agenda of the forthcoming Board Away Day.</p> <p>The Board noted the Good Governance Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
12	Elections 2025 Report Part 2	<p>JL presented the Elections 2025 Report Part 2, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>JL noted that this is the sequel paper that takes a deeper look into the Election campaign and proposes recommendations for next year to make sure we meet our KPI's.</p> <p>JL noted candidate demography and how candidates have been engaged with at the Guild prior to running for election. JL further noted</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>candidate demographics based on colleges, voter outreach and new tactics being used to engage and incentivise voters.</p> <p>JL noted that the incentives had varying successes. JL noted the recommendations to continue work to empower candidates, develop the diversity of candidates and also tweak incentives to target more specific groups.</p> <p>SS noted it would be worth looking at how we could engage specific student groups with the incentive provisions, and JL confirmed this would be included and balance with cost and accessibility.</p> <p>PH asked if there is a reason why specific Officer roles attract less candidates, particularly the Sports Officer role. JL noted that UB Sport lead the work with Sports Officer, and we have struggled to articulate the Guild's involvement. SO noted that the Guild is not the home of Sports Clubs at the University which all goes through UB Sport, so many sporting students don't interact with the Guild except during Sports Night which does not translate to democratic engagement. JL added that UB Sport is very supportive, and they help promote the election to sports students.</p> <p>EmB noted anecdotally there could be better clarity and understanding of what students are voting for and what those roles are. EO noted that student leadership development could be something to help develop students so that when the roles come around, they feel they have the skills to put themselves forward.</p> <p>HS noted engaging the Career Services to promote the skills that students develop when they put themselves forward for elections, and JL confirmed that we have been engaging with Careers for specific roles.</p> <p>WCO noted that anecdotally it was difficult understanding the scope of the role and noted that the 'a day in the life' video of their predecessor was very useful for them.</p> <p>SO noted that due to the election rerun rules, existing Officers are limited to what they can share during election period. EO noted that advertising that is a professional job and a paid salary and a developmental role could be promoted better.</p> <p>The Board Approved the Elections 2025 Report Part 2.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
13	Social Media Policy	<p>JT presented the Social Media Policy, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>JT noted this policy has been approved at HR Committee and the Charity Commission recommended that this is approved by the Board.</p> <p>JT noted that this has been developed in line with guidance taken from the Charity Commission.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		PH asked how we would monitor the policy, and JT noted the Guilds complaints process, and creating awareness within the organisation. The Board approved the Social Media Policy.	Noted Approved
14	Full Time Officer Wins	<p>The FTO Team presented the Full Time Officer Wins for the Board's information.</p> <p>President – Facilitated an opportunity for students to discuss Ethical Investment, International Student Forum, Coffee with President Podcast with Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Pro Vice Chancellor of Education.</p> <p>EO - Delivered a series of Research Engagement Talks, worked on a national campaign on international student experience with Russell Group Unions with APPG championing the report, released "You Said, We Did" across campus, Community Roundtable Event with local MP in collaboration with WCO.</p> <p>AEO - Successfully organised International Student Workshop, initiated work on Research Study Portal, work with Worklink to streamline job application process, Student Success Stories Podcast.</p> <p>WCO – Improved Officer transparency through updates to the Officer pages on website, updated Guild website with bills information and how to report issues to Council, worked with MP, launched First International Women's Day at the Guild, launched a Cookbook.</p> <p>SO - Launched Club Executive with UB Sport, supported 200 students with the Sports Access Fund, organised Green Week with Sustainability Officer.</p> <p>IO – Worked with Careers Network to increase student intake for Skills Workshop, organised Cultural Events such as Food Festival and Language Picnic.</p> <p>PGO – Hosted Speed Friending event for PG research students, worked with the Careers Network to establish the PG space at the University.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the 2024/25 Officer Team for all their work this year.</p> <p>The Board noted the Full Time Officer Wins.</p>	Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted Noted
15	Democracy Operations Update	<p>JL presented the Democracy Operations Update for the Boards information.</p> <p>The Board noted the Democracy Operations Update.</p>	Noted Noted
16	AOB (Any Other Business)	<p>JD thanked the outgoing Officer team.</p> <p>The Officers team thanked the Trustees.</p>	Noted Noted

		The Officer-Elects, JL, NB and EB left the meeting at 19:59.	Noted
17	Meeting Reflection	No items noted.	Noted
18	Reserved Business	JT presented 1 item of Reserved Business for the Boards information. The Board noted the Reserved Business.	Noted Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:23.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 8th September 2025