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| In attendance:  Joe Inwood, Chair/President (JI), Matthew Judson, Deputy Chair/Student Tustee (MJ), Lucas Bertholdi-Saad, VP Access & Academic Affairs (LBS), James Hunt, External Trustee (JH), Grace Davis, Student Trustee (GD), Allison D’Ambrosia, VP Graduates (AD), Ellie Macdonald, VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities (EM), Rosanna Greenwood, VP Charities and Community (RG), India Jordan, External Trustee (IJ)  Also in attendance: Ryan Bird, Oxford SU Chief Executive (RB), Lily Johnson, Student Services Assistant (LJ). Item 7 onwards: Anisha Faruk, President Elect (AF), Ray Williams, VP Access & Academic Affairs Elect (RW). Item 9: Amandeep Ubhi, Head of Business Development & Operations. | | |
|  | Item | Actions |
| 1. | Apologies   * Katt Walton * Nick Entwistle * Sarah Owen * Alex Kumar |  |
| 2. | Minutes from previous meeting   * (AD) not involved in shared parental leave policy. Under section on welfare and liberation, commented that if we had this capacity we would not have needed to hire a student researcher * JI agrees to add these and discuss exact phrasing afterwards * Minutes otherwise approved by the Board |  |
| 3. | Conflicts of Interest   * No conflicts of interest declared |  |
| 4. | Matters arising from previous meeting   * (RB) can speak to pay review (and will also cover in his report), worked its way through, new grades confirmed, annual PDRs are now part of pay review and in June/July. The new policy has been well-received for the clarity this has given staff. Finance and Risk Committee will continue to have oversight of pay and People and Culture Committee can help with direction and implementation of policy. * (JI) Quinquennial Review, university would like it to be light touch, discussions about what can be included, what can be done outside of it, reporting to JSCECSM, there will be another meeting in July with Ryan and new Sabbs. * RB: procedure for Steering Committee which means they will have a checklist of short questions to run through if any flags from those questions it will be escalated by President this role is the connection between Steering and Trustee Board. * (JI) Complaints procedure has been updated following Ivy’s recommendations, university now agreed it. * (LBS) need to change ‘Scrutiny Committee’ to Steering Committee in minutes of last meeting – JI agrees to change * (JI) Update on wellbeing and liberation item is part of Ryan’s CEO report |  |
| 5. | CEO Report   * RB provided an overview of his report, highlighting key areas and successes, broadly doing well against plan. * Welfare policy support being addressed more by Advice team, Student Minds involvement going forward will also help – (EM): doing the best we can now, setting things up for future Sabbs, talked about well-being but thinking also about how we can support liberation, support campaigns now but what else could we do with Sabbs and liberation, especially if they don’t come from liberation background, support beyond just E&D training. (RB) agreed point – something we need to look at. * (LBS) even as officer not involved in welfare directly I can clearly see the impact these changes have started to have. Would like to ask how useful this has been in terms of Advice change of focus? (EM) not useful side of things, people trying to do jobs they were not prepared for/did not apply for. * (IJ) will the timing of the QSU report fall in with the QR? (RB) yes, NUS taking time but report nearly ready. * (IJ) noting rise in recommendation of place to work – good, (MJ) why did that happen? (RB) made it priority, shift in structures as well.   Report on Finance – CONFIDENTIAL   * (RB) outlined the detail of the current financial situation, 18 mths ago looked at staffing structure, need some further changes to operations and business side in same way as have done on student engagement, shift in landscape in University means that facing a financial challenge, budget confirmed for next year, need to start planning so as to not face cliff edge afterwards. * This involves taking forward following objectives:   + To develop a structure that will enable us to continue to build our quality of service and deliver on our strategy   + To develop a more coordinated and effective way of managing / developing internal systems & processes such as finance, HR, H&S, governance, admin & IT   + To enhance sabb support particularly around policy/campaigns work (based on the last Board meeting)   + To ensure OSSL is set-up to deliver an increase return   + To achieve a reduction in total staffing spend – to around 90% of block grant   + To build in more flexibility through the introduction of more student-staff opportunities * JH agrees with what RB says, to give context of how we got here: we had high reserves and university refused to increase funding because of this, finished last year with £370,000ish, finally started to achieve deficit budgets which in turn will run our reserves down to just above our target reserves, hoping university will see value of work and increase block grant even a bit. * RB also note other cost pressures, cost of living for staff, inflation, going up pay scale. * RG: how are staff cutting costs made? (JI) Finance Committee meeting in June, best to keep in contact over email, need to look at whole not bit by bit * (RB) what I need from Board is agreeing of the objectives, Finance Committee can look at the detail and I can then enact, Rosie looking at scenarios and modelling it at the moment. * (LBS) working well in this area, made more difficult by university not working with us, taper not cliff-edge definitely right thing to do, some degree of protection (fixed term roles) helping, difficult thing to do, strategic plan helps. * (JI) really important to sort transition for this, non-Sabbatical trustees very important in ensuring continuity here. Also, current Sabbs handing over. | **Board recommends that CEO continues with work and agrees objectives**  **Finance Committee to meet again and communicate with Trustees**  **Get new Sabbs involved to transition, and learn from outgoing Sabbs** |
