***Trustee Board Meeting*** TB26/LW/1

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***Friday 6th December 2024***

***1400-1600***

***Room HDC204***

***Meeting facilitated also on Teams***

**MINUTES *(Approved)***

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**Invites extended to:** Liam Williams (Marjon SU President & Trustee Board Chair),

Dev Aditya (External Trustee & Trustee Board Vice Chair), Edmund Jacoby (Marjon SU Deputy President & Trustee), Graham Briscoe (External Trustee), Kelly-Louise Preece (External Trustee), Paul Guildford (External Trustee), Jack Dee (Student Trustee),

Emily Chipperfield (Student Trustee).

Mick Davies (Marjon SU GM),

**Present:**

Liam Williams (President & Trustee Board Chair) LW

Dev Aditya (External Trustee & Trustee Board Vice Chair) ￼ DA

Edmund Jacoby (Marjon SU Deputy President & Trustee) EJ

Graham Briscoe (External Trustee) GB

Paul Guildford (External Trustee) PG

Kelly-Louise Preece (External Trustee) facilitated on Teams ￼ KP

Emily Chipperfield (Student Trustee) EC

Jack Dee (Student Trustee) ￼ JD

Mick Davies (Marjon SU GM - in attendance) MD

All papers had been previously circulated by MD.

**1. Welcome and introductions from the Chair:**                                **LW**

LW welcomed all to the meeting.

**2. Apologies:**  **LW**

LW Informed the board that DA was stuck in traffic but would be join the meeting as soon as possible.

**3. Declaration of Interest:**   **LW**

There were no further decorations of interest other than those previously recorded.

**4. Minutes from September meeting (TB25/LW/1):**  **LW**

The board considered and approved the minutes from the September meeting.
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**5. Matters arising:** (Action grid attached).  **LW**

LW to explore for additional grants for project work within the SU.

Action LW

DA/PG to arrange a meeting for late January.

Action DA

On going exploration of file sharing systems.

Action PG/LW

File Sharing Discussion PG

• Discussion on potential file sharing systems:

• SharePoint considered but may have limitations for external trustees.

• Current issues with navigating university papers due to license restrictions.

• Suggestions for alternatives:

• Google Drive used by university's board. LW

• Box mentioned as a system used by other professional institutes.

• Concerns raised about the financial implications and efficiency of proposed systems.GB

SharePoint and External Access

• Exeter runs on MIS 365 and uses SharePoint extensively.

• External access to SharePoint can be granted.

• External trustees can be set up with associate IT account

Action LW to continue to update Board Trustee access to SharePoint will be discussed in the next meeting.

**6. Report from Officers: (TB26/LW1)**  **LW**

• Two important documents to discuss: strategy and mixed papers.

• Strategy needs approval before January.

• Latest version of the strategy was shared via email

Student Financial Support

• Increased maintenance loan and tuition fee impacts.

• Students receiving the highest maintenance loan will see an increase of about £247 in the 2025/26 year.

• Benchmarking shows students need approximately £18,000 annually for a minimum student living wage.

Mental Health Concerns

• 55% of students reported a decline in mental health during university.

• 44% worry about finances daily, contributing to mental health decline.

• Need for financial support initiatives.

Budgeting and Workers' Rights

• Development of a realistic budgeting planner for students.

• Aims to help students understand their spending needs.

• Discussion on workers' rights for students.

• 90% of students work 16 or more hours a week.

• Awareness campaign needed regarding workers' rights.

Joy Program

• The Joy Program is an independent project aimed at holistic well-being for students.

• Developed by the Dean of the School of Health and Well-Being, Saul Bloxham.

JOY Programme

• Training for student deliverers.

• No prior experience or knowledge required.

• Training provided by JOY programme leaders in welding support methods.

• Accessibility.

• Available to all students in the Plymouth area.

• No fee for participation.

• Focus on personal development.

• Emphasis on what students can do to improve themselves.

• Sharing knowledge in areas like yoga, aromatherapy, and medicine student-led knowledge exchange and practices.

Personal Professional Development Conference

• Organizing a conference for students.

• Addresses queries outside of course content, such as self-employment, finances, the use of AI, digital footprint and LinkedIn.

• Involvement of staff.

• Business professor to deliver a session on building a professional portfolio.

• Digital and IT team to discuss digital footprint and social media presence.

• Tentative scheduling.

