**Annual Members Meeting**

Time: 16:00 – 18:00

Duration: 2 hours

Location: On Teams

Chair: ASU President (Balraj Purewal - BP) and ASU CEO (Max McLoughlin)

Minutes taken by: Student Activities and Voice Manager (Nadine Al-Kudcy)

Meeting quorate/not quorate: not quorate (BP confirmed the meeting is not quorate. Voting will be taken for indicative purposes).

In attendance:

8 staff attending

20 students attending

Minutes from Previous AMM shown. 91% vote to approve the previous minutes

(Paddy Crosby - PC) Student noted that CEG students in the minutes. Student noted verbal feedback to them from CEG students about not sure how it has come to fruition.

Amanpreet Sidhu noted individual enrolment onto the SU system, can be time consuming given how it is set up. CEG student can participate in SU clubs and societies. SU collaborating with OnCampus for events. Library and other aspects CEG have the partnership directly, not through SU.

Richard Broome noted in the chat:

[16:13] Richard Broome

Yes, they are our Associate Members. We have done everything from our end and have an agreement with OnCampus Aston (CEG). But CEG have an issue at their end with ability to share data. So, at this point we don't have a data share into our membership system as we do for Aston Uni students. Therefore, colleagues have to enter their data directly in the office when they contact us.

PC asked about the payment for membership, has this gone through and is the SU benefitting from this arrangement as agreed?

Richard Broome and Max McLoughlin (MM) noted that yes, the terms have been met.

BP asked if there were any questions.

MM introduction.

Staff lead to ensure the SU does what it needs. Work alongside the Sabbatical officers to deliver for students.

Part of charitable constitution we must have an AGM and are legally obliged to deliver information on these slides to you.

Annual accounts from 2021-22 shown on slide.

MM confirmed fundamentally good news. Circled in red is the total amount of funds. £782,929 total, due to increase in funding. Pandemic; 3 key things

* Not running commercial services which have previously operated at a loss
* Staff furloughed
* Not running any activities due to restrictions e.g. no sport.

Not great student experience but good for the balance sheet.

Roughly just under £1 million to be spent on student services

Balance sheet slide – this is what the organisation was worth. Outlines fixed assets, we don’t own the building but the things in it. Stock in the shop and bar. Debtors are people that owe us money. One of our debtors is the Uni, where we get the block grant but nothing to be concerned about as the payment comes through.

Net worth is our total value – restricted and unrestricted funds. Money in our clubs and societies accounts and this money strictly speaking belongs to the clubs and societies and is spent how they wish. Designated funds for The Green and to invest in our commercial services.

Question in the chat:

[16:18] Michael Pritchard (Research Student)

Richard any indication that CEG will work to improve their systems to better enable data sharing or are we stuck with manual processing for the foreseeable.

Answered: [16:21] Richard Broome

This has been raised repeatedly with CEG, Paige, Nadine, Preet and I met with CEG for the periodic liaison board and I raised it firmly with management of CEG. They have not yet been able to give any indication when this might improve. The issue lays with the wider CEG company and it is not within the control of the CEG Director on site at Aston.

Question from student (PC) about the accounts being labelled and spoken about interchangeably between this year and last year.

Max noted that the accounts are audited and important snapshot of where we were and were we are looking to go.

PC asked about the financaes being earmarked for commercial services and the decision making process. Eg Starbucks and sustainabaility.

MM noted charitable aims doesn’t mention sustainability. Student communities and what they want to do.

Spend money on something that doesn’t bring income but brings students together. In line with our charitable aims.

Commercial areas important to support clubs and societies in line with our charitable objectives.

Supporting space within our building vs spending money externally - supporting our students so what is justifiable.

Students using the commercial space upstairs – students not spending money but using the space, making friends and part of their student experience. Not commercial benefit but building relationship with the SU and meeting our charitable aims.

