

# Board of Trustees Minutes

City, University of London Students' Union is a registered charity (charity number 1173858) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 10834450).

## 4.30pm | 23 May 2023 | Online Meeting, MS Teams

Members	Initials	Meeting 1 13.09.22	Meeting 2 06.12.22	Meeting 3 28.02.23	Meeting 4 23.05.23	Meeting 5 13.07.23
Gesmina Tsourrai (President) (Chair)	GT	✓	✓	✓	A	
Aaminah Patel (Deputy President)	AP	✓	A	N/M	N/M	
Yavuz Emin Kafadar (Deputy President)	YK	✓	✓	A	✓	
Fortune Sampson (Deputy President)	FS	✓	✓	A	✓	
Nick Ratcliffe (Lay Trustee and Deputy Chair)	NR	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Alan Latham (Lay Trustee)	AL	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Rumnique Gill (Lay Trustee)	RG	P	A	✓	A	
Liz Williams (Lay Trustee)	LW	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Vacant (Lay Trustee)	-	N/M	N/M	N/M	N/M	
Ibrahim Hamid (Student Trustee)	IH	A	A	N/M	N/M	
Tofunmi Odugbemi (Student Trustee)	TO	✓	✓	P	A	
Saundarya Rastogi (Student Trustee)	SR	N/M	N/M	✓	✓	

Key: "✓" = Present, "A" = Apologies given, "N/M" = Non-member, "P" = Partial attendance, 'X' = Non-attendance

Included in the circulation	Initials	Reason and Meeting Section
Philip Gilks	PG	Chief Executive (Company Secretary)
Sayed Alkadiri	SA	Interim Deputy Chief Executive
Jeni Turner	JT	Head of Finance
Chris Moore	CM	Head of Communications and Business Development
Aadam Ali	AA	Clerk

## Formal

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

NR welcomed everyone to the meeting and chaired the meeting as Deputy Chair of the Board. Apologies were received from the Chair GT, RG and TO.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

(Paper: BT2254)

The Board **noted** the register, and no new interests were declared.

### 3. Minutes and Actions

3.1 The Board **approved** the Minutes of the meeting held on the 06 December 2022 as being a true and accurate record.

(Paper: BT2255M)

The Board **approved** the Minutes of the meeting held on the 28 February 2023 as being a true and accurate record.

(Paper: BT2256M)

- 3.2 The Board **noted** the Matters Arising (Paper: BT2257A), noting the following:
- The management account action is pending and the deadline for this is September 2023.
  - The brand and visual identity action has been completed and Bert Agency have been appointed.
  - The Board will discuss whether meetings should take place all online or in person at the Trustee Away Day.
  - There is no update on speaking with the original students who proposed the BDS motion as part of the Legal Advice Follow up action. PG suggested that the Board remove this action now, due to the amount of time passed on this.

#### 4. Decisions taken between the meetings

There were no decisions taken by the Board of Trustees between meetings.

#### 5. Items brought forward by the Chair

No items in Section E – Starred Items for Approval or Section F – Starred Items for Information were unstarred therefore all these items were **approved** and **noted** by the Board respectively.

### Section A – Update from the Chief Executive and Strategic Progress

#### 6. Chief Executive Report

(Paper: BT2258)

The Board considered the Chief Executive report, which included updates on key projects, recruitment and staff matters which PG presented. He highlighted the following from his report:

- PG highlighted that there is a potential opportunity to have a relationship with Citizens UK. This would underpin some of the points in the new strategy on community leaders and community organisers.
- PG said that the quick wins project demonstrated how such great engagement could be achieved from a small budget. He said this was a great piece of work in developing communities.
- PG updated that the SU Awards was successful and that he would be keen to see Trustees attend next year's awards.
- PG highlighted that there is a potential for the Union to move space. The University is conducting a student gateway project in which each key service would have a presence in a more centralised location on campus and making this a hub for students. PG said the hub would become a single point of access for students and would be an improvement on the current Welcome Desk location at the Union. The Welcome Desk Receptionist and Student Officers could have a presence in the new space.
- PG added that there may also be a potential for the entire Union to be relocated to the proposed hub. This would place the Union at the heart of campus and would improve footfall, wayfinding and the approachability of the Union.
- The trial concerning Sabita Thanwani's murder will take place in early July. The Union has reached out to the friends of the former student to see if they are okay and if the Union can provide any support during this difficult time.
- PG said that he would be focussing on budget implementation and visual identity. PG will continue to work on the catering tender and sport which the Board recognised. PG noted that continuing work on sport and the merger with St George's would require some Trustee involvement in providing a steer as some of the work will be complex.

