

ENSA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Date: 29 April 2025

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Hybrid (In-person and Online) B32 Merchiston Campus

Attendees:

- **Directors in Attendance:** Lang Banks (Chair), Ryan Cairns (RC), Debs Chapman DC), Ailsa Crum (AC), Evans Eghan (EE), Antonio Garcia (AG), Chika Marvis (CM), Erin Slater (ES)
 - **Apologies:** Aswin V Podimon (AVP), Anastasia Asenguah (AA), Deepa Bheeman (DB)
 - **In Attendance:** Tony Foster (ENSA CEO), Catherine Jones (CJ), Marianne Hogg (MH), Craig Stephen (CS), Craig Reid (CR), Zsuzsanna Toth (ZT), Daniel Wright (DW)
 - **Minutes Taken By:** Susan Finn
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Key Points Discussed:

1. **Welcomes and Apologies:**
 - The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
 - Apologies were noted from three student directors: Aswin V Podimon, Anastasia Asenguah, and Deepa Bheeman.
2. **Approval of Previous Minutes:**
 - Minutes from the last meeting in February were introduced and approved as accurate.
3. **Finance and Risk Meeting:**
 - Upcoming finance and risk meeting scheduled for 20th May.
4. **Declarations of Interest:**
 - Inquiry about any declarations of interest from attendees; none were declared.
5. **Finance Paper:**
 - Simplified version of the finance paper appreciated.

- Opportunity for questions and clarifications provided.

6. Staff Presentation:

- Presentation of survey results, including Pulse survey and staff survey.
- Highlights of areas of improvement and feedback.

7. Student Partnership Ambition:

- Discussion about moving towards a student partnership ambition in line with Scotland's ambition for student partