

**University of St Andrews
Students' Association**

Minutes of the Students' Association Board Meeting

Held in the Hebdomadar's Room, 23rd October 2014, 5:15 pm

Present: Mr C Marks (Chair of Board), Mr L O'Rourke (Director of Events and Services), Mr O Hajda (Director of Representation), Ms F Morrice (Director of Student Development and Activities), Mr Patrick Mathewson (Association President) Professor L Milne, Mr J Tantillo (Association Chair), Ms A Kennedy-O'Brien, Ms Z Evans, Ms J Cassidy, Mr D Scott.

In attendance by invitation: Mr Iain Cupples (Secretary to Board), Ms J Cowan (Management Accountant), Ms C Miller (Clerk to Board), Mr D Whitton (General Manager).

1. Chairperson's Business.

1.1 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Ms F Bell and Mr A Goor.

1.2 Acceptance of the minutes of the Students' Association Board Meeting of 16th September 2014.

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2014 were accepted.

1.3 Matters Arising.

- a. Education and Representation Co-ordinator post.

Mr Hajda summarised the background to the development of this position, emphasising the development in academic representation since 2010. This meant that the vast majority of the Director of Representation's time was taken up with academic representation, much of which was administrative work, to the detriment of equal opportunities, democracy and wellbeing. The area had been identified by the previous sabbatical team as a priority for staff support.

The job description had been revised since the last meeting and was now confirmed as grade 4. The last remaining issue was the hours of work: the staffing committee had recommended an initial fixed-term contract of 23 months at 20 hours per week, to begin in semester 2. Total salary costs would be around £15,000 per annum, although recruitment and setup costs had to be figured in as well. Total expenditure should be within the limit agreed previously.

Professor Milne noted that she felt it important to maintain the link between the Director of Representation and staff involved with academic representation in the University. Mr Hajda agreed, and said that the position was not intended to replace the student voice but to support it. Professor Milne suggested that it would be

important to review the effectiveness of the proposed role and look at how it worked out in practice, preferably well in advance of the 23 month contract expiring. It was agreed that the post should be reviewed before the 6 months probation period ends. The Board approved the position, with the recruitment process to begin in time for appointment in semester 2.

Mr Hajda said that the job description would need a final revision before recruiting began, but that the final version would be circulated to all Board members by email.

b. Trademark of crest.

Mr Marks presented a proposed revision of the agreement with the University, with input from himself and Ms Bell. He asked for the thoughts of the Board before giving comments he had received from Mr Goor, acting in his capacity as Finance Director with the University.

Mr Mathewson said that the oversight clause would need to have a structure or regularity to it – perhaps six-monthly reviews. He said that the issue of the fee also required clarity, particularly over what was considered ‘reasonable’.

Mr Scott suggested that a dispute resolution clause would be useful.

Mr Marks said that his feedback from Mr Goor was that the University were on board with the majority of the changes and understood what they were intended to achieve. Mr Goor had suggested that clause 17 might be moved to the top of the agreement. The University’s Chief Legal Officer would be consulted on the issue of exclusivity of the St Andrews name. Clause 9 was one area where there still seemed to be a need to find a middle ground. It was suggested that to try to resolve this, Mr Marks would arrange a meeting between himself, Mr Mathewson, Mr Whitton, and Ms Bell for the Association, and Mr Goor and the Chief Legal Officer for the University.

c. Society agreement.

Ms Morrice reported that this issue was proving complicated. Ms Bell had made some useful contributions and Ms Morrice would be contacting Thornton’s for further legal advice. One major issue was where an agreement over the use of intellectual property and/or resources such as contact lists could be placed so as to be effective. Documents such as the standing orders or affiliation agreements were signed by society office holders and may not bind individual society members.

Mr Marks said that Ms Bell had raised the issue of the legal status of societies. This might mean there is a requirement to allow them the option of independent legal representation before signing any agreement: this would likely prove impractical.

Mr Scott said that the issue of intellectual property was very broad. If the intention was not to encompass all possible IP, it would be wise to be specific about what was covered. If in effect what was being sought was a ‘non-compete’ clause, these were also often difficult to enforce in practice.

Mr Hajda asked what would happen if intellectual property was abandoned, for example if a society folded. Ms Morrice said that resources such as social media accounts might revert to the Association. Mr Marks suggested that there could be a clause allowing the Association to grant permission to use these resources to other student groups.

The Board felt that the issue remained important and further advice should be sought.

Ms Morrice noted that, on the positive side, the conflict that had sparked this discussion had now been resolved.

