



**A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2012-13 WAS HELD  
AT 5PM ON 5 MARCH 2013 IN THE BOARD ROOM.**

10 MAR 2013

BT-132-M2

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## **MINUTES**

**Present: Michael Pearson (Chair)**, Ellie Read, David Haines, Billy Marsh, George Martindale, Jack Heskett, Matt Peat, Zak Evans, Louise Batts, Sam Minnitt, Caroline Walker, John Palmer.  
In attendance: Andy Parsons, Louisa Allen.

1. **Apologies.**  
Rory Mitchell, Mark Dunkley.
2. **Register of interests**  
Now all collected; please notify LA of any updates.
3. **To approve the minutes of the previous meeting and to deal with matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda – BT-132-M1. The minutes were approved.**  
BM: Rag still part of LSU constitution, it is just that they refer to their policies collectively as their 'constitution'.  
Groups: The overlap was seen as a good thing. GDO more about the Union, VP Welfare is rep of International students.
4. **To receive and approve a report from the Executive – ER.**  
  
ER presented the report.  
Voting – College students down as lack of staff support.  
The Board congratulated Ali Cole on the success with Elections.  
JP stated that the College turnout is evidently still an issue, and it is disappointing that we can't engage them. ER stated that AC has made a huge effort to get college students involved, and the exec generally has done more talks and other involvement with the college, but elections is a very difficult area. To get a college rep on exec would be great but it should not be a university student, and getting a college student to stand would be very difficult. The college have worked with us to promote the elections, with shout outs. ZE stated that the HE students seemed to be more engaged than the FE. The students are generally not aware of the union.  
MP noted that the culture is very different. ER stated that the college had its own freshers bazaar, with a lot of time and effort spent resulting in two signups.  
GM said that a lot of things happen at night and are for over 18s. Maybe if the college students came to see the elections event night they might be more interested.  
JP suggested asking NUS to share some good practice from other FE institutions. One of LSU's strengths is that it is not just a University students' union.
5. **To receive a financial update – AP/RM.**  
  
AP presented the update.  
JP asked if we have fewer people coming in, or the same number in but spending less? AP: there are fewer people, with Wednesday being particularly down, and they are also spending a bit less. We

have fewer students on campus this year and other venues in town are also down – it's not our market share that is down.

We have tried lots of options to make Wednesdays better, but so far there has been no discernible effects on income, though we have made some cost cuts. Targeted promotions do seem to work so we will be working more on those (see item below). Had we done nothing we would have been open to criticism. It is still one of the biggest nights in Loughborough, though not as large as we would like. To have 3 or 4 viable nights a week is still very successful.

LB can we do anything for Freshers to re-launch? AP we need to look at everything in the context of the communications review. We will think again in May (possibly with involvement with the new exec).

Loan paperwork: they have everything they need and LA was hoping to have the paperwork today for signing but it has not arrived; if it arrives and needs to be completed before the next Board meeting LA will notify.

#### **6. To receive an update on the Research and Brand Project – AP.**

AP presented the update.

We asked for the early decision of the Board so that we could move forward with the project, which has made some big steps in the last couple of weeks.

There is no consistent theme in visual terms – our standard logo system is approx. 10 years old. JP pointed out that very few of our logos have 'union' in them. We need to take care that we are not destroying the strong brand assets (eg Hey Ewe).

We are in the process of completing a current state audit for Rebecca Battman including some consideration of contemporary (for example Leeds Union) and aspirational organisations to look at best practice. We are visiting Sheffield and Leeds for research. The next step will be to develop the vision.

JH stated that he attended the meeting with Rebecca and his reservations about the cost were abated as she is very knowledgeable and wants the project to succeed, and will be good value for money. She noted that we are not 'branding', we are improving communication.

JH asked about the involvement of people across the organisation. We are meeting with staff representatives immediately below management level (one Monday, another tomorrow and next Monday) with some good reactions and very useful feedback. CW noted that if the perception is that we are spending money on logos then that will cause bad feeling, but as it is being posed as our communications strategy that is easier to understand.

