

DSU Board of Trustees Minutes

Meeting Four of the academic year 2023-24

Monday 24th June 2024 / Adam Redfern Board Room/ TEAMS

Members	Initials	Meeting 1 07.08.23	Meeting 2 09.10.23	Meeting 3 11.12.23	Meeting 4 18.03.2024	Meeting 5 24.06.2024
Geoff Kershaw (Chair)	GK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Phil Gilks	PG	✓	✓	✓	P	✓
Beverley Shears	BevS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rita Bullivant	RB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amir Iqbal	AI	A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Luke Martin	LM	✓	A	✓	✓	✓
Mehul Parekh	MP	✓	NA	NA	NA	NA
Shreeya Dubal	SD	NA	NA	✓	✓	A
Sarah Bradley (CEO)	SB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paula Heneghan (Clerk and HOF&CS)	PH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Andy Reynolds (HOIGE)	AR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amy Horner (HOMS)	AH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Catherine Searcy (Minutes)	CS	✓	N/ M	N/ M	N/ M	N/ M
Komal Shahzadi	KS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Destiny Mazaiwana	DM	✓	✓	A	A	✓
Adejumoke (Fluffy) Adewola	AA	✓	A	✓	✓	✓
Gurupriya (Priya) Karasala	PK	A	✓	✓	A	✓

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

Formal		
Item	Discussion	Actions
1. Introduction/Apologies for Absence/Conflict of Interest	Apologies from SD. No Conflicts noted.	
2. Minutes of the previous meeting	No comments/amendments. Minutes approved by all.	
3. Action Log and Matters Arising (5 minutes)	Action log updated.	
4. CEO Update	Verbal update from SB. Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix for more info on Projects added to CEO report • Touched by student action which has come to campus since last meeting re. Palestine Conflict. Worked closely with DMU and students felt able to express themselves. Noticed that often led by external organisations and no suggestion of encampments on campus. • General election: political landscape currently changeable. AH has done some work into scenarios of 'what could happen?' • Team culture has been a theme following staff survey results. SMT and Middle-Mgrs training on 25/06/2024 on Conflict Resolution. • Welcome Festival planning continues – much more collaborative with DMU than ever before. • DSU Celebrates took place at the end of May – annual event to thank student volunteers, Course Reps etc. Function Rooms were transformed for the event and great success. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting recent events include live music held by students, table top gaming events, proms • Recruited Communications & Marketing Manager who started 24/06/2024 and successful candidate was internal applicant. <p>RB: PowerBI project behind due to licensing?</p> <p>SB: Power BI part of Microsoft software. Struggling to get it working at DSU presumably due to licenses within DMU etc. PH has been working hard to resolve but still some way to go. SMT have access currently to PowerBI Pro, but not able to download from it and not yet been able to rollout to all staff.</p>	
<p>5. Exec Officer Update</p>	<p>Verbal updates given by all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Council update: 4 motions put forward 1) Mature Student Liberation Officer requesting LO's be paid. Voted against but in favour of an honorarium to recognise efforts - not yet confirmed. 2) Graduation costs policy to continue project with Executive Officer 2024/25 team was passed. 3) Election timeline motion put forward by KS due to feedback from candidates, to reduce to Mon-Fri only. This was approved. 4) First Aid training to be offered to all society members – this was approved. <p>PG: The honorarium will fall within s22 and will count towards their two years as an Officer. One way round is to create a committee to appoint them to the role as advised by Sussex SU.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI attended NUS National Conference in April. Hosted a feedback session following on from this with DMU students who attended. Positives were networking opportunities but negative feedback was delegates not feeling heard and environment delegates were put in particularly regarding Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, and not a safe space. Have explored disaffiliation or vote of no confidence at Student Council and are aware that NUS is going through a reform itself. <p>PG had also heard similar feedback.</p> <p>BevS: DMU has really embraced diversity and tolerance and quality and calibre of students, SU and staff is why DMU aren't having issues that other places are experience. Very sad to hear that delegates did not feel safe and experienced Islamophobia.</p>	

