

# Minutes

Subject:	Management Committee Minutes: 21 April 2020
Produced by:	Tony Moore
To:	Management Committee
Action:	To approve
Status	<b>For publication</b>
Paper:	MC 19.20.25

Present: Ali Perez (ALP), Martin Marko (MM), Amelia Trew (AT), Toby Cunningham (TCU)

Chair: Sophie Atherton (SA)

In attendance: Tony Moore (TM), Tim Cave (TCA), Claire Boothby Barnbrook (CBB), Caroline Wilson (CW)

Apologies: Wendy Storey (WS), Callum Perry (CP)

## Action Points from meeting

Required	Assigned
Analysis of comments on International Students FB group to me made and presented to either FTO Catch-up or MC	ALP
SIA's to be made on three scenarios proposed in Furloughing paper and integrated into Savings and Cuts document	TCU/CBB
Head of Opportunities to be asked to write to Concrete editor reminding of their responsibilities under the Media Protocol	CBB

## MC 412 Minutes, Apologies, Matters Arising

Minutes of the meetings held on 15 April 20 were agreed.

ALP reported they were in the process of collating the requested changes to the letter to the University and were waiting on a response from Martin Jopp, the External Trustee; once Martin had responded, ALP would send the letter.

SA reported they had read the text of the campaign letter for a remittance of student fees for 19-20: the text was fine and the Union would become a signatory to the letter.

## MC 413 Covid Response

### Finance

TCA reported SMT had met with the University and conveyed the seriousness of the Union's current financial crisis: without use of restricted funds, the Union would be insolvent by July.

TCA noted the requested crisis funding consisted of:

- £500K if the government extended the furlough scheme past July
- An extra £350K if there was no extension to the scheme
- An extra £150K if the venues were unable to open before January

TCA advised that the request was for a loan or a gift.

TCA noted that one more item would need to be added to the figures given to the University: deferred VAT payments which would likely come due in the autumn.

TCA noted they would be going through the figures in detail with the University's Director of Finance.

MM wondered, if the University were minded to refuse crisis funding, when would the Union need to know by in order to decide whether it was insolvent?

TCA advised the auditors would need to know the University's position so as to incorporate it into the final draft of the accounts and this would, realistically, need to be around the end of June.

TCA noted the government had relaxed the regulations around wrongful trading, in the light of the financial chaos caused by the pandemic, and there would be three month window for organisations to evaluate their positions with regard to testing for insolvency.

TCA, in clarification to TCU, noted they would jointly work with the University's Chief Resource Officer and the Union's auditors on a wording for the accounts acceptable to all parties.

### **Business Continuity Plan**

CW reported that the furloughing process had gone smoothly. CW noted that the Union had been liaising with the GMB in answering student staff queries and had produced a FAQs for student staff; CW noted they would circulate this to FTOs.

CW reported the new payroll system had been rolled out for all permanent staff and would be put in place for student staff in due course.

### **Governance**

TM reported that the wording on use of restricted funds had been checked and reflected the Union's interpretation.

TM advised the wording of the Code of Practice Relating to the Students' Union had been checked and would provide a reference point for the ongoing discussions with the University on finance.

TM noted, on charity guidance, there was an opportunity for charities to offer a Gift Aid facility to enable ticket holders for cancelled shows to change their refund into a charity donation.

### **Academic and Impact on Students**

CBB reported that, due to staff leave, there were no comms stats available.

CBB highlighted the following developments:

- Advice – a rise in housing enquiries – studies and housing forming the overwhelming majority of all queries
- Hardship funds – worrying lack of take-up – Union will work with STS to investigate the reasons – ALP noted they would be conducting a Facebook poll with students

MM noted they had met with the University as to lobbying to extend the student safety net to PGs and would continue to push on this issue.

- STS reported that requests for food parcels had tailed off – AT noted they had delivered five and parcels were readily available if requested
- International Students Facebook group now has 500 members – ALP noted they would analyse comments from the group and report to FTO Catch-up or the next meeting of Management Committee **AP**

### **Overall**

TCU advised that the only clear certainty going forward was that lock-down would last another three weeks and the furloughing would last until June.

On the HE sector, TCU reported:

- Some universities may not survive the financial shock caused by the pandemic
- Some universities delaying the start of the academic year
- Some thinking of small seminars and groups taking place in the first term.

TCU cautioned as to the risk of a second wave of the pandemic hitting around November.

As to the University, TCU reported:

- There was a likelihood that there would be a reduction of module choice due to the need to reduce the extra workload for academics caused by the demands of online teaching
- Near certainty of a large loss of fees from international, particularly, Chinese student resulting in need for cuts across the University.

TCU advised that there would be the most significant changes to learning and teaching at UEA in over twenty years and the key role for the Union would be to monitor their impact on the student experience.

SA believed the way that any reductions in module choice would relate to next year's Student Protection Plans should be looked at; SA thought any changes from the current year's Plans should be examined in detail.

TCU noted they had circulated a paper on future staffing arrangements during the pandemic. TCU advised that in response to the pandemic it was envisaged that a mixture of furloughing (if still available), shortened hours and redundancies would be needed.

TCU noted that the arrangements in the paper would be subject to change dependent on how the pandemic and the government's responses and the University's responses evolved. TCU advised that the paper would be circulated to Trustees and would be on each Management Committee agenda.

TCU advised that the paper imagined a narrowing of resources available until at some point the Union would not be able to deliver its core charitable services.

CBB wondered whether University-funded posts would be safe from any job cuts.

TCU advised that, at present, they would be but that there would be cuts across the University and it would be for the University Departments responsible for their funding to decide whether this should continue.

AT noted the paper referred to a possibility of a FTO being furloughed and wondered who would make this decision.

TCU advised the decision would be made by the FTOs at Management Committee.

CBB suggested that a Student Impact Assessment could be made for the three scenarios in the paper.

TCU agreed an SIA would be useful and would be integrated into the existing Cuts and Savings paper. **AP**

### **MC 414 Enlited App Data**

SA noted that, because of time considerations, this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

### **MC 415 AOB**

#### ***NUSSL***

TCU reported they had attended the NUSL online update. TCU noted that there was a major doubt as to whether the NUSL Trade Show in July, where SUs made their bulk drinks purchases, would take place.

TCU advised that a common problem for SUs was the short shelf-life of unused stock of VKs and the Union would be looking to pare down the stock with a food and delivery service or a cash and carry sale at the Waterfront.

TCU noted they had joined an SU's working group to investigate possibilities of SUs trading online,

#### ***Concrete***

SA noted they had received a somewhat confrontational email from the Concrete editor which had suggested that the Union was afraid to ask the University for

students to receive a refund on this year's tuition fees. SA noted that the editor implied that the alleged cause of any fear was that the Union would not wish to jeopardise funding negotiations with the University.

TCU advised that the editor was under a misapprehension as to the Union's and the wider student movement's position on any fees refund. TCU advised the Union and the NUS were lobbying for a fees refund to come from the Students' Loan Company and for emergency government support for universities: not to come from individual institutions. TCU noted disappointment that the editor had impugned the Union's integrity.

The Committee noted that the approach to SA which consisted of multiple emails was a breach by the editor of the Media Protocol. The Committee noted that, under the Protocol, all requests to the Union for comments should be jointly addressed to the CEO, the Marketing Manager, and the Activities and Opportunities Officer. The Committee asked that the editor be reminded of student media's responsibilities under the Media Protocol. **AP**

**MC 416 Time, Date and Place of next meeting**

2 pm, Tuesday 28 April, online. SA requested that the duration of the meeting be lengthened by 30 minutes.