

EDINBURGH NAPIER STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors
Minutes of 25 September 2024
B32 Merchiston Campus

Directors in Attendance: Ailsa Crum (Chair AC), Ryan Cairns (RC), Evans Eghan (EE), Chika Marvis (CM), Debs Chapman (DC), Antonio Garcia (AG), Isobel Hall (IH), Andy Houghton (AH), Erin Slater (ES)

Apologies: Aswin V Podimon (AVP)

In attendance: Tony Foster (TF) ENSA CEO

Taking the minute: Susan Finn (SF)

Standing Items	Actions
<p>Welcome and Apologies AC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made to the new ENSA CEO and incoming Officers.</p> <p>Tony Foster, ENSA CEO Evans Eghan, President for Societies & Community Chika Marvis, Co-President for Education & Employability</p> <p>Apologies were received from Aswin V Podimon (AVP)</p>	
<p>Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>Minutes for Approval AC introduced the minutes of the last meeting in June. As there were no amendments proposed, the minutes were approved.</p>	
<p>Action Log The previous paper showed one ongoing action. The meetings relating to the HR review have taken place.</p> <p>➤ Carry out Student Survey on Sighthill campus: to be done early in term one 2024/25 when students are back on campus.</p> <p>Action: RC to check with Zsuzsanna Toth, Head of Events & Campaigns, that the survey has been done.</p>	RC
<p>Presentation from Elected Officers</p> <p>President Societies and Community</p>	

EE went through the sabbaticals joint updates and spoke about the induction training they received which gave them a better understanding of the university's position within Higher Education. They also benefitted from some personal and professional development training.

EE delivered a speech at the summer graduation ceremony which went very well. RC said he especially liked the part where EE asked students to stand up, turn around and applaud the family and friends who had supported them.

This applause is to be continued at future graduation ceremonies.

All were heavily engaged in the welcome week organisation process as well as the execution which gave a great opportunity to meet and interact with new students.

EE highlighted three main manifesto projects.

- *Napier Student Film Festival* Film submissions are open with a deadline of 29th September – 25-30 films are to be selected from around 200 submissions for the festival of masterclass sessions and film screenings and industry conversations. The festival date is 13-15th November.
- *Residence Week Experience* EE is having ongoing discussions with the Head of Student Accommodation and will be speaking to students during the ENSA President accommodation tour.
- *International Students Support Scheme* Meetings are to be set up with the Student Futures and International Support teams to discuss the opportunities available to international students particularly financial support for African students. Conversations with the Alumni network and SAPA (Scottish African Professional Association) have already taken place.

EE will also be working on.

- Introduction of a Societies Volunteers Committee
- New Student Housing Policy Strategy – meeting with Edinburgh Council Housing Development Officer on the 8th October to discuss including a student charter as part of the new policy (working with Edinburgh Sabbs).
- Revive the green garden with the Sustainability society as part of the Scottish Climate week.

AH asked if there had been any response to the message put out by the university following the riots in England and if there been an increase in complaints or anxieties from international students coming forward to Reps or the Advice service?

EE said he had noticed a little more anxiety with the new development but felt the new government election might give students hope that things would improve.

TF noted nothing like this has come through the ENSA Advice service.

Co-President Education & Employability

CM highlighted the main projects he is working on.

- *Napier Project Management Challenge* As part of Scottish Climate week, an 8-week project has been launched where recent graduate and current students will work in groups of 3-6 on a project on sustainability. They will have the opportunity to pitch their project to potential employers at an award night and receive a certificate of participation.
- *Student Led Community in all University Schools* To help bridge the gap between ENSA sabs and Programme Reps and increase peer to peer support. To be launched in October.
- *ENSA Support Stalls* To be held twice a week at each campus, staffed by sabs and course rep volunteers. University support services will also be invited to join the stalls.

ES noted she had been involved in a project management challenge and offered to give any input or answer any questions.

CM thanked ES for her offer of support.

AC asked about the school specific communities and the suggestion of having an overall Rep for each of the 5 schools and wondered if there was anything in place between the Programme Reps and the sabs at the moment?

CM said there are 5-8 Learning & Teaching student Consultants that are run by the university.