2. Finance Committee Business.

Ms Cowan reported that the Finance meeting had not taken place due to absence and unavailability of members. The main issue for Board to consider was that the £1m bond had matured today: it had been decided, in consultation with Mr Mathewson and Mr Marks, to reinvest £750,000 in Nationwide at 1.40%. The Board were now asked to approve this decision. There was no objection.

3. Staffing Committee Business.

Mr Hajda asked about the issue of the living wage for casual staff. The staffing committee had considered the issue and agreed to review it after one year, and that period was almost over. Mr Cupples said that the management group had considered the issue of casual staff pay again over the summer, and that he would circulate the data from that discussion to Mr Hajda after the meeting, with a view to reviewing the issue formally at the next meeting of the staffing committee. Mr Marks noted that there was a responsibility on the Association to balance student welfare against financial performance. Mr Whitton said that the Association endeavoured to treat student staff in the best manner possible, giving the example of training and registration for security staff as a non-wage benefit that student staff received. We have received no complaints on use of these contracts.

3.1 Law At Work Audit.

Mr O'Rourke reported that, in line with the agreement entered into for LAW services by the Board, an audit of the Association's policies and documentation had taken place. The results were generally satisfactory. LAW had asked for input on two issues: whether the Association wanted to introduce a 'gardening leave' clause into the contracts of senior staff, and whether the Staff Disciplinary Procedure should be explicitly made non-contractual or should apply only to staff with two or more years' service. The staffing committee had recommended that a clause giving the option of at least three months' 'gardening leave' be inserted into the contracts of staff on Grade 6 or above: and that the Disciplinary Procedure apply to staff with two years' service or more only. The Board approved these recommendations.

Mr Cupples would feed this back to LAW and also follow up on other points relating to the audit. He would also circulate the final copy of the audit to Board members by email.

3.2 Media Policy.

Mr O'Rourke reported that the staffing committee had recommended approval of this policy, with some amendments. Mr Cupples informed the meeting of the amendments in detail.

Mr Scott asked if the Policy covered the sabbatical officers. Mr Cupples said that it did not: the staffing committee did not have the power to pass policy binding on sabbaticals. He suggested that a code of conduct or similar document for elected officers might be adopted by the SRC/SSC, covering much of the same ground as this policy. Mr Hajda noted that these issues were covered verbally in elected officer training at present. Mr Marks suggested that, as an alternative, the existing Policy might be replaced with a media policy covering both staff and Association volunteers, which would include both elected officers and other volunteers: or an overarching volunteer policy that covered these areas amongst others.

In the meantime, the Board approved the policy, as amended.

3.3 Flexible Working Policy.

Mr O'Rourke reported that the staffing committee had recommended approval of the policy as written. The Board approved the policy.

4. President's Business.

Mr Mathewson reported that he had been working with the AU and Development Office on plans for the Alumni Weekend, which would take place on 17th-19th April 2015. The focus of the weekend would be on activities, including club and society reunions, music, sport and theatre, as the feeling was that St Andrews alumni tended to identify more with these activities than with subject or year groups. Current students would be involved in all of these activities. The aim would be to build relationships by ensuring the alumni enjoyed the events, rather than to immediately solicit donations from them. He believed the event would benefit the University community as a whole.

Mr Mathewson also reported that, after campaigning from the Association, the University had approved a pilot 'employability officer' programme that would see students paired with an employability adviser from the beginning of their studies. The University had also funded a 'Night Bus' scheme that was proving very popular. He believed these initiatives were good examples of the Association and University working in partnership for the benefit of students.

Mr Mathewson also asked the Board for a short informal discussion on the subject of sabbatical remits. The feeling of the sabbatical team was that they were at full capacity, and from discussions with peers in other institutions they seemed to have fuller remits and work longer hours. The Board discussed how sabbaticals were currently supported and could be better supported, both by staff and other trustees.

4.1 Memorandum of Understanding for IT.

Mr Mathewson asked for comments on the document as circulated.

Mr Scott said that he felt the Memorandum was lacking in certain areas. He said that it should incorporate a data-sharing agreement, clearly setting out what data was shared and what happened to that data on termination of the MoU. There may also be a need for clauses covering advice on data security, processing and sharing. He suggested that the Board ask the University for service levels for service units, staff and students, and that these should be used as a basis for an agreed service level for the Association. He said he was happy to work with Mr Mathewson on taking these, and other issues, forward.

Mr Marks noted that, as with the trademark agreement, a dispute resolution clause would be needed, as well as a mechanism for agreeing the fee.

Ms Morrice noted that the asset list would need updating.

Professor Milne agreed that she would speak to IT Services to assign a designated person from the University side to take the issue forward.

4.2 Governance Review

Mr Mathewson said that he and Mr Tantillo were working on a plan to take the recommendations of the Bonnar review and the CAPOD review forward. As part of this, the Board were asked to approve amendments to the Laws explicitly setting out the structure of the Board subcommittees.