	<p>2023/ 2024 projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light the Night in February, SHAG day, Refreshers, GOAT-ing opportunities led to a large amount of feedback. • Free breakfast project is ongoing with DMU and hoping to be in place for next academic year. <p>Fluffy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing Walks, dog therapy session during exam periods, Wellbeing Wednesdays throughout the year with numbers increasing as the year went on, signposting students to mental health support services • Personal GOAT-ing re. cost of living crisis, signposting students to Hardship team and food bank voucher scheme now in place <p>Komal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful history months this year including Black History Month, Disability including personality showcase, LGBTQ+ month, Women’s Month including period item giveaways • Langer and Diwali events held on campus successfully • Fees Policy ongoing, Mandir/Temple for Hindu students to access on campus proposal submitted to DMU, lots of collaborative projects with other Execs <p>Amir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Events Committee ongoing and hoping to handover to incoming Exec. To support students in putting on own events. • Student Flea market hosted in Campus Centre Building, NUS Delegate training series for new delegates, what we offer to UK/Transnational Education students as an SU 	
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	<p>Priya</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Chairs Networking events now mandatory from 2024/25, meeting every term • Alternative sport space opportunities across campus, free memberships to student hardship fund, simplifying room booking process with DMU, new communication channel created for Committee Chairs <p>Destiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Development project has involved a large number of meetings to attend. Currently DMU are exploring new financial options for the project and then student consultation on that • Block timetabling and teaching to allow employment around ongoing but has been raised with Susan Orr • Personal Adobe licenses are beyond budget for DMU so looking to move some desktops around campus that students can access with the software on and an easier way to view where these desktops are located • Assessment and feedback policy – met with DMU as feedback can often be poor quality. Recognised the issue is not the policy but that academics are not following it. • Personal tutoring – have a paper/research <p>Legacy Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student attendance (DM): DM conducted a survey with over 200 responses on what impacted student attendance. Held a focus group to further explore themes from the responses and have submitted a paper to DMU working group on attendance. Would like to take research request to Academic Board to explore block teaching in more detail. • Graduation Costs (AI): want to get this to the finish line with DMU to get costs reduced or gone completely. <p>RB: Block teaching in DM’s presentation, time frame DMU are working to on this?</p>	
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	<p>DM: Understanding is that DMU have been continuously reviewing its effectiveness but unsure as to how that has been done. Have approached one of staff involved but not a priority hence why want to take to academic Board. Want to explore further over summer alongside/supported by a researcher. Don't feel on DMU radar to feedback to me.</p> <p>BevS: Concerned DM doesn't feel DMU are seeing concerns as a priority. Must be something built in for reviews but also must be space for DSU to have an independent review. If DM would like BevS assistance in anyway then let her know. Feedback DMU Governors are getting is that block teaching is a success but important we all keep a finger on it.</p>	
6. Commercial and Development Sub-Committee update	<p>Verbal update from AI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AH presented report on DSU progress and trends including data trends from elections; Academic advice cases usual peaks have changed due to block teaching; Student non-attendance concern for DMU; event attendance increase for DSU • AR gave update on new online shop provider, Streamline, due to launch early July 2024 • Project Click update from AR • Preview of Q3 results and 2024/25 budget were discussed. 	
7. People and Culture Sub-Committee update	<p>Verbal update from SB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Networks update, including recruitment of new Co-Chairs this summer • New policies: Menopause Policy, Disability Policy and Neurodiversity Policy • Staff survey results presented • Reward & recognition update from PH • Health and safety update from LH 	
8. Student Council, ASMM and Scrutiny Panel update	Discussed earlier in Executive Officer presentations.	