AC asked if these were paid positions?

TF said in some universities they are paid positions, from £1000 a year, because of the responsibility of what they are asked to do.

RC noted that if students are part of a committee they get to see more and be part of what the sabs and ENSA do rather than just being told. This also helps get people interested in the sabs roles and hopefully wanting to run for it.

IH asked if this would have to be taken to the Student Council because it's a change in the Rep structure?

TF thought there may be a middle ground on creation of these communities to test it and see how it goes and then incorporate that into a change when the Board do a constitutional review.

Co-President Sport and Wellbeing

RC is looking forward to continuing in his role for a second year and is focussed on making sports more of a priority in the university and ENSA.

Sports Value RC worked with other Scottish sports Presidents on a cost-of-living survey. One question was 'how does joining a sports club make you feel?' The data received was incredible and emphasised the importance of sports for student wellbeing, engagement, and retention.

Sports Volunteer Committee Increase the committee engagement, getting a better understanding of what we do and helping with the development funds and awards for nominations.

Wellbeing Campaigns Movember, World Mental Health day 10th October collaborating with the Wellbeing team, Scottish Women in Sports leadership theme

S&S Awards Ball and Varsity planning

RC will continue talking to the university about the value of sport.

IH noticed a post had gone out on social media about ENSA not tolerating initiations and asked if RC was aware of any sports clubs doing any initiations during Welcome Week.

RC said he has not heard of any so far. This is something that universities in Scotland have done through the Scottish Students Sports network and so the message was sent to committees and club members to show ENSA won't tolerate it. There is also a policy on the website.

RC shared some reflections from the sabs on Welcome Week.

- Range of inclusive events -under 18's events, night and day events
- International and PG student meet ups
- Welcome Fair – chatting to clubs and societies
- Interacting with new and returning students on campus
- Great opportunity to learn who ENSA is and what they do
- Speaking to students about the Programme Rep role

AH suggested sabs make a note of what they hope to do before the next Board meeting to help shape their reports.

ENSA CEO Report

TF has enjoyed the first 4 weeks at ENSA and will finish induction meetings by the end of next week.

The report has been done in the format of the strategic plans 2021-2024 outcomes.

ENSA Website and Communication

The ENSA website is a window to the world for current, international and online students and a forum where you don't have to be on social media to look at it.

TF is encouraging staff in their departments to create blogs under the website headings where they tell the stories about what they are doing on a weekly basis. This would include things like meetings with the university, actions and decisions discussed and would let people see what's going on behind the scenes.

TF is speaking to the Comms team about structuring the website in a way that staff and sabbaticals can provide content for it. Also, as a user, there will be a regular day that certain information is shared e.g. sports results on a Monday.

TF was at the recent Open Day and noticed the first question people ask is "Do you run any sports and societies" This is because it's what they know and understand. However, this is one of the service areas that is really underfunded and is an area to capitalise on and support.

Wellbeing

The Wellbeing section shows the number of students using the Advice Service, clubs, members, taster sessions and trials that have taken place so far.

Community

A robust Welcome Week report was produced by Zsuzsanna, Head of Events & Campaigns. The week was very successful and really pushed staff and students forward. A staff debrief is scheduled and a survey of the students will be done.

It was important to note that the week was all about getting to know your peers, retention, having support structures in place.

AC agreed that students were more likely to stay at university if they make a friend/connection.

Student Lay Directors – deadline 27th September

Three have put their names forward and TF will pass their applications on to Daniel Wright. Interviews will then be set up.

AC suggested looking at the term of office for Student Lay Directors. At the moment the constitution states it's a one year term 1st July-30th June.

TF would also like to look at deadlines and pre-planning.

Action: Send Student Lay Director applications to Daniel and arrange interviews.

TF

Action: Review the term of office for Student Lay Directors.

TF

Our People

TF has been doing his induction and noted there are a few issues to be addressed.

- Staff expenses
- Sickness
- Communications – testing an SLT channel on Teams with a view to every department having a channel.
RC noted they already use this platform for clubs and societies.
- Staff conditions longer term.

Governance and Financial Stability

SLT Responsibility: Increase responsibility as they are very competent. TF may bring the Marketing and Finance teams in to join some of the SLT discussions.