The Board thanked PG and **noted** the Chief Executive report. The Board commented with the following:

- LW asked what the communications plan would look like if the Union moved. PG replied saying that the plan would come but would be relatively easy to communicate as the Union would be in a centralised location on campus.
- The Board congratulated FS and YK on being re-elected for another term.

## 7. Strategy Update Report

(Paper: BT2259)

The Strategy Update Report was taken as read by PG.

The strategy update report was **noted** by the Board.

## 8. Strategy 2023-2026

(Paper: BT2260)

PG delivered a presentation on the new Strategy 2023-2026. He highlighted the following from his presentation:

- PG presented the Union's new purpose in the strategy to 'Making Every Day Better'. The wording was chosen to show decisiveness, not contain superfluous words and put the focus on evidence-based research in making every day better. PG hopes with this wording and structure, it will become more memorable and enable the Union's efforts to become even more transparent.
- The new values are 'We Listen', 'We Learn' and 'We Lead'. The values provide continuity between the old strategy and the new one and demonstrate how the Union embeds itself day to day.
- PG explained the new behaviours of the Union in 'The Way We Act' which includes being evidence-led, open to change, not fearing failure, striving for equity and sustainability and being a welcoming experience.
- PG presented the three promises which are creating community, delivering change and providing support. These three promises encompass the commitment to students that the Union wishes to make.
- The KPI targets for each of the promises are: 'Over 75% of students identify as being part of a community facilitated by the Students' Union', 'To be in the top 5 Students' Unions in London for NSS question 25' and 'Over 75% of students know how the Students' Union can help them if they need it'.
- PG stressed the importance of building communities at City and putting emphasis in the correct places. City is the second largest population of students that travel to University and it is key to engage with them. The Union is planning to create and develop student leaders and community organisers. PG said the Union should show bold and decisive leadership.
- PG stated that the next stages of the Strategy if approved would be the budget allocation and implementation plan.

The Board thanked PG for the presentation and commented with the following:

- The Board noted that it is brilliant that the strategy focuses on building communities. SR reflected on her experience as a student and stated that she only knew people on her course. PG said that this experience is consistent with the research findings of students and said that communities would not just be created on courses but will grow on a school level before other groups are developed.
- PG noted that not all communities would be created the same way and the Union's approach would need to be adaptable.
- The Board noted that some of the KPIs were linked to results from surveys such as the NSS and the Staff Survey. The Board asked if other data sets would be used to measure the KPIs against. PG said other data sets could be used but the ones specified are the most consistent. PG added that the Union could use touch points throughout the year with students to gather further data.

The Board **approved** the Strategy 2023-2026. The Board thanked PG and the SLT in their work to bring this together.

## 9. Brand and Visual Identity

(Paper: BT2261)

CM presented the paper on Brand and Visual Identity. He highlighted the following:

- CM confirmed that Bert Agency had been appointed to conduct work on the Union's brand and visual identity. They have worked with several impressive clients including Adidas, Tate and Manchester City FC.
- CM explained that Bert Agency work on a few passion projects, of which the Union has been selected as one of them. This would reduce the cost of the planned work by a significant amount.
- CM said that Bert had started work by conducting the first workshops and they are exploring where the Union is as an organisation and what the narrative and identity is.
- CM noted the Union should be unique and distinct, which will be embedded into the new brand and will be bespoke. Further workshops with staff and students will be taking place.
- The timeline for the work will be on track by July 2023. CM noted that the turnaround time is quick however, it would be vital for the new branding to be launched alongside the new strategy.
- CM pointed out that the website provider MSL would launch a microsite starting August 2023 for Freshers and the wider website would be reskinned until the new website is ready to be launched in November 2023.
- CM asked the Board to release £15,000 from the Union's reserves from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to become a brand development budget going forward.

The Board thanked CM for presenting the item. The Board commented with the following:

- The Board asked how far the Union's brand would be complimentary to City's branding. CM replied saying that the brand must be unique and bespoke, but at the same time, not alien to City's branding to juxtapose it.
- PG noted that depending on the outcome with the potential merger with St George's, Bert have created space for St George's name to be included as part of the branding.
- PG suggested that the branding would require approval at the beginning of July which is before the Board Away day. PG asked the Board if they would be happy to defer the decision to the SLT. Bert will be presenting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July.
- CM clarified any physical assets created this year would come from UKS' budget. PG confirmed any assets that needed replacing due to the merger, the University would pay for.