Mr Hajda asked if these amendments should go to the SRC and SSC first. The Board agreed that the amendments should go to these committees for information, but as the proposed amendments affected Board business only, it was in order for them to be approved without prior approval by SRC/SSC.

Mr Scott noted that it was unusual for an organisation of this size to have separate Finance/Audit and Risk committees. Mr Marks said that this could be reviewed after a few meetings of these committees.

It was noted that there was a need to identify an external chair for the audit and risk committee. Mr Mathewson and Mr Marks would undertake to find a suitable candidate.

4.3 Bubble Browse

Mr Mathewson explained that this was an enterprise founded by students looking to gather together advertised accommodation vacancies in a central database, to help students in St Andrews find accommodation. He had been approached by the

founders, who wanted to find ways of working with the Association. These might include licensing the software, integrating it into the Association website, or other ties.

Mr Cupples noted that there were significant risks around liability: there needed to be a robust system for ensuring that all vacancies were in properly licensed accommodation.

Ms O'Brien noted that the idea was fine in theory but would not necessarily work well in practice: by the time an advertised vacancy had been picked up by the Bubble Browse system, the property might have been let.

The Board felt that there was no compelling reason to pursue any link with Bubble Browse.

5. Director of Events and Services Business

Mr O'Rourke noted that the early part of term had gone well but as in previous years, there had been a steep decline afterwards as students did not seem so inclined towards regular nights out. In particular, the promoter behind Circus Saturdays had put the event on hiatus after disappointing attendances, despite strong marketing and a lot of hard work.

This meant that Venue 1 was currently only being used for special events, meaning a decline in entertainments income. However, regular events in the bars were proving successful, in particular karaoke. These events appeared to more closely meet student needs at present.

Sinners' nights were the exception and were proving crucial to entertainments and bar income. It was hoped to put on an act for the final Sinners of term.

Mr Tantillo asked how the Main Bar Diner was going. Mr Whitton said that the October offer (two meals for £6) had been put in place to generate business, at which it was successful. He noted that Rectors' sales were currently very strong and should exceed budget, though bar sales were likely to fall short of budget. However, evening sales in Rectors' were not so strong. Mr Whitton and the commercial manager were in talks about events to coincide with the Open, which should provide a boost to Association income.

6. Director of Student Development and Activities Business

Ms Morrice said that so far 130 of 170 societies had completed affiliation paperwork, and that this was historically a very good ratio for this point in the academic year. There had been a high take-up from societies of the Redevelopment Fund, intended to help with hire of venues while the upper floors of the building were being redeveloped. She had been working on the annual Employability Conference with CAPOD: this would take place in January. She had also been working on University Challenge. Finally, she noted that arranging student group bookings in the Byre was proving more complicated than anticipated.

7. Director of Representation's Business

Mr Hajda said class rep numbers were up and training had been very well attended. Black History Month had been mostly successful although one event had been cancelled. SHAG Week had also been successful.

With regard to Raisin Weekend, some messaging had been successful and some less so: a post-mortem would be held with the University. Moving forward, he would be working on the Rectorial election and SRC reform, which was a project that had somewhat stalled, as well as wellbeing campaigns around smoking, alcohol, exams and healthy eating.

8. Redevelopment

Phase 3 would not now be handed over on the 24th October but had been put back a week. Even so, not all works would be complete – there would be some finishing required. It was intended to launch the Beacon Bar on the 6th November – Board members would be invited to attend this event.

9. AOCB

Mr Tantillo presented a list of changes to the Laws passed by SRC and SSC since the last Board meeting. These were approved.

Mr Mathewson said that he had been in negotiations with the rights holder for the book 'Through The Eyes Of Students', with a view to transferring the rights to the Association. The intention was to complete a legal agreement on the transfer. Mr Mathewson, Mr Whitton, Ms Cowan and Mr Tantillo would pursue this issue and circulate the completed agreement to trustees by email for approval.

Mr Hajda said that he had been made aware earlier of a petition circulating amongst student casual employees of the University, upset at the use of zero hours contracts by the University and at alleged poor treatment by individual managers. The Association made use of similar contracts for casual staff. It was noted that in the past, this had been found to be convenient for both the Association and student staff, as it offered flexibility to both sides: and that the Association endeavoured to ensure that these contracts were used responsibly, in line with best practice in this area.

Mr Tantillo gave an account of the 'That's Union' information campaign, which had been run in part as a response to the CAPOD review's recommendation of increased transparency.

10. Closed business

11. Date of next meeting

11th December 2014

Mr Chris Marks
Chairperson