**STUDENTS’ UNION AT BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY**

**Student Members Meeting (SMM)**

**[30 May 2023]**

[18:00PM] [via Zoom]

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

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| **PRESENT**  *Omuwa Ayomoto (OA) SU President-* ***Chair***  *Chike Dike (CD) SU VP Welfare & Community*  *Norah Deka (ND) SU VP Education*  *Fiifi Asafu-Adjaye (FA)* *SU VP Opportunities*  *Leon Cambray (LC)*  *Aneta Postek (AP)*  *Other BU Students* |  | **IN ATTENDANCE**  *Dr Samantha Leahy-Harland (SLH) Chief Executive Officer*  *Kayleigh Heckford**(KH) Democracy and Campaigns Manager*  *Fatmata Durkin (FD) Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator* |
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**1. Welcome and Introductions, for noting**

* 1. Omuwa Ayomoto, SU President and Chair of the Student Members Meeting extended a formal welcome to all participants in attendance.
  2. OA stated that 20 votes had been submitted via proxy prior to the meeting and these would count towards the 100 quoracy requirements for the SMM.
  3. OA outlined the meeting agenda.

**2. Meeting Etiquette and Democratic Procedures, for noting**

2.1 There was a presentation of SUBU’s Safe Space protocol to members.

2.2 OA reminded attendees of the SMM meeting etiquette and the Union’s

Democratic Procedures.

**3. Ratification of Minutes from the previous meeting (24 May 2022)**

3.1 **24 May 2022 Student Members Meeting** **Minutes were RATIFIED.**

**4. Trustee Board Report on the Union's activities since the previous meeting, for noting**

4.1 A short update was presented by Dr Sam Leahy-Harland (SLH), Chief Executive Officer of SUBU, on behalf of the Trustee Board.

SLH listed the priorities for the Trustee Board over the past year. Key points

noted by the SMM:

* A continued focus for the Trustee Board had been around ensuring the financial future and viability of SUBU. Particularly, as SUBU returned to more normal operations, in terms of the Commercial Services operations re-commencing and in-person events on the membership side.
* SUBU had also been assessing how it articulated its impact and value to its members and stakeholders, including the Union’s primary funder, the University.
* The Trustee Board had been overseeing a framework for measuring SUBU’s outcomes and impacts. This had been developed over the past year and this work would be shared imminently at an event, via a Report that was due to be published shortly.
* Commercial Services and the income generated through its outlets, which included the nightclub, shop and bar in addition to the Summer Ball, were reinvested back into SUBU, and that enabled the Union to provide the full range of services and activities to its members.
* The recent pandemic and the way that it had affected student behaviours had, despite the Union returning to some form of normality, impacted SUBU’s income and the Organisation had not yet recovered its previous, pre pandemic, trading performance.
* In the Autumn and Spring SUBU commissioned a review to assess Commercial Services from an operational perspective and also to gather a thorough understanding from students and staff, what it was that was wanted, from the outlets on campus and at The Old Fire Station. SUBU were now in the process of instigating a new Commercial Strategy that would be introduced over the Summer.
* Another key area for the Trustee Board was the launch and implementation of a People Plan, focused on the staff at the Union. SUBU recognised that its people were its biggest asset as they enabled it to provide the services and activities for its members. Staff needed to be empowered, rewarded and motivated and during the past year the Union had been reviewing how it could best support its people, helping them grow, develop and deliver for its members.