Substantive items for consideration

<p>9. Staff Survey results</p>	<p>Verbal update given by SB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began surveying staff in 2023 using NUS survey • In 2024 have done a lighter version, to save costs and time as NUS data takes a long time to come through <p>Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good work-life balance; love line management; service delivery, work environment, communication <p>Areas of challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMT not as connected as would like: at recent CEO Training Session explored communication styles etc • High expectations: managing the modern workforce brings with it an expectations that are causing some strain • More trust in mini-teams: The team feel that other teams aren't doing as well as they are, so trust isn't as high <p>Key variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management styles: Though the sentiment is broadly positive, the degree of independence and support varies. Some staff feel more autonomous while others rely heavily on managerial support. This could point to differing management styles or varying staff needs. • Service delivery consistency: Responses indicate that while service quality is generally seen as high, there are concerns about consistency. This suggests a need for standardising processes or improving certain aspects of service delivery. • Perception gaps in SMT: While many responses are neutral or positive, the detailed comments indicate that perceptions of SMT's effectiveness vary by individual and issue. 	
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	<p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently held a CEO Learning Session: Session was on communication styles & strengths, focus on empathy and considering others perspectives. The team feel they, as individuals, communicate well, but often feel others don't. There is a lack of acceptance and empathy here. • CEO objectives and SMT: I've been gifted a ready-made objective to continue work on presenteeism, management upskilling and empowering SMT. The skills gap at Manager level is clear. • Survey in 2025: Do we need to pay for the large NUS survey, or shall we stay in-house? Thoughts from Trustees welcomed. • PDP season and 2024/25 academic year planning: All Team Day, Strat plan review after discussing these results as a team. Workshopping and honest conversations. Addressing Manager skills gap & SMT connection with team <p>LM: Survey in 2025, preference?</p> <p>SB: Struggling to see benefit of benchmark feedbacks, but open to opinions.</p> <p>BevS: Good to see improvement. Reference to 4 day week, do they want compressed hours or reduction in pay?</p> <p>SB: Would like to explore that more with staff as curious to what they mean and they need.</p> <p>BevS: Dilemma about surveying internally or externally, chose an external survey that is actually measuring the qualities you want in your organization, but if you want to shine in the sector then perhaps have to go alternative route. Will appreciate considered debate.</p> <p>AI: Did you find NUS results in 2023 useful?</p> <p>SB: Were able to segment quite easily and staff felt wasn't 100% anonymous. Myself and RB discussed at P&C Sub-Committee around standing by comments but main thing I found helpful was segmentation.</p>	
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	<p>PG: Find the NUS survey very cheap although does take away anonymity due to size of organization. But benchmarking ability is useful and spotting national trends that may affect staff workload and happiness also. Provides confidence to team that PG can't provide if do internally.</p>	
10. Student Trustee recruitment	<p>Update from AH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had to cancel Appointments Panel scheduled for 27/06/2024 • Have discussed as SMT to review how we recruit to these roles. SB and AH have discussed some ideas but any other feedback or ideas would be welcomed. 	
11. Spotlight ideas	<p>LM: Presentation from returning Execs about what they want to achieve in the year ahead.</p> <p>PG: 1) Freedom of Speech consultation results if out by then along with 2) Sexual Harassment consultation as potentially both huge pieces of work and interesting to see how fit in at DSU.</p> <p>AI: 1) New Government impact on SU's and Higher Education 2) AI</p>	
12. Q3 Financial Results	<p>Verbal overview given by PH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profit of £64k, budgeted to make £23k • Commercial £76k adverse – variances reported at December 2023 Board meeting • Membership Services underspend of £118k • Bottom line is ahead of budget including further staffing savings within the Mar/comms & Advice teams • Salary savings across the board offsetting variances in Income, costs being controlled so gaps from the previous years are now plugged • Q4 downturn of £9k compared to budget due to reduction in Native contract income £6k and £3k downturn in SUpplies • Focus for SMT is now on budget 24/25 preparations • PH feels £46k is a prudent assessment 	