 Chat noted:

[16:29] Patrick Crosby (Student)

Does that possibly speak to the proportion of space dedicated to the commercial space, and perhaps the need for a (or an additional) strategy for community building separate to commercial spaces?

PC questioned whether building spaces that aren’t commercially based?

MM noted the SU allows students to use space much like their front room, no pressure to spend money.

Chat noted:

[16:34] Michael Pritchard (Research Student)

Patrick for what it’s worth I can confirm the topic of balancing community & commercial (or rather, achieving both) is a regular topic at finance subcommittee of the trustee board and within the commercial services team themselves on a more detailed level - & I anticipate cost of living will be a big factor in those discussions going forwards

Reserve’s Policy – charities cannot save money. Must spend money on their charitable aims but if saving up for a particular thing then this must be clear and stated.

What can the SU do if the University pulled the plug on the SU funding? If no funding is received, how long can the SU continue until other funding comes through? University funding is pretty secure, but we still have a reserves policy. £500,000 in reserves, likely to cover 4 months of business as usual. Board of Trustees have agreed to spend more money to support the commercial services, as the business model starts to work. Designated and restricted funds outlined within the policy.

Additional information to learn more about the SU as a charity – links provided on slide.

MM reviewed the Board of Trustees.

MM confirmed clean audit.

List of affiliations – branches out to other external organisations that help facilitate what we do. A very important affiliation is NUS. Noted that BUCs is important for student sport and the National Governing Bodies.

MM noted that this slide marks the end of the data that he is legally bound to review and discuss.

BP – New Strategic Plan review

Vision and Mission outlined. Providing the best possible experience whilst at Aston.

Enabling Objectives – people, resources and space will be managed sustainably and effectively.

Make social media as engaging as possible. Build network through partnerships and collaborations.

BP confirmed no motions submitted and no policies lapsed.

BP introduced full time officer updates.

* Lobby Unviesity for additional funds, secured £500,000 additional funding for staff and resource at the SU.
* Commonwealth Games – selected to be a baton carrier as a representative of the University
* Representing the SU at meetings with the University

PC noted lobbying the University relating to corovnavirus cases rising. Given the University attitude towards covid and risk and given the same concerns being exoressed about this coming assessment period, what have you done to lobby the University about making the assessments accessible and safe?

BP clarified what period referred to

PC current time

BP confirmed Yesmeen is working with ruth

Student petition being discussed with the University.

BP noted he is not familiar with what is currently happening. Yesmeen, Paige and Annas have also been working on this more currently so can check and get back.

No further questions.

Paige Dawson

January lobbied the University to sign a pledge to not use NDAs in sexual harassment and bullying cases. One of the first Unis to sign this pledge in England.

February secured ReciteMe on the SU website to make it more accessible. Neurodiverget students to assist them.

Worked with Advice Team manager about reporting in spiking cases.

March Welfare Report saved on SU website and shared with the University. Raw data is also available.

Student Users Experience group and presettned to Alison Levey and Ravteg Dhesi – look to use to create a manifesto to guide improvement of student health and welbing

Hosted Vigil with BCU, UCB and UoB for any students impacted by war. Colelcting food and supplies for care packages.

May Mental Health Month – reflection from the Welfare Survey. Lots of activities scheduled for the month so look out for them.

Annas Mazhar

December – Student Activities Christmas dinner, noted SA Executive Committee organsiation.

AU Ball had over 400 attendees at Eastside. Great to see bounceback after Covid.

New VPSA elected; Aroubah.

Varsity taking place tomorrow with sports clubs competing against BCU.

ASU Awards happening this Friday, great for it to happen in person after 2 years online. Grateful to recognise the work put in by the students.

Yesmeen Singh is on annual leave today so is unable to giver her report.

**Part Time Officer updates.**

Isha Hussain provided slides for her update.

Michael Pritchard reporting for DSOs.