The Board **noted** the Brand and Visual Identity paper and were supportive. The Board also **approved** the release of £15,000 to create a Brand Development budget from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and also **approved** for the SLT to approve the new branding and identity.

## 10. St. Georges

PG presented a verbal update on the potential merger with St. Georges, University of London.

The Board **noted** PG's update on the Merger with St George's. The Board said there were risks but also significant opportunities.

## 11. Sport

(Paper: BT2262)

PG presented the paper on Sport and highlighted the following:

- PG presented that City Sport would be managed by the Union by the 1<sup>st</sup> June with two additional staff, a Sports Development Coordinator and a Sports Administrator.

- A lot of work will need to be completed over the Summer around policies, processes, financial regulations and renegotiating contracts with venues and suppliers.
- The Union is focussing on Sport for students who start on the 1<sup>st</sup> September and no student would be disadvantaged from the move.
- PG said the core budget for Sport is £259,000 and the budget would be cost neutral however PG is requesting for an additional £45,000 for the cost in leadership time and financial cost.
- PG said the Union is aiming to maintain a good level of competitive sport with BUCS and LUSL whilst also holding sessions that have less commitment where students can pop in and take part as part of a programme called City Active.
- PG stated that storage for equipment would be an issue as it is a continuing challenge at the University.
- PG requested the Board to approve between £16,000 and £50,000 to use from the Union's reserves to support the development of Sport. The lower amount would cover more basic costs whereas £50,000 would help grow the development of Sport and the City Active programme.

The Board thanked PG and made the following comments:

- The Board asked about the insurance implications with the acquisition of Sport. PG said that this will be explored with Endsleigh, the Union's insurance providers and that health and safety policies will be updated to include sport.
- PG clarified the budget for Sport from the University is ring fenced. Any income that the Union receives from Sport activity will be reinvested into Sport. Other budgets from other departments will not be at risk of being used to support this.
- PG clarified that the Union will not be affected by City's proposed budget savings.
- PG noted that a lot of time had been spent on the transfer of sport and that a communications plan for new students in September will be worked on.

The Board noted the paper and **approved** the use of £50,000 from the Union's reserves to develop sport.

## 12. NUS Employee Engagement Survey Results 2023

(Paper: BT2263)

PG presented the NUS Employee Engagement Survey Results 2023 and highlighted the following:

- PG presented that overall, the survey results indicate that the Union is moving towards the right direction and most scores had increased favourably.
- PG pointed out that last year the results were mixed and the SLT committed to complete several actions which has improved the scores.
- The survey this year also included temporary staff increasing the response number to 23.
- Most results show as blue (over 60%) and green (over 70%) as favourable and most comparison scores against the Students' Union benchmark are positive also.
- The University's recent survey found staff at City to have an engagement score of 49%, whereas the Union has scored 80% which is a tremendous comparison.
- Results on pay and reward have increased greatly compared to last year due to the pay review and Coordinators now being the best paid in the country.
- PG completed a workshop with staff following the survey and asked them to focus on five areas that the Union scored below the benchmark comparison in the survey.
- The recommendations from the workshop and survey for the Union include:
  - Developing a new approach to performance management to be delivered consistently across the Union.
  - Employee wellbeing to review staff workload and work distribution and expectations.
  - Employee wellbeing to create a stress risk assessment for the Union.

- Managers to deliver change management training across the Union.
- Hybrid-working and balancing the expectations of this around the new strategy.

The Board asked the following questions:

- The Board noted that most of the recommendations would require HR delivery. PG confirmed that most delivery of HR would fall to him but that he could engage with an external consultant if necessary.
- PG noted that all recommendations would be delivered in with 'great people doing great things' as stated in the new strategy.
- PG clarified that the hybrid-working arrangement expectation will need to be reviewed as front facing staff who work directly with students will need to be on campus whereas roles such a finance have more flexibility.

The Board **noted** the survey results and **endorsed** the recommendations from the survey and workshop.

## Section B - Student Insight

### 13. Sabb Spotlight

FS presented on his progress as Deputy President and highlighted the following points:

- FS has sent on the steering group for the mental health charter with the University.
- FS organised an inter-school basketball competition with staff for students which was received well.
- FS has engaged with the University on the Senate and has voiced his concern about students who must wait to resit after resit boards take place which has implications on international student visas.
- FS is lobbying for a fee instalment scheme when fees haven't been paid instead of outright withdrawing these students.