**5. Presentation of the Union’s accounts, for noting**

5.1 SLH presented a short update.

Key points noted by the SMM:

* SLH explained that SUBU’s purpose was to benefit its members, the students at the University. Its aim was to represent the interests and welfare of all BU students. SUBU was the recognised channel between students and the University, and the Union’s key goal was to promote cultural, sporting, and social activities for students throughout the year. These objectives were laid down in the Union’s Articles of Association, and SUBU, being an independent charity reporting to the Charity’s Commission, had to ensure that it fulfilled these aims.
* Each year SUBU presented its annual accounts to its members at the SMM. This was a statutory requirement under the 1994 Education Act.
* It was an opportunity for members to explore how SUBU spent its finances.
* The Union always reported on the previous year, therefore the reporting period under discussion was 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022.
* The Union’s accounts were externally Audited. SLH explained that as a company registered with the Charity Commission, SUBU appointed a set of qualified accountants to review its accounts and confirm they offered a true and fair picture of the Union’s finances. This provided an expert and independent view of SUBU’s fiscal position.
* The Union was obliged to report on its finances to Company’s House and the Charity Commission.
* External auditors were appointed for the reporting period 2021/22 and the draft audited accounts were always sent to the Trustee Board. Annually, the Trustee Board conducted the final approvals for the final accounts.
* The accounts were also reviewed by the members at the Student Members Meeting. It was important that members had sight of, and understood, how the Union’s finances were managed and controlled. Fiscal management and control also occurred by means of the Full-Time Officers, ensuring members had influence over how the Union spent its finances.
* SUBU was funded by income from its trading subsidiary, Feelprime, which encompassed the Old Fire Station and the Summer Ball. SUBU also acquired funding through its bar, café and shop.
* The only other major source of finance was the annual block grant which was provided by Bournemouth University.
* The block grant in 2021/22 was £1.19M. This was a slight increase from the 2020/21 figure which had been cut due to the pandemic and cost saving on behalf of BU. SUBU was satisfied to see that figure reverted.
* SUBU was fortunate to have rent and service free occupation of its facilities, and this supported the activities the Union provided.
* £4.6M was the income generated by SUBU throughout the year and was an increase from the year before. The previous year had been adversely affected due to the covid crisis and during that time all Commercial Services had been closed with no income being made. SUBU had, during that period, had to reduce its spending to align with the prevailing conditions.
* There had been an upturn in trading during the 2021/22-year, post pandemic, but it had not matched the pre-pandemic trading figures. However, numbers continued to improve in the Union’s venues.
* Due to the hard work of the Commercial Services Team, SUBU were successfully awarded an Arts Council Grant which supported the resurrection of events at The Old Fire Station. SUBU won £250K of Arts Council funding which was allocated to improvements to the facilities.
* SMM noted the departmental highlights that gave an insight into the variety and range of activities provided by SUBU.
* SUBU had a managed pension liability. The Union had been part of a scheme that had closed several years ago, there was a debt that SUBU was paying down over the next 17-18 years. This was a managed and serviced debt which was built into the Union’s trading each year and was affordable.
* SUBU achieved an increase in its assets and income over the year and this ensured the full operation of the Union and that its minimum reserves policy was maintained.
* All the income from SUBU’s trading arms and the money from the block grant were allocated to student activities, student services and staff in support of those services and activities.
* Direct expenditure on charitable activities in 2021/22 was £2.62M, up from £1.93M the previous year. SUBU had to reduce spending during the pandemic, but as soon as it was able, its priority had been investing, to ensure the right support, staff and the right services were in place and the right events targeted to its members.
* The £2.62M covered the operation of the Advice Service, Clubs and Societies, Student Representation and Voice.
* Due to a reconfiguration of staff in SUBU’s Finance Department this year, the Union were a little delayed in the production of the audited accounts, but the process was in the final stages and the final report would be available from SUBU by the end of July and the details would be available should anyone request them.
* SLH stated that the figures presented at this meeting were unlikely to change and would be in the final report when produced. The Members Meeting were informed that the figures presented were draft data whilst the accounts were being finalised.
* Contact details were given so that any member who wanted further information could get in contact after the meeting, as required.