	<p>AI: Opportunities development fund underspend of £5k – reasons behind that e.g. lower uptake?</p> <p>AH: Within Opportunities team large way promote the fund is through Committee catchup meetings but due to staffing issues that hasn't been able to take place. Currently being built back up and encouraging applications.</p> <p>BevS: Is there anything worrying the Exec about the financial situation?</p> <p>AI: A lot has to do with staffing and have had staff savings in previous year and now so we won't have that going forward. Need to be more accurate with budgeting next year as we won't have those staff savings.</p> <p>PH: Hopefully will pick that up in the next item.</p> <p>GK: Consistently missed in Commercial and consistently saved ourselves in Membership Services. Pattern cannot continue and we had a good conversation around this in C&D Sub-Committee recently.</p> <p>PG: End of year surplus, how does it impact on block grant discussions or asking for more funding with DMU?</p> <p>SB: Not going to DMU regularly for funding and maintain strong relationship. Going to them with sensible ideas and incrementally for longer term initiatives.</p>	
<p>13. Budget 24/25 for Approval</p>	<p>Verbal overview from SB of Budget Summary paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realised how agile we are which has given us sense of confidence and calm to go into second year of new strategic plan. Using data to guide student trends and more realistically where we will be. • Lots of research done into budget taking into account Members Survey, broader commercial and SU surveys and carried on theme of being agile • Not going to DMU with requests for increasing block grant/funding as not reasonable request TEXT REDACTED • £14k bottom line profit, takes into account stretch projects and reducing costs for students as much as possible 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surplus on reserves which is nice and budget includes projected 3% cost of living increase TEXT REDACTED <p>Overview from PH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership Services spend £723k. • Central Services £502k spend which includes pensions deficit, cleaning, insurance, auditors, staffing, contingencies <p>BevS: Opportunity to chat with DMU about the pensions deficit still being paid into when no current staff members are still in the scheme?</p> <p>PH: Debbie Muddimer, Head of Finance at DMU, is aware of the situation. Have option of speaking to DMU Finance team member too about. Some SU's, their universities have offered to pay their deficits but DMU are not able to do for us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Services and Marketing: £18k profit <p>PG: Expect LVL1 to lose some money, question to Executive Officers is it effecting students and deeply enough to cost £57k investment a year?</p> <p>AI: Think a lot of students are not coming to LVL1 but now do value as its own space now to hang out in there. Focus on general events and less nightlife.</p> <p>KS: Don't think it works – most feedback is wanting the games downstairs for easier access.</p> <p>LM: SULets rent for the office downstairs, how long has it been TEXT REDACTED</p> <p>AR: They have a few things in the contract with them that need to be compared more widely including exclusivity. Conversations with DMU to finalise about which spaces are DSU's and which aren't, once those are completed then will be looking to start those conversations.</p>	
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	<p>LM: Have had a number of discussions with SB about their charitable status as if they are more of a commercial entity, then why do we give them that reduced rent.</p> <p>AI: Have we included a rental income from Desi/space on the ground floor?</p> <p>AR: Small element in there but largely based on what was done this year and still need to finalise who comes into that space.</p> <p>GK: Native contract was renegotiated at their request TEXT REDACTED. Is there a contingency there?</p> <p>AR: Have been in contact with another similar company and they would be happy to step in if that happened. Have also done work within our own team about making local contacts to generate ourselves. Native have done a restructure themselves and are generating a lot more bookings for Welcome Festival for us already so more confident with their position.</p> <p>Trustee Board voted to approve the budget for 2024/25.</p>	
<p>14. Reserves & Investment Policy</p>	<p>PH: This time last year Trustee Board reviewed these policies. PH has updated figures for this year (in document sent before Trustee Board).</p> <p>PH would like the Board to approve use of TEXT REDACTED.</p> <p>LM: Get out arrangement if doesn't work for DSU?</p> <p>PH: If invested money in three-year deposit then would have to wait for that time to expire but no set up fees. Aim of the Foundation is to support charities like DSU.</p> <p>RB: Is this a move that may involve data moving from one system to another or in the old system, so what happens to that data?</p> <p>PH: We have TEXT REDACTED. We then have day to day banking within TEXT REDACTED. This is to allow us to generate more interest independently. Once we have done that one application form, PH can move money without needing trustees to repeatedly complete forms and supply identification. The TEXT</p>	