| 12. | Finance Committee Minutes (brought up from below the line because JH had comments)   * (JH) RAG and tax is a difficult issue, we need to handle carefully * (JH) situation with our auditors (CCW) – usual 3-year window with them coming to an end, we have found them to be very good, recommend to extend for one more year and then see if want to go up to 6 years in total (RB) happy with this * (JI) why only 3 years anyway? (RB + JH) in our financial procedures. * Board noted the minutes from Finance Committee on 21st May. | **Board agreed to extend our current auditors for a further year.**  **Financial procedures to be updated to reflect change.** |
| 6. | Elections Report   * (RB) We report to the University on elections, the Returning Officer is happy that they were free and fair. * (AD) We did not help enough with candidate wellbeing, it was worse than the year before, could have helped if greater communication about this. Also would question why the suggested increase in budget for refreshments on election night – why do we do election night event at all? * (EM) Do not think that it went well on candidate wellbeing front, especially at the beginning of elections. Concerns were dismissed, had to deal with it herself, candidates let down because of this and no measures really in place to help them with this. Candidate dinner – too much focus on food because EDs, other problems around food or might not want to go – need something else accessible to all not just majority. More general point about SU events centring things on food – connect to item 7; (LBS) seconding comments on 4th key objective here, should be objective but don’t think we are doing it properly here. * (LBS) should also note that 5 had put their names forward to run for C+C when nominations closed but only 2 actually ran. * (LBS) on slates – it’s loaded language to say it went “well”. * (LBS) candidate academy, have good feedback on it, but is it the best use of resources and time, seemed low turnout. (AD) but those who ran did attend. * (LBS) need discussion on live streaming debates vs hustings, do not have figures on attendance and viewings to compare, problem of asking questions when online, (MJ) hustings organized last minute so hard to publicise. * (RB) Have Sabbs had a chance for feedback? (AD, LBS, RG, JI, EM) have not been able to express this, (JI) need to feed this back before next year elections and learn from current Sabbs. * (JI) headline is we need to recognise that there were free and fair elections, plus a record turnout, some good innovations and a raising of our profile, while there are also things we need to feedback. All Agreed.   New sabb-elects join the meeting – AF and RW. | **Sabbaticals to provide feedback to Sarah Bradley. RB to feedback concerns.** |
| 7. | Accessibility & Oxford SU  EM delivers presentation on the nature of accessibility and things Oxford SU has done and can do   * (EM) Problems have been raised with us over the last year and we need to act on them, engrain solutions within organisation. Item to discuss – questions posed by Disabilities Campaign (DisCam) - what is in our remits and what can we do in next few years? * (AD) if we cannot find a venue from a college which is not fully accessible, we should be prepared to have events in the SU (seconded by MJ). * (LBS) Comms has been worked on, with lots of input on this from students, should not just be from them though. Could we have an accessibility audit paid for? * (EM) agreed, need culture change in internal learning about disability, becoming part of routine; (RG) need to include Campaigns too, for example RAG has massive reach. * (JI) Are DisCam better placed to reach what people need to know more than us, we need to listen to them and students’ insights. * (AD) We rely too much on them and their main focus should be on being students and we can’t keep taking from them, we should take initiative. * (RB) We need to be bold, we want to be leaders in the university on this. Audit is an obvious first step, update processes/systems, getting tools, then training. The university can often be inaccessible, we need to be much better and set the standard. * (LBS) Some targets in the strategic plan are helpful on this like on wellbeing, but should add to 1.1 about accessibility for disabled students specifically * (EM) From experience of the last year, disabled students fall to the bottom of the pile and have the most intersections (e.g. mental health + LGBTQ), and are left behind. We have a problem with our website not having an accessibility statement and this will soon become illegal. IJ can look into the legal regulations about this. * (IJ) New College has done well on this (JI) we should use Warden of New College, chair of disability subcommittee and incoming Chair of Conference of Colleges as a strategic contact (AD) could take part in the college audit being overseen by Domestic Bursars (EM) seen papers for this, it is very limited, need something broader. * (EM) It gives impetus to all staff if we include accessibility in our strategic plan. * (MJ) Time concerns – how much of EM’s time has this taken up so far? Do we have capacity to focus on this more? (EM) This is an issue that is increasingly more of a priority, keen to fully engage with DisCam. * LBS: Partnership is important between VP AccAff and VP WEO. * RB and EM: will feed back discussion on this item to students. | **EM to discuss accessibility and website with IJ.**  **RB and EM to follow up with Disabilities Campaign.** |
| 8. | Officer Impact (Sabb Reports)  MJ takes the Chair.  Order: LBS, AD, EM, RG, JI.   * (MJ) Next steps have been touched on by all, but more suitable perhaps for next Sabb team going forward. * (JH) As an external it is impressive to see what is happening. Sustainability work seems particularly good. * (RB) Don’t underestimate the impact and the role you have all played in a challenging wider environment. A huge amount of work in a short amount of time. * (MJ) Please can we have summaries circulated?   JI returns to Chair. | **Sabbs to circulate written report summaries** |