AP strongly recommends we proceed with the project as outlined in Rebecca's proposal. We are currently below the budget. AP will report back to the Board after each stage. By the next Board meeting we should have a strong option to look at for the voice/vision stage. It has to go to Union Council on 16<sup>th</sup> May.

The Board agreed.

#### **7. NUS Digital, loyalty and Big Data - AP.**

AP presented the report. This has flowed from the work we have very recently started with Rebecca. MPt: the volume of offers could be confusing so it is important not to overwhelm.

JH this is already happening elsewhere and we need to take advantage of it. This should make things easier for staff (eg bar staff and speeding up queues) to help them improve service. Who would own it?

AP stated that the idea behind the NUS Innovation Fund is that the ideas developed are to be shared freely. The good thing about this system is that you can test it as you go along, so we will know if we are doing too much at once, for example. The work that Claire Delaney is doing is producing financial results. The big data stuff would find more of these patterns.

MP noted that the contactless technology could have knock on effects for cash collection systems (eg Rag can shakers).

LB asked if the card scheme will be an opt in system. AP stated that we will run it from the existing student cards. We could somehow tie in to the University system depending on what software they are using. Loyalty benefits would be automatic (you don't have to use them) but in order to use it as a cashless-type card the student would have to put credit onto it first (which would involve more set up costs).

JP stated that other organisations are now using biometrics instead of cards (eg fingerprints). We need to be careful that we are not over-engineering with little ROI.

DH asked when NUS Digital will be installed; it will be the end of the academic year. All the pages would need to be redesigned eg hall subs, committee subs, and there will be no students here to do it. AP stated that NUS Digital will have templates so it should be reasonably straightforward.

The Board agreed AP can pitch to NUSSL and negotiate with the other unions; he will bring the project back before proceeding to the next stage.

**8. To receive a report on Pensions Auto-enrolment – AP.**

AP presented the report. The current pension contribution does not include the back payments for the previous pension scheme (previously discussed) of c.£100k per year.

BM asked if it applies to exec officers too: it does. The Aegon scheme is not transferable. NEST is. The recommendation is that we offer the NEST (the lower contribution) with the option to join the Aegon scheme (the higher contribution). The Board agreed.

**9. To note the Union's KPIs.**

No changes since the last meeting.

**10. To note the Union's Risk Register.**

No changes since the last meeting.

**11. To receive a report from the Union Director – AP.**

AP presented his report.

GM asked about the concession for Mr Weis, concerned that he will expect the same next year as the situation will be the same. AP stated that he needs to show that he has made plans to cover this period, as it's not a surprise. We've told him he won't get it again and it will remain as a debt. He is building his business and should be in a better position by next year. BM: the restaurant seems to be very busy so why is he struggling? He has margin issues after cutting his prices. It is well staffed. Lunchtimes are very good but there is not much in the evenings. The takeaway business should be better next year with a proper launch in Freshers.

MPT asked if we can promote more to assist? Lots of people think it is still called Jom Makan. JH it is relatively low cost compared to a cut in rent of £7K. We have taken a sympathetic view but can't offer one tenant marketing for free if we don't give it to others.

JP: the cost of it being empty is more than the concession we are giving him.

The Board noted that we should not be setting a precedent with the rent free period.

JP asked is there a market for the Therapy Zone business? Yes, very much so. The model works elsewhere. JH LSU is not making a huge investment so it seems good. The clients may still want to attend the clinic, albeit with different therapists. It is a good model for future arrangements.

The Board agreed.

**12. To consider any items referred to the Board by Union Council and vice versa – DH.**

None from Council. Remunerations committee was passed but not put into the constitution which was passed subsequently, so it is not currently in existence.

There is currently an informal verbal report of Board to Council – the minutes can act as the written report.

Select Committees – DH is emailing the groups, papers have gone out, there will be a break at next council for the groups to meet.

13. **Institutions.**

University is consulting on the 10-year building excellence strategy, students heavily involved.  
Andrew Burgess will be attending from next time as this is Caroline's last meeting.  
MP, ER and AP thanked CW for her service to the Board.

14. **Any other business.**

**None.**

15. **Date of next meeting – Tuesday 30 April 2013 at 5pm.**