The Board agreed to add TF as a cheque signatory.

HR Committee: The committee was created to work on the staffing review a few years ago. ENSA pays an external company £4/5k a year and could use them a bit more. SLT could also help with HR function.

AG said it makes sense for the SLT to own the HR processes and is willing to try a new approach.

IH noted the constitution states that as a Board it should have a Finance subcommittee and any others are additional so can be created or dissolved.

TF suggested he deals with any HR issues internally but bring to the Board any particular issues that can then be taken to the external company if required.

TF also noted that some of ENSA's policies as a charity are not in place.

All Directors agreed to the new HR process.

Pension Liability

TF made the Board aware that Andy McGoff (Director of Finance) has come to ENSA with a suggestion.

AC explained this would be a scheme where we might be able to waiver the market-based pension liability but would need to pay the university back.

This will need a decision by the university and will be brought back to the Board when there are more details.

OTHER – STAFFING PROPOSAL

Finance Officer

Helen Woodward has requested going from 5 days to 4 days a week for the next two years.

TF asked Helen to cost a replacement and highlighted the proposal of bringing in a Finance Assistant two days a week. This could be a secondment from the university or may be advertised externally.

ES asked if ENSA uses the same software as the university as this might be easier if a secondment from ENU came in and they were familiar with the system.

All Directors agreed to the proposal.

Discover Edinburgh

A programme has started where we are getting in touch with local organisations who are offering students discounts and asking if they would like us to promote their events. This will help to build relationships with the community.

ENSA Spaces

A tidy up of all spaces within ENSA is taking place to allow the best use of offices and meeting rooms including spaces at Craiglockhart and Sighthill. This will also allow for private hot desk spaces for staff and students.

Community Participation Survey

TF would like to ask students some simple questions on four main areas.

- what do you like about the university?
- what do you not like?
- what would you like to see?
- how do we get there?

This will gather data that shows what people think are the responsibilities of ENSA and the university and what students are asking for. The new strategic plan can then be built around this information.

TF has a suggestion of a company that could do the survey including a report which would cost around £1800 - with promotion the piece of work would cost around £2000.

Data from the university will be needed to make sure that statistically the same number of people who get to fill in the survey is the same as the university.

TF has been having positive discussions around data sharing with the university this week.

AG said it was a small amount of money for the data we would receive.

RC asked what the external company does - TF explained it helps to create independence.

Chair Recruitment

It was agreed that progress needs to be made on this and in the shorter term, think about how the Boards affairs are managed.

- Who will Chair the meetings?
- Who will work with the CEO on the recruitment process when AH steps down? **AG is happy to help with this.**

TF offered to share the advert with his networks and asked if there was anything the Board was missing in terms of members.

AC suggested looking at current Director's term of office to check if anyone is coming to the end of their term. It would also be useful to have someone with finance experience.

<p>It was agreed the advert would be kept on the website until the 28th October and promoted on informal channels over the next few weeks including LinkedIn.</p> <p>Action: TF to share advert with his networks. Action: Check term of office for all Directors. Action: Confirm Chair of next Board meeting. Action: Set up Finance & Risk committee dates.</p>	<p>TF TF ALL</p>
<p>Risk Register It was recognised that the risk register exists and will be reviewed in the coming months.</p>	
<p>Finance Reports for noting. ES asked 2 questions about the P&L.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Was there a reason that there was no budget allocated / was the identification for the need for marketing identified late on following setting of the budget? Or it is a reader error (as in I am missing it)? ➤ Was the marketing expenditure identified as being beneficial in terms of the student engagement / experience? Reviewing the welcome week report it certainly looks like there were a good number and variety of events held and the comparison from the previous year is useful in terms of the numbers attending the events. I see it is noted a feedback form has been generated, is the idea this will be used to then set a budget for the marketing / publications for next year? <p>TF explained there was no budget figure in the line For Welcome Week Fair/Publications for August as it will appear in September's figures for £19,500. Last year we did not receive the Invoice until September hence why the budget was for Sept not August. The info acquired will be used to set budgets for next year.</p>	

Next meeting 27th November in room B32 Merchiston.