| 9. | Discussion Item – OSSL  AU joins meeting.   * (AU) Gives presentation on OSSL, noting slides will be circulated following meeting.     Discussion   * (AU) How can board members help? * (JI) What kinds of things are holding us back? (AU) Now back to full staffing levels, not previously had the chance to look forward, but now there is time, knowledge and structure in place, only now starting to understand whole team needing to work together on OSSL activity. * (JH) A very important area and heading in the right direction, with a more uncertain financial future it has the capacity to be the answer to help us through. We also need to make sure it fits with our ethos. * (AD) Are there areas that colleges have neglected that can be covered by OSSL? (E.g. housing, storage space, local community opportunities). Also working on demand from students e.g. stash store. (LBS) OSSL could definitely help with student concerns e.g. international student storage. * (LBS) There is a question of the OxStu as previously an OSSL venture but now losing money, we need to think about how to maintain it. (JI) from last Finance Committee we know that OxStu loses money, we should start seeing it as a charitable activity instead. * (JI) To clarify the governance structure of OSSL, it is a registered company with directors made up of three Sabbatical Trustees of Oxford SU and the CEO. Finance Committee has oversight at present but we are trying to bring about OSSL Board meetings, have looked at hiring an external board member. * (AF) Who are the OSSL directors and how does it work with their other commitments, and how do we decide this? (JI) KM, AD, LBS are directors this year, they volunteered at the start of the year. AU oversees it day-to-day, OSSL board has met once this year. (RB) In the past, OSSL Board only meets to sign off the accounts but now looking to give it more of a strategic role. * (MJ) Website sales numbers going up – how was this done? (AU) same website from same provider but we have better product knowledge and we update it more. (MJ) so will it continue to grow? (AU) it will grow more because we are still exploring new areas e.g. on housing. * (EM) Services and marketing are an obvious first step but is there space for us to do more events that return money? Ticketed events? Not suggesting this is something we have capacity for now but an idea for the future. (RG) would this cause a problem for RAG by competing with their events? (JI) related issues of VAT. Oxford SU does not pay VAT at the moment but OSSL does. * (AD) There is a market for making students’ lives easier in terms of helping sponsorship with balls and boat clubs etc., it involves time for us but helps students. (AU) Could help students with this, have had a student group approach about Domino’s. * (LBS) Consulting-type businesses – departments and Careers Service are doing this already. (AU) Will look into this. * (EM) There won’t be nightclubs left in Oxford in 5 years. Demand could mean opportunities. * (RG) Not something discussed widely within the SU (JI) yes, how can sabbs feed in? How can students feed in? We are not currently analysing year on year but why not? (AU) We have Oxford in our name and we need to capitalize on that. Resource is a problem, we need to spend more time, but we are going in the right direction. We are opening up a dialogue with student engagement and for sabb inclusion we can start having OSSL Board meetings. * (RB) This is about making a plan and sticking to it, looking at income but also how much it costs. We need to make decisions about what we do and don’t do going forward. * (LBS) The key question is what is the purpose of OSSL. We could see it as having nothing to do with students’ interests other than funding the SU - if clubs lose money then maybe we shouldn’t do it. Should it be about making students’ lives better directly, or should that be done by Oxford SU? (RB) good question, we need to have clear goals * (JH) We need OSSL to make money, but also to do work that is in line with the aims of the charity. Money first, then charity can do charity. (AU) The interest for clients is in being part of something that makes students’ lives easier. They want to see tangible benefit from their advertisement. * (AF) question about hiring external member. (AU) planning started, but interest was not there. * (AF) what area of the charity/business can run things like club nights? (JI) commercial activity has to be OSSL. * (MJ) question about previous club nights - what happened to them and why? (AU) there is now more awareness across the city on the issue of club nights, accessibility is something to look at to make it appealing to a wide range of students. We weren’t in the right place to offer it before, but now could be better. * (EM) A club night is not something to do right now. In order to be viable we need to get more into it, need to look more like a service provider. At the moment we are a campaigning body primarily. There will be more closures of clubs so a changing landscape could mean it makes sense. (MJ) It could be good for our profile too. * (JI) What resources do we have to put into OSSL? It’s good to be more ambitious but we need to know what we can put into it. There is a need to innovate, but we should not create more resource problems. (RB) Increasing partnerships, where another entity runs things and we get commission. (AU) We need to challenge current staff as well to push beyond what we have right now. * (JH) This board and OSSL Board working together and in productive discussion along this line could develop well over next few months. * (AD) There is an outstanding action for OSSL Board to have meeting before July – preferably before OSSL directors change with Sabb handover. * (JI) In summary, we need to innovate; and address the purpose of OSSL. Should it be focused on students’ interests or making money for Oxford SU? OSSL Board to take forward with AU. | **Board to contact AU with more ideas.**  **OSSL directors to arange a meeting of the OSSL Board.**  **RB to look at the possibility of changing *The Oxford Student* accounting from OSSL activity to Oxford SU activity.**  **AU to develop a 3-year strategy on business development to report to Board.** |
| 10. | Date of the next meeting  Away day – date to be confirmed  Friday 15th November at 1pm |  |