• Planned for end of January to early February, during a quieter academic period.

 Violence Against Women and Girls Project

• Grant application.

• Applying for a £5,000 grant from Devon Community Foundation.

• Focus on campaigns for student safety in nightlife.

• Proposed initiatives.

• Provision of free drink caps to prevent drug spiking.

• Self-defence classes for students.

• Collaboration with local organizations.

• Partnership with Plymouth and Kernow Soroptimists group for awareness.

 Bystander Intervention Training

• Addressing cultural issues related to safety.

• Positive bystander training to encourage intervention in unsafe situations.

• Collaboration with local initiatives.

• Project Nighteye for reporting antisocial behaviour.

• Sharing resources.

• Potential contact for bystander intervention training from Exeter University.

Strategy Discussion LW

• Agenda item for strategy approval.

• Old strategy printed by mistake in the papers.

Staff Leave

• University extended leave for staff during Christmas.

• Offices will be closed from December 20 to January 1.

Financial Management

• Discussion on budget management and staff retention.

• Mention of a pay award nearly 12 months overdue.

• Concerns about financial reporting and management.

• Issues with misreported spending and unexpected revenue losses.

 Financial Situation

• National Health financial recovery is underway.

• "There are some green shoots in the future about finances."

• Voluntary redundancies have reduced 40 full-time equivalents.

• No compulsory redundancies currently being implemented.

• Focus on efficiencies in hiring and processes.

Construction and Development

• Construction of the Allied Health and Wellbeing Hub is ongoing.

• This will include physiotherapy, nursing, osteopathy, and sports rehab.

Strategy Development

• A working group formed in January to write the strategy.

• Participants included DanTinkler, Sarah, Mick, and Millie.

• Strategy document is outward facing for students and staff.

• It will be available on the website.

Mission and Vision

• Mission remains unchanged from the previous strategy (2018-2324).

• Vision focuses on being a mechanism for student voice and enhancing student

• Emphasis on academic, personal, and social support.

Priorities and Enablers

• Four main priorities identified from the business and operation plan.

• Ensuring students feel supported and represented.

• Providing opportunities that are fun, meaningful, and impactful.

• Importance of a sustainable student union highlighted.

• Sustainability is crucial for the existence of the student union.

• Discussion on strategy for approval and comments before January.

 Enabling Themes

• Focus on digital innovation and online resources.

• Importance of file sharing and digital presence.

• Engaging all students, including those not on campus.

• Building strong partnerships.

• Developing ethical partnerships with sponsors like Capitol Students.

Success Metrics

• Shift in measuring success since last review.

• Quantitative and qualitative targets established.

• Aim for a digitally enabled organization.

• All resources online and a contact point for students.

• National Student Survey (NSS) results.

• Ranked fifth and sixth for the last two years.

• First in the southwest for student unions.

Community Belonging

• Collaboration with Vice Chancellor on student impact statements.

• Need for targeted surveys to avoid response bias.

• Focus on specific areas with lower NSS scores, like psychology and osteopathy.

 Influence of Rankings

• Discussion on the impact of rankings on student decision-making.

• Importance of monitoring student satisfaction and engagement.

• Consideration of how to leverage rankings for university investment.

Success Statements

• Proposal for six success statements a year.

• Target set for quality control and engagement levels.

• Discussion on the rationale behind the number of statements.

Student Statement

• Discussion on circulating questions via email for approval by Proxy

• Digital implementation discussed:

• Website triage for out-of-hours support.

• Sharing resources currently in paper copies online.

**7. Report from GM: (TB26MD/1)**  **MD**

Including:

* Profit Against Budget Q1
* MSU Projected cashflow Year Aug/July 25
* Trading and income generation
* MSU Financial Statement Yr end 31 July 2024

Financial Statements Approval

• Approval needed for annual financial statements for the Year 24.

• Basic financial contribution noted:

• Contribution of £16,000 reduced debt from over £100,000 to approximately £95,000.

• Pension deficit explained:

• Historic debt from NUS pension scheme collapsed in 2011.

• Current repayment based on size and improved credit score.

Pension Debt Explanation MD

• Pension deficit is gradually reducing.

• Reporting changes discussed

• Difference between management accounts and financial accounts.

• Debt recorded in financial accounts may exceed reserves.

Trustee Responsibilities

• Clarification on trustee responsibility for debt.