Events put on for Disability History Month. Took senior staff around the main building. PVC Diversity and senior estates member highlighting accessibility issues within the building. Some issues have been addressed and larger projects there are plans being reviewed which is positive progress.

Disabled student and staff forum – ensuring voice heard.

New model for SU Disabled Students committee. Looking to uplift and empower the members of the committee, better represent themselves to ensure the range of needs are represented. Constitutions for this written and look to implement.

Laptops for DSA recipients waiting for DSA to be confirmed. Short term response and lobbying for long term response then became aware that the University had given the SU a number of laptops. Finding the right person to talk to, find that things can change which is a positive.

Eleanor Barton ahs asked whether those laptops have been distributed?

PC noted that there is a process via the Enabling team for students to request a laptop but not sure it is the most effective, noted that the DSOs haven’t input into this.

Chat: [17:00] Max McLoughlin

We've put some promotion out on social media about the laptops- take up hasn't been great from students, but they are there if students want them. Spread the word!

[16:59] Annas Mazhar

Does the disabled students committee still meet at all?

Michael noted that yes it has, hopeful to take this forward. Members looking to continue their involvement next year. PC noted that the reforms they would like to make would assist with this.

**Ann Bennett**

Governance review. Trustee Board has been working ona governange review, proposals submitted in conjunction with this.

Responded to UCU strikes quite wuikcly. Met several times to try and ensure student ovice is heard. Held an emergency student countil in term 2.

Tricky position to report, not a liberation officer. All officers are required to talk at Council, rather than just those that choose to talk.

Wish Michael all the best in this role next year.

**Questions and AOB**

Meeting notice given months ago but Officers only asked to submit their report approximately 36 hours ago. Ann gives a week notice and provides a template for the presentation. Warning allows for exceptional circumstances. Note that Yesmeen is on annual leave, for an AGM feel that this is problematic. Reason why she cannot be in attendance but.

Adora Wong – Student representation feedback to Yesmeen about exams and lobbying the University about the approach for this exam season. Is there is anything that can be shared with the students to help calm them down?

Eleanor Barton – Regarding the differences of opinion between different students in the student rep chat. Contingencies last year have been removed which means accredited exams are in person, but some are not so can still be online. Certain subjects have everything online so seems like there is an imbalance of approach and students finding it unfair. Everyone’s course is different so in certain careers there is a more physical application so require the in-person sections. The main thing is about the communication; split amongst the colleges so focused to specific groups.

BP noted that there is confusion and agree that communication needs to be better.

BP will pick this up with Ruth given that Yesmeen is on annual leave.

PC asked whether Yesmeen is on annual leave for the rest of the week? PC noted that they and Michael have been very vocal about their concern for how exams have been handled this year. Teaks so not as badly handled as last year. Reinstatement of the no detriment policy? PC and MP not involved in these discussions, why the full-time officers didn’t involve them in this?

BP noted that the full-time officers were on annual leave so not always available for discussions.

PC queried what has been happening without input from the part time officers

BP apologised and noted it wasn’t with malicious intent.

MP noted about lobbying the University directly

Eleanor Barton relay back. 15-day policy for event approval and then being asked for things to be produced within 48 hours back, discrepancy of timings. Common courtesy to be given as much notice as possible. For example, a training issue communicated last minute, hard to manage.

BP noted that the Activities team is stretched, and new resource should help with this.

AW noted issues with Sport Aston. Is there any chance that this can be organised better for next year? Will someone be replacing the Club Coordinator soon?

BP noted that he and MM have been pushing on about these issues with the University. Requested Adora send through notes that he can follow up on too.

PC noted that this time last year no-one ran for DSO and would like to put themselves forward for the DSO role for the coming year.

MP noted where there is anything that can be done between the SU clubs and societies and the University Safety Team. Experience with Music Society and entry into the Main Building, issues relating to this.

NA noted that new personnel and recognition of consistency issues. Paige, Richard and I have been in conversation with the Pro VC about this too.