

LEICESTER STUDENTS' UNION

BOARD OF TRUSTEE

Minutes of

16th April 2025 at 13:00

Room 3.01, Percy Gee Building, University of Leicester

Members of Meeting			
	Name	Designation	Remarks
Present	Julia Bates	Chair / JB	<i>Chairperson</i>
	David Moore	DM	<i>Lay Trustee</i>
	Phil Smith	PS	<i>Lay Trustee</i>
	Nicola Hurley	NH	<i>Lay Trustee</i>
	Sian Worton	SW	<i>Student Trustee</i>
	Joshitha Venkataraman	JV	<i>President</i>
	Reed James	RJ	<i>Community & Wellbeing Officer</i>
	Aishwarya Kote	AK*	<i>Liberation Officer</i>
	Ajay Reddy	AR	<i>Sports & Societies Officer</i>
In Attendance	Liam Davis	LD	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
	Ambalavanar Kumaran	AK	<i>Director of Membership Services</i>
	Kex Leung	KL	<i>Administration & Governance Coordinator</i>
Apologies	Sabina Tariq	ST	<i>Lay Trustee</i>
	Nicola Jarram	NJ	<i>Director of Finance</i>

1 Apologies for Absence

1.0.1 The Board **NOTED** the apologies from **NJ** and **ST** were received.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.0.1 There is no declaration of interest.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

3.0.1 The Board **DISCUSSED** the new forms of minutes created by KL and made relevant suggestions for the future minutes.

3.0.2 The Board **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting on 20th November 2024 as an accurate record.

3.0.3 The Chair **REVIEWED** the action log with the Board.

3.0.4 The Board **APPROVED** this public version of the minutes and **NOTED** that the form should be refined continuously based on the feedback from the Board.

3.0.5 The Board was **INFORMED** that there will be a separate section on the website about the Board of Trustees.

4 Elections Summary

4.0.1 The Chair **ACKNOWLEDGED** the quality of work on the last election.

4.0.2 AK **PRESENTED** the elections summary as follows:

4.0.2.1 A notable challenge faced by the Union is unprecedented high rate of candidate disqualification due to reasons including campaigners' behaviours.

4.0.2.2 The team applied the elections rules diligently considering all the challenges, and such application was reinforced by the external Returning Officer who is satisfied with the election as a whole.

4.0.2.3 Recommendations have been made in the report and will go out for consultation with the students to gain feedback on the suitable course of action and noting the Board should not be the decision-making body on these recommendations.

4.0.2.4 AK **EXPLAINED** the Part-Time Officer (PTO) selection process and the impact on elections.

4.0.3 LD made the following comments:

4.0.3.1 The disappointing high rate of disqualification was, in part, caused by the higher number of candidates and a large number of students who are new to the Students' Union.

4.0.3.2 The announcements of disqualifying candidates on the Union's social media channels are the ones that received most engagements from the students.

4.0.3.3 The question on how to elect student leaders and representatives ideally shall be put to Leicester 100, and the Union will build on its feedback and devise relevant improvements.

4.0.3.4 There was a high level of engagement from the international students.

4.0.3.5 The Union might need to discuss and devise a modern solution on how to maintain the diversity of the officer team in future elections.

4.0.4 LD **RAISED** that the team would need more support in regard to candidate disqualification.

- 4.0.5 AK **REITERATE** that the model of producing and electing student representatives should not be decided by staff but by students, hence the importance of retrieving feedback from the Leicester 100.
- 4.0.6 The Board **DISCUSSED** the issue of measuring the capabilities of the candidates and the concern of students answering those question via the usage of AI tools to pass the baseline during the selection process.
- 4.0.7 AK **STRESSED** that it was fortunate that there was a Full-Time Officer who were able to remain neutral by not running in the election and supporting the election work.
- 4.0.8 AK **EXPLAINED** to the Board that the recommendations made in this paper is only for the Board's information and to gather feedback from the Board.
- 4.0.9 The Board **CONFIRMED** that AK should proceed on the basis of this paper.

5 Finance Update

- 5.0.1 LD **PRESENTED** the paper on 25/26 Budget and Reforecast 3.
- 5.0.2 The Board **NOTED** the finance update.