• MD to re-send his brief to the board from 2022/24.

• Indemnity for trustees is in place but limited.

• Liability shared among other Student Unions in case of issues.

• Other universities have cleared SU pension deficits to remove from risk register.

Incorporation Discussion MD

• Incorporation aimed for but hindered by costs.

• Estimated cost for incorporation is around £15,000.

• Need for negotiation with the university regarding funding for incorporation.

 Performance Against Budget MD

• Performance is on track for the first quarter.

• The report shows percentage of budget remaining.

• Expected to have three quarters of the budget remaining.

• Insurance budget is spent monthly.

• Payments are primarily annual, with some quarterly.

• No questions on expenditure for the first quarter.

Annual Cash Flow Update

• An annual cash flow report was produced instead of quarterly.

This provides a better overview for the board. Previous quarterly reports raised questions about cutoff dates.

• Estimated costs for upcoming meetings and events.

• Meeting estimated to cost £400.

• Income from May ball estimated conservatively at £3,500.

Income Generation Challenges

• Over 90% of funding comes from the university.

• Need to generate approximately £20,000 net independently.

• Decline in event attendance and student spending.

• Students are more selective with their disposable income.

• General decline in drinking culture among 18 to 21-year-olds.

• Increased bureaucracy for staging events.

• Health and safety requirements have significantly increased.

• Costs associated with compliance make smaller events less viable.

Event Planning Strategy

• Focus on three major events instead of regular weekly and termly events.

• Events align with student habits, such as annual balls and Freshers week.

• Need to adapt to changing student culture.

• Promotion is shifting towards more mature students in healthcare sectors.

• Students may prefer networking events or guest speaker sessions over traditional

Operational Plan Development

• Operational plan developed at the beginning of the year with incoming sabbaticals.

• Importance of constant monitoring of events.

• Example: Significant changes made to May ball after 20 years of tradition.

• Ability to quickly adapt due to the small size of the organization.

Sponsorship Challenges

• Nightclubs are withdrawing sponsorship due to decreased patronage.

• Accommodation agencies are now providing sponsorship.

• Current sponsorship amounts to £6,000, highlighting a shift in policy.

Communication and Partnership

• Need for continuity in communication regarding sponsorship and advertising.

• Issues arise from middle management questioning promotional decisions.

• Building relationships with accommodation agencies is beneficial.

• Facilitates problem-solving for students facing landlord issues.

**8. Deputy Vice Chancellor Update:**

 Professor Michelle Jones, Deputy Vice Chancellor at the university.

• Introductions of attendees:

• Mick, General Manager of the Student Union.

• Dev, Deputy Chair External Trustee.

• Jack, Student Trustee, second year student in Sport and Exercise Psychology.

• Millie, mature Student Trustee training as an osteopath.

• Graham Briscoe, External Trustee.

• Kelly, External Trustee (online).

2030 Strategy Update

• The New Marjon 2030 strategy, titled "A Case for Inconvenient Excellence," was

• The strategy outlines:

• Mission, vision, and enduring values.

• Focus areas: core student success, research and knowledge exchange, place.

• The intersection of these areas is referred to as "modular magic."

Annual Priorities

• Four annual priorities identified:

• Grow student numbers.

• Implement the curriculum framework.

• Grow commercial and research knowledge exchange income.

• Operational excellence program.

• Current student body statistics:

• 4,196 students enrolled.

• 1,858 taught mainly on the Marjon campus.

• 1,092 working and learning with partners.

Diversity and Recruitment

• Efforts to procure a third party for international student recruitment.

• Modest growth target of 10-15% for taught on-campus provision.

• Current demographics:

• 70-75% of students from PL or EX or Devon postcodes.

• 9% black, Asian, minority ethnic population.

• Aim to integrate international students to enrich the campus experience.

 Apprenticeship Provision

• Continuing to grow apprenticeship provision with funding from the Office for Students. • Finalized agreement with Encore Southwest for access to HE programs on-site.

• Targeting students who lack entry requirements for university.

Student Employability and Curriculum Enhancement

• Activities enhancing employability.

• Professional societies, student ambassadors, and representatives.

• Articulating benefits and skills developed.

• Learning design and timetabling.

• Addressing student work alongside studies.

• Improving timetabling for better facilitation.

• Peer Assisted Learning (PALS).

• Targeted support for modules where students struggle.

• Paid opportunities for trained peer support.