**6. List of Affiliations, for Ratification**

6.1 Presented by SLH.

Key points noted by the SMM:

* SLH explained that SUBU required approval at the SMM for the continued affiliation to the National Union of Students (NUS).
* The NUS had changed over the past few years due to internal restructuring.
* It was made up of two distinct organisations: There were two arms – one was the NUS UK and was the arm of the NUS that SUBU was most familiar with. This was the campaigning and political arm of the NUS. NUS UK ran the liberation and national conferences. It was this arm that had been subject to an independent investigation into antisemitism, although some might argue that this aspect would affect all arms of the NUS, but the investigation was confined to the NUS UK element. The other independent arm was the NUS Charity and this arm offered support, guidance and resources for the staff within the student union movement. It provided support for elections. For example, if there were complaints around process, the NUS would provide the Union with a dedicated individual to assist SUBU through any issue. This arm also had an element that oversaw all the trading deals for SUBU’s Commercial Services. This meant that the arm conducted numerous trading deals nationally with brands, products and services, which meant that SUBU did not have to undertake that work but got the benefit of potentially discounted costs and bulk agreements.
* SUBU was a member of both arms. The costliest arm was the NUS UK – campaigning arm.
* The costs for both were linked to the amount of block grant a student union was given; that was the way the NUS calculated the membership fee.
* For SUBU, in 2022, NUS UK cost £22,491K and NUS Charity £5,622K.
* Update on NUS and the investigation into antisemitism - In May 2022 serious allegations were made and investigated. A report had been published and there were a considerable number of actions and recommendations that required implementation. NUS were committed to delivering on all of the published actions.
* SUBU members were encouraged to visit the NUS website for more information if required.

6.2 OA thanked SLH for the updates provided. OA handed over to LC for

comment.

6.3 LC stated that whilst NUS Charity were quite important to SUBU and offered some significant value, this could not be said with regard to NUS UK. From attending a number of liberation conferences and the national conference this year, LC observed that there had only been a couple of useful workshops. In terms of this arm’s effectiveness – there had been major problems with its accountability with regards its internal management, and on top of that, any policies approved by NUS were not effective, they did not appear to go anywhere. Multiple policies were passed or had not even reached a vote during NUS conferences but regardless of what happened, it did not appear to have any impact on SUBU. LC concluded therefore, that considering the cost of affiliation each year, which was funding that could potentially be reallocated to other parts of SUBU including its own Democracy and Campaigns Team, the feeling was that NUS UK did not fulfil any meaningful role for SUBU currently.

6.4 Voting was cast and the final results would be combined with proxy votes after the meeting.

**7.** **Open Questions to Trustees, facilitated by LC.**

7.1 A question was received from Aneta Postek (AP): AP noted that SUBU had not yet recruited to all the Part-Time Officer roles, and this may have been influenced by students preferring to do paid work, because the Part-Time Officer roles were unpaid voluntarily positions. Instead of investing money in conferences, that money could be better spent on students being active and more involved as paid Part-Time Officers. This was also the information received from other student unions, in that their part-time officers were being paid, which supported levels of engagement, and with the positions treated more seriously. There were lots of challenges, particularly in the community and it was difficult to understand why students did not want to be engaged.

7.2 SLH responded and clarified that as CEO of SUBU SLH was not a member of the Trustee Board but stated that the question posed was an interesting one. SUBU were aware of the challenges faced this year regarding the recruitment of Part-Time Officers. If students considered that funding may be a barrier, that was important for the Union to hear. There was a Trustee Board Meeting scheduled to take place in July and OA and the other Full-Time Officers could raise this. SUBU were in the process of forming the budgeting plan for next year and the aspect of finance in this area could potentially be reviewed with the possibility of some form of funding for Part-Time Officers. It could make the role more appealing without removing the need some students had for part-time work to live. This would be taken as an action, to the Trustee Board, to look at the funding for Part-Time Officers, what was available, the planning and approvals necessary. This would be reported back as soon as possible. It was an important issue for the Union to review.

**Action**: The funding for Part-Time Officers to be reviewed at the July Trustee Board

Meeting (SLH + Full-Time Officers).

7.3 LC stated that it had always felt slightly uncomfortable that students from marginalised groups were asked to conduct free labour. From an optics perspective it had always felt unusual. These students had the most struggles at University, from a resource perspective, and to be asked to put in a lot more time and emotional labour could be really difficult. There had definitely been times during the year when LC had been unable to work, academically or for SUBU because the situation had become overwhelming. This was not helped by the fact that there was no compensation for these efforts, other than if a student was interested in going to the Summer Ball, if that was of any interest.