6 Staffing our new Governance

- 6.0.1 LD **REMARKED** that this presentation is to provide updates to the Board on the next steps for the integration of the governance review, and the relevant tasks, including paperwork and gaining students' approval are completed.
- 6.0.2 The presentation **NOTED** the following:
 - 6.0.2.1 There is an immediate need of tweaking the staffing structure as a result of changes in governance.
 - 6.0.2.2 College Rep Program will be expanded to include post-graduate students.
- 6.0.3 LD **NOTED** the benefits of employing more student staff from both the business & finance perspective and the charity perspective.
- 6.0.4 In response to the question raised by JV, LD **NOTED** that the Union's strategy will focus on developing community and representation structures that meet the needs of students, and recognise the growth of international postgraduate students, which leads to the need of employing students from those communities for various work. He is also conscious of the awareness on issues including their right to work and visa restrictions.
- 6.0.5 While recognising the benefits of this staffing structure, DM **NOTED** the importance in matters related to finance and HR in the implementation of this staffing structure, and the awareness of single points of failure.

- 6.0.6 The Board **NOTED** the presentation of the Union's staff structure and future planning given by LD.

7 Risk Register

- 7.0.1 The Board **DISCUSSED** the Risk Register in the categories of compliance, democracy & governance, and external factors.

- 7.0.1.1 LD **NOTED** that the Union is a low-risk charity when compared to other charitable organisations.

- 7.0.2 The Board **AGREED** that risks should be managed by the appropriate Sub-Committees and their work, along with the allocation of responsibilities should be presented to the Board, as well as the changes took place in the Union's risk profile.

- 7.0.3 The Board **NOTED** the Risk Register.

8 Sub-Committee Structure

- 8.0.1 LD **NOTED** that this is a revised paper on the Sub-Committee Structure as per requested by the Board in the past, and it aims to provide more details on the newly proposed Membership & Governance Sub-Committee, including its order of business that outlines the need for Board oversight of the Union's risks and the delivery of charitable objectives and its duty of overseeing the Union's democratic process, such as the elections and the delivery of the Leicester 100.

- 8.0.2 In response to the question raised by the Chair on whether the new Sub-Committee structure covers all risks areas with the removal of the Risk Management Sub-Committee, LD **NOTED** that an allocation of risks is recommended in this paper, and the Board needs to decide the allocation of Lay Trustees for the Sub-Committees.

- 8.0.3 The Board **NOTED** the need to avoid clashes between meetings and lectures considering the importance of the student members of the Sub-Committees.

- 8.0.4 The Board **DISCUSSED** the allocation of personnel for each Sub-Committee and **NOTED** the need of allocating the relevant experts to the Sub-Committees accordingly.

- 8.0.5 DM **RAISED** that there is a need to revise the Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committees, and their respective Chairs should ensure a revised version is produced.

- 8.0.6 LD **RAISED** that the Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committees should mention inviting staff members to the meetings.

9 Strategy Update

- 9.0.1 LD will provide the strategy update to the Chair in their next meeting.

10 Memorandum of Understanding

- 10.0.1 The Board **APPROVED** the Memorandum of Understanding and it will be signed by the Chair.

11 Sustainability Network

- 11.0.1 RJ **PRESENTED** this paper in the wish of seeking approval for the proposed Sustainability Network to be the 5th Council of the Union.
- 11.0.2 DM **REMARKED** that this paper is well-articulated and demonstrates the strong interest from students in the area of sustainability.
- 11.0.3 The Board **DISCUSSED** the relationship between a Council, the Leicester 100, and the Board, and recognise the importance of allowing the Board to understand the voice of the students via the work of the Leicester 100.
- 11.0.4 LD **SUGGESTED** a one-year trial run for this proposed 5th Council and return to 4 Councils after the trial while reviewing its effectiveness and costs.
- 11.0.5 The Chair **RAISED** concerns over the possible increase in the need for staff resources in time.
- 11.0.6 The Board **APPROVED** this proposal of making the Sustainability Network to the 5th Council of the Union for a one-year period as a trial run.

12 Any Other Business

- 12.0.1 There is not any other business.