Operational Excellence and Student Experience

• Importance of student experience.

• Partnerships that enhance cultural engagement.

• Placements and internships as part of opportunities.

• Streamlining processes.

• Reducing errors in manual processes.

• Improving accuracy and efficiency for staff International Student Support.

• Collaboration between SU and university.

• Mutual support systems for international students.

• Importance of student experience for retention and growth.

• Financial considerations.

• International students bring more income but require more support.

• Need for joint efforts in providing adequate support.

Quality Assurance and Partner Students

• Responsibility for student experience.

• Academic liaison tutors for partner institutions.

• Robust quality assurance processes in place.

• Curriculum framework inclusion.

• Partner involvement in curriculum pilots.

• Ensuring partner students receive quality education and support.

Student Demographics and Programs

• Partners attracting diverse student populations.

• London-based partners attracting mature and entrepreneurial students.

• Degree programs supporting business development.

• Degree apprenticeships from the wider southwest region.

• Youth and community apprentices from Cornwall.

• Nursing and speech and language therapy apprenticeships planned to be online.

 Workforce Development

• Focus on SEND market for Multi Academy Trust.

• Teacher and specialist teaching assistant apprentices in development.

• Collaboration with MAT for workforce offerings.

• Current learning hubs.

• Students learning in Heathrow hub.

• Students learning in Cornwall hub.

Financial Sustainability

• Need for efficient budget management.

• Importance of looking at benefits versus costs.

• Discussion on growing the budget and external funding sources.

• Challenges with capital projects.

• Student tuition fees insufficient for capital projects.

• Need for collaboration to generate income.

University Culture and Engagement

• Importance of fostering political debate and activism.

• Desire for a healthy and encouraging community culture.

• Societies playing a role in engagement.

• Internationalization efforts.

• Need for inclusive societies that engage all students.

• Learning from other universities' successful activities.

Operational Challenges

• Need for operational flexibility to generate income.

• Small operational changes impacting income-generating activities.

• Importance of communication to avoid unintentional restrictions.

The Chair thanked the DVC for this comprehensive update and gave the board opportunity for questions.

DVC welcomed the university's approach to international students and expressed that it would be an excellent opportunity for the university and the SU to work together to best serve international students. The DVC agreed.

GB raised that international students bring in much more money compared to UK students although this does not seem to be reflected in students' unions funding.

He asked how students overseas were represented by the SU. The DVC replied that the partners were responsible for the students whilst UPM is responsible for quality assurance.

PG asked where the DVC saw the main areas of growth for MSU.

DVC answered that there should be continued development of societies, a reassessment of how the union can support apprentices.

EC Welcomed the DVC reports she asked:

How the university will continue to foster within is student body a grounded values and moral code, the DVC responded that this would be an excellent area to work in unison with MSU and to encourage more debate though either societies or in other forums.

The Chair thanked DVC, and she left the meeting.

There then followed a general discussion with board members raising the following topics:

Suggestion to strengthen links to appropriate university levels. GB

• Importance of partnership and unified communication.

• Need for a meeting to review sponsor list at the beginning of the year.

Document Circulation Partnership agreement. MD

• Final draft agreement sent to university membership for sign-off.

• Document awaiting agreement between student union and university

Location and Cost Considerations PG

• Discussion on using university buildings versus exploring alternatives. PG

• Current accommodation is free; alternatives may incur costs. MD

• Statement for the board regarding the need for support in managing changes. DA

• Acknowledgment that union staff will need help during officer transitions. DA

• Importance of board awareness regarding support needs.

Advertising and Space Utilization MD

• Agreement states the university will provide space for union activities.

• Union should have autonomy to advertise within that space.

• Issues arising from lack of dedicated space leading to advertising conflicts.

Cautionary Notes on Student Union Operations LW

• Concerns about losing spaces and resources similar to larger unions.

 • Examples of UEA and Newcastle Student Union losing facilities.

• Need for strategic planning to avoid similar pitfalls.

**9. AOB**

**10. RESERVED BUSINESS**

Close 1607

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| **Action                                                             By Whom        Date** |
| **5.** | Continue to explore additional grants for project work.Set up a meeting with Devon Mind for late JanuaryExplore file sharing systems | LWDAPG/LW | OngoingAsapOngoing |
|  | Continue to update Board Trustee access to Sharepoint | LW | March 2025 meeting |