**8. Motions (Student Ideas), for Ratification**

OA explained that Student Ideas could be submitted online at any time throughout the year. Students were then able to vote and comment on those ideas. Students who submitted ideas were invited to discuss their proposal with a member of staff. The ideas needed to include the following information:

* The Problem- what the problem was, including relevant facts, figures and what was currently in place
* The Solution- what needed to change in order for the problem to go away
* Ideas for Implementation- what needed to happen to bring about this change

All ideas were outlined in full on the SUBU website.

8.1 **Motion 1**: **Make campus safer for marginalised students.**

Proposer – Leon Cambray

**Summary**: Many students of marginalised groups did not feel comfortable around the police, have had bad experiences with the police, or knew someone who had. As a result, the involvement of police on campus could often make these groups feel less safe and supported than was necessary. Not only this, but the reliance on police to manage issues increased the likelihood of escalation within incidents, especially including BIPOC and other minority groups.

LC explained that the idea was to try to mobilise BU’s own campus security, and as a result of subsequent discussions since this idea was developed, there was a now a security element operated by BU Estates. LC explained that the problem, as mentioned, was that Dorset police had the most disparate statistics in the country on how they treated marginalised groups. In the UK there were low levels of confidence in the police with regards to marginalised groups. The idea presented was around prioritising BU’s own services and ensuring those services had the relevant training to be inclusive and an awareness of unconscious biases. It was also about not inviting the police on campus unnecessary, for vanity, but to have them involved in investigations and incidents that are deemed necessary.

8.1.1 No comments or opposition were noted for Motion 1.

8.1.2 **Motion 1: Make campus safer for marginalised students – Motion PASSED / RATIFIED**

8.2 **Motion 2:** **SUBU should lobby to allow part-time work to be included for**

**exceptional circumstances.**

Proposer - Amelia Metcalfe

**Summary**: OA gave a summation: Many students needed to work in order to

live at University and with the rise in the cost of living, increasingly

students found themselves in this situation. This could have a major impact on

students. BU allowed exceptional circumstances for students who were in

short-term financial difficulties if they required an increase in work hours. But

this did not include students who found themselves needing to work many

hours to pay for essentials all year round. This idea asked for SUBU to lobby

the University and allow part-time work to be accepted as grounds for

exceptional circumstances as well as to provide more support for students

who needed to work to study; this included both home and international

students.

8.2.1 No comments or opposition were noted for Motion 2.

8.2.2 **Motion 2: SUBU should lobby BU to allow part-time work to be**

**included for exceptional circumstances - Motion PASSED /**

**RATIFIED**

8.3 **Motion 3**: **SUBU to lobby to create women-only and men-only hours in**

**the gym.**

Proposer: Julia Tavaszi

**Summary**: OA gave a summation: The SportBU gym at Talbot was mixed-gender, with no hours allocated for single-gender use. This was important because some students may not be comfortable exercising around a different sex for various reasons: such as religion, anxiety, sexual trauma, or having been previously harassed by a different sex in a gym setting. Individuals may feel more comfortable having set hours set aside for single gender use. The closet gym that offered women’s only hours was in London. There were no other options for students in Bournemouth. This idea would have SUBU lobby SportBU to have at least one hour of women only usage and men only usage a week; making sure these hours were Trans inclusive. It would also ask SportBU to have single gender options for popular classes and work to make the gym more accessible. This idea also asked SUBU to work with SportBU to create a more inclusive environment especially with marginalised genders, for example, non-binary people

8.3.1 No comments or opposition were noted for Motion 3.

8.3.2 **Motion 3 – SUBU to lobby to create women-only and men-only hours in the gym – Motion PASSED / RATIFIED.**

**9. AOB**

9.1 None recorded.

9.2 OA thanked everyone for taking part in the meeting.