YK presented on his progress as Deputy President and highlighted the following points:

- YK strongly believes in the importance of societies and community building. He implemented the £50 starter fund for all societies upon registration.
- YK is working on initiatives to get students to visit City Bar such as sports nights.
- YK has been researching having a bike scheme for City students with discounted hire costs.
- YK is currently looking at the catering tender and evaluation. YK successfully lobbied for microwaves to be accessible for students to use on campus.
- YK also wanted to commend GT for successfully persuading Senate to divest from fossil fuels.

The Board thanked the Sabbatical Officer team and commended them on their work and **noted** their reports.

## Section C – Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

There were no items presented in this section at this meeting.

## Section D – Finance

### 14. Management Accounts

(Paper: BT2264)

JT presented the March Management Accounts highlighting the following points:

- JT said that under income, the accounts show a favourable variance due to unbudgeted advertising income, additional income from sport and higher than



expected bank interest. There is also a favourable variance on staff cost due to the delayed appointment of replacement staff.

- JT noted that in the full year forecast, there was an initial increase in the block grant of 15% for 2022/2023 in relation to the increases in salaries from the Salary Review, cost of living increase and the fourth sabbatical officer. The increase will be offset by the relevant increases in staffing costs and will be net zero.
- JT noted that at budget meetings in March 2023, approximately £24,000 of the underspend from departments has been reallocated to rebranding in the forecast. This will have no effect on the final forecast figure since funds are being reallocated.
- JT said the Union has large reserves which should give the Board confidence in their decision to allocate some funding to Sport development.
- JT said that she has created a new expense form in preparation for Sport, and the Union is using Sage as its finance software but will not be moving onto the next level of subscription which is cloud-based due to the extra cost with various features that would not be utilised.

The Board thanked JT and she answered the following for the Board.

- The Board asked JT how Sage is being backed up if not on the cloud. JT confirmed the Union uses a remote data access version which can be accessed she backs up manually and can be accessed from any machine at home.
- JT confirmed that access to Sage could be given to Trustees, or anyone deemed necessary and can be given as read-only access.
- The Board asked what the £39,000 expenditure for subscription fees is spent on. JT confirmed subscriptions include NUS, WonkHE, Coole Insight and MSL.

The Board **noted** the March Management Accounts.

#### 15. Budget Timeline 2023/2024

(Paper: BT2265)

The Budget Timeline 2023/2024 was taken as read by PG.

The Budget Timeline 2023/2024 was **noted** by the Board.

### Section E - Starred items for approval

#### 16. Senate Student Members Appointment

(Paper: BT2266)

This item remained starred so was not discussed and was **approved** by the Board.

FS raised concern about the policy and how Senate Members would be chosen in the instance that only three Sabbatical Officers are chosen given there are four Sabbatical Officers. **Action: PG to review the Senate Student Members Appointment policy by March 2024.**

#### 17. Risk Register

(Paper: BT2267)

This item remained starred so was not discussed and was **approved** by the Board.

### Section F - Starred items for information

#### 18. Summary of all Assembly meetings since the last meeting of the BoT

(Paper: BT2268)

This item remained starred so was not discussed and was **noted** by the Board.

#### 19. Elections Returning Officers Report

(Paper: BT2269)

This item remained starred so was not discussed and was **noted** by the Board.

**20. Elections Report** (Paper: BT2270)  
This item remained starred so was not discussed and was **noted** by the Board.

**21. Referendum Returning Officers Report** (Paper: BT2271)  
This item remained starred so was not discussed and was **noted** by the Board.

**22. Union Advice Board Report** (Paper: BT2272)  
This item remained starred so was not discussed and was **noted** by the Board.

## Section G - Other

### **23. Any Other Business**

PG noted that the original date planned for the Trustee Away Day clashed with the upcoming graduations. The Board agreed to meet instead on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July for the Trustee Away Day. **Action: PG to check the 13<sup>th</sup> July with LW and RG as the new Trustee Away date.**

The Board formally thanked GT for her contributions to the Board whilst being Chair for the previous year. The Board wished her every success in the future.

### **24. Trustees Only Business**

All staff left the meeting, and this section of the meeting has no minutes.

**Date of the next meeting:** 13 July 2023

**Board Clerk:** Aadam Ali