	<p>REDACTED would be moved from TEXT REDACTED and put into the TEXT REDACTED platform.</p> <p>GK: Process for ensuring that PH sticks to the policies?</p> <p>PH: Within the policy there is mention of monitoring and review. This perhaps need to be enhanced for reporting into SB?</p> <p>GK: Think it does so that it protects both DSU and PH.</p> <p>AI suggested adding it as an item to C&D Sub-Committee.</p> <p>RB: Have we done due diligence on the TEXT REDACTED?</p> <p>SB: If it reassures trustees we can go back to them and ask for an explanation on Trust Pilot scoring.</p> <p>ACTION: PH to go back to TEXT REDACTED and enquire about the Trust Pilot reviews/rating and reporting mechanisms</p> <p>BevS: Have TEXT REDACTED in a savings investment account and if that bank goes bust, we will only get £80k back so whatever is done, some of that money needs to be moved.</p>	
<p>15. Elections Report</p>	<p>AH gave verbal overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice team ran a great election again, shown by high voter turnout • Did see a reduction in number of votes per student but saw more of students taking the time to read manifestos • Increase in the number of complaints logged but tended to be of the same incidences so more awareness from students about how to make those complaints. • Number of recommendations made in report that will be implemented 	
<p>16. Risk Register updates</p>	<p>SB bringing to Trustee Board every meeting and highlighting any key changes/amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced likelihood of reserves risk by 1 point 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native contract now signed so risk remains the same but mitigation has now happened • E10 – reduced from 2 to 1 as DMU have agreed to pay cost of living increase for 2024/25 	
AOB	<p><u>Additional reading with papers</u></p> <p>RB commented that the additional papers took a long time to read but was very helpful. Was it something we had commissioned?</p> <p>SB: Yes, have something more specific coming for ourselves but we did commission this although it is SU wide. They will be walking us through our specific SU data.</p> <p><u>Outgoing Trustees</u></p> <p>GK: For three Trustees today is their last meeting. Thank you to DM, AI and LM for their service, commitment and support both in this meeting and outside of it.</p>	

Meeting closed

Items for receipt (not discussion)

Future Meetings:

Date	Meeting	Information
Thursday 15th August 2024	Trustee Board Away Day incl. Board	All day On campus, Leicester
Monday 4th November 2024	People & Culture Sub-Committee	1:30pm - 3:00pm TEAMS
Monday 11th November 2024	Commercial & Development Sub-Committee	1:30pm – 3:00pm TEAMS

Monday 25th November 2024	DSU Trustee Board	4:30pm - 7:30pm In person or via TEAMS
Monday 3rd March 2025	People & Culture Sub-Committee	1:30pm - 3:00pm TEAMS
Monday 10th March 2025	Commercial & Development Sub-Committee	1:30pm - 3:00pm TEAMS
Monday 7th April 2025	DSU Trustee Board	4:30pm – 7:30pm TEAMS/In person
Monday 2nd June 2025	People & Culture Sub-Committee	1:30pm - 3:00pm TEAMS
Monday 9th June 2025	Commercial & Development Sub-Committee	1:30pm - 3:00pm TEAMS
Monday 23rd June 2025	DSU Trustee Board	4:30pm - 7:30pm In person or via TEAMS

DSU Trustee Board Action Log 2023/24

Date action added	Action Reference	Action Required	Notes	Action Lead	Target Date for completion	Status
Oct 23	Risk Register	SB, PH and RB to meet to go through current Risk Register and possible changes/additions to layout style and bring back to TB		SB/PH		Completed
Oct 23	Merchant Services	PH and AR will look into further.		PH/AR		Completed

Oct 23	Business Continuity Plan	Amend communication timeframe; Compare with DMU and edit	Meeting DMU 19 th March	SB/PH		In progress
Dec 23	Executive Officer update	Exec to include in next Trustee Board Officer update what their legacy goals/aims are.		EXECS		Completed
Dec 23	Commercial and Development Sub-Committee update	SMT to decide when Project Click will be next added to Trustee Board agenda.		SB/PH/AR/AH		Completed
Dec 23	Student Council update	Include Scrutiny Panel update on Trustee Board agenda going forward.		AI		Completed
Dec 23	Trustee Code of Conduct	SB to revise and recirculate.		SB		Completed
Dec 23		DM to coordinate and work with SB on wording.		DM		Completed
March 2024	CEO Update	SB to look at format of project dashboard.		SB	June 2024	Completed
March 2024	Executive Officer Update	At June Trustee Board, Exec to present details on plans for their legacy projects after they have left DSU.		EXEC	June 2024	Completed
March 2024	Spotlight Ideas	Could be useful auditor introduction as well as Trustee training, so leave with SB.		SB		