



Trustee Board Meeting

Monday 24th March 2025, 16:00– 18:00
Mandela 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)**
 Simone Hawley, BAME Student Trustee **(SH)**
 Mikey Brown, Postgraduate Student Trustee **(MB)**
 Johnny Davis, External Trustee **(JD)**
 Helen Stone, External Trustee **(HS)**
 Emma Wedge, External Trustee **(EW)**
 Penelope Hackett, External Trustee **(PH)**
 Harshitha Naidu, International Student Trustee **(HN)**

In attendance

Jo Thomas, Chief Executive **(JT)**
 Nick Bailey, Director of Finance & Systems **(NB)**
 James Lindsay, Director of Community & Representation **(JL)**
 Adam Sheridan, Director of Engagement **(AS)**
 Emily Badger, Director of Operations **(EB)**
 Chike Dike, Executive Assistant **(CD)** (note taker)
 Elliott Packham, Systems Development Manager **(EP)** (Agenda Item 6 only)
 Joe Argyle, Senior Commercial Manager **(JA)** (Agenda Item 8a only)

Apologies

Erica Conway, University Representative Trustee **(EC)**
 Mitali Gohel, External Trustee **(MG)**
 Dionne Enam Williams, Undergraduate Student Trustee **(DW)**

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

No	Item for Discussion	Notes	Action
1	Minutes of Previous Meeting (13.01.2025)	<p>The Chair presented the minutes of the previous meeting, dated 13th January 2025, for the Board's approval (please note that this item was taken after agenda item 8b).</p> <p>PH highlighted the second paragraph of page 7 and noted the need for rewording to reflect the motion's proposal to pressure the University to cut its links from organisation that invest in arms trade.</p> <p>PH also suggested removing or putting an asterisk on the word 'alleged' on in the seventh paragraph. JT and CD to review and reword.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		The Board approved the Trustee Board minutes.	JT, CD Approved
2a	Matters Arising	<p>The Chair noted the action tracker.</p> <p>JT noted that we are awaiting a current draft of the Memorandum of Understanding from the University and once a final version has been received, that action will be resolved.</p> <p>The Board noted the Action Tracker.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
2b	Declarations of Interest	<p>The Chair asked Trustees to declare any possible conflict of interest relating to the items on the meeting's agenda.</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
3	HR Committee Minutes (12.02.25)	<p>WCO presented the minutes of the HR Committee Meeting, dated 12th February 2025, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>NB noted that the wording in fourth paragraph of the Gender Pay Gap Report item needs to be reworded to reflect that majority of student staff are female.</p> <p>WCO noted that main points discussed in the meeting were a Quality Marks review paper, and the Gender Pay Gap Report.</p> <p>The Board approved the HR Committee Minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>CD</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
4	Audit & Risk Committee Minutes (06.02.25)	<p>EO presented the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting, dated 6th February 2025, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>EO noted that all the items for approval were approved during the meeting, including the Risk Register, Safeguarding Policy, PCI PSS Policy and Auditor extension request.</p> <p>The Board approved the Audit & Risk Committee Minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
5	Engagement Committee Minutes (18.02.25)	<p>AEO presented the minutes of the Engagement Committee Meeting, dated 18th February 2025, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>AEO noted that the discussions in the meeting were mainly around Engagement Participation and an Officer Elections update.</p> <p>The Board approved the Engagement Committee Minutes.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
6	Strategy Aim 1: Engagement & Participation Update	<p>EP joined the meeting at 19:31.</p> <p>EP presented the Strategy Aim 1: Engagement & Participation Update for the Board's information (please note that this item was taken after agenda item 7).</p> <p>EP noted that this report had been previously presented to Engagement Committee and outlines the Guild's current position and progress of Aim 1 strategic objectives.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>EP highlighted a success in Aim 2: Representation with the number of votes received for the 2025 Officer Elections exceeding the target and with an outcome of 9346.</p> <p>EP noted that the target for number of Student Group members is 13k, highlighting that we are currently at 12,800 and are likely to hit the 13k target.</p> <p>EP noted that we currently have 3919 student volunteering at the Guild and are on track to hit our target of 5000.</p> <p>EP noted that year on year, university population has been fairly consistent until a sharp increase recorded this year and highlighted that the growth is coming from students who are based on the Birmingham campus. EP noted that further enquiry into the growth shows majority of growth coming from international students on campus and added that the sharpest increase in population has come from PGT international students accounting for majority of the university growth. EP noted that the majority of international students are from China and India, highlighting that there has been an increase of Chinese students studying at Birmingham this year and a decline in Indian students.</p> <p>EP noted this has prompted us to think about how we widen engagement with Chinese students and noted that these discussions are taking place at management level.</p> <p>EP noted that the engagement with Chinese students between 2023 and 2024 increased by 8.4%, however when adjusted for the overall university population growth, our engagement percentage is negative.</p> <p>EW asked how the international student growth compares to pre-covid and if there was a deliberate attempt by the University to increase Chinese student numbers. EP noted we review into how it compares to pre-covid numbers, and JL added that the market for international student recruitment is much tougher currently compared to pre-covid.</p> <p>MB asked if the Guild has the expertise to look into engaging this cohort of students, flagging that language is a barrier. JT noted that something that has been raised in discussions with managers is that if we create a number Chinese student- specific events, we run the risk of not giving them the opportunity to socialise with other students. JT noted finding the right balance would be key and the way forward would be to look at what we do and how we can tweak it to be more appealing to Chinese students.</p> <p>EW noted it would be important to understand the motivation of Chinese students and if their priority is to engage with the student experience or if it is to get a degree and return home.</p> <p>The Board noted the Strategy Aim 1: Engagement & Participation Update.</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>
7	CEO Report	JT presented the CEO Report, for the Board's information (please note that this item was taken after agenda item 5).	Noted

		<p>JT noted that at the last meeting there was a lengthy discussion around the Palestinian Solidarity Idea and a draft board response is attached as an appendix.</p> <p>The Board approved the idea, as outlined in the paper for publication.</p> <p>JT noted that the University is doing well with recruitment and are scoping out additional teaching spaces across campus. JT noted that they are looking at two spaces in the Guild building.</p> <p>SH noted that the proposal is positive and will improve student footfall. SO noted that it is positive opportunity, but it would be important to address any disruption for Student Groups as they are some of the most active students at the Guild.</p> <p>MB asked how the space would work logistically, EB noted we are looking at movable seating and our internal operations to make sure the space is reset for Student Groups to use.</p> <p>The Chair supported the projects as an exciting opportunity, and noted we will need to be clear about our financial requirements from the University. EB confirmed that the University will be providing the capital.</p> <p>The Board approved the Teaching Spaces proposal.</p> <p>The Board noted the CEO Report.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Noted</p>
8a	Income Generation Project	<p>JA joined the meeting at 18:02 (please note that this item was taken first on the agenda).</p> <p>AS presented the Income Generation Project, for the Board's approval.</p> <p>The Board approved the Income Generation Project.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
8b	Income Generation Update	<p>AS presented the Income Generation Update, for the Board's information (please note that this item was taken second on the agenda).</p> <p>AS noted the commercial development updates including visits to the British & International Franchise Exhibition and Warwick, York and Hull Students' Unions with the Business Development Manager to obtain ideas and information on best practice.</p> <p>The Board noted the Income Generation Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
9	Byelaws 2025	<p>JT presented the Byelaws 2025, for the Board's Approval.</p> <p>JT noted that minor changes have been made to the Byelaws which are currently being reviewed by the University.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>

		<p>JL noted that the All Student Vote 3 took place between 3rd – 7th February and a single item, Pro-Choice policy, was included and the policy reached quorum and has passed.</p> <p>JL noted that the Guild Officer Group has met twice between January and February 2025.</p> <p>The Board noted the Democracy Operations Update.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
14	External Audit extension	<p>NB presented the External Audit extension for the Boards approval.</p> <p>NB noted item is seeking approval for the extension of the contract with the auditors for a further two years; this financial year and the next financial year.</p> <p>The Board approved the External Audit extension.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approval</p>
15	Delegation of Authority	<p>NB presented the Delegation of Authority for the Board's approval.</p> <p>NB noted that there have been minor housekeeping changes, and the updated Delegation of Authority was approved by the Audit & Risk Committee in February.</p> <p>PH noted some clarifications to be added to the Delegation of Authority. NB to update.</p> <p>PH queried the personal expenses signatories and the Officers who sign them. SO confirmed that the Officers receive training regarding this. NB noted that the two Officers who approve personal expenses are also representatives on Finance Committee.</p> <p>The Board approved the Delegation of Authority.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>NB</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p>
16	AOB (Any Other Business)	<p>The Chair noted that there have been 8 responses to the Board Effectiveness and urged the Board to complete the survey.</p> <p>CD to recirculate the survey to the Board.</p> <p>The Chair noted that this is JD's last meeting and thanked them for their contribution and presented gifts.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>CD</p> <p>Noted</p>
17	Meeting Reflection	No items noted.	Noted

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:13.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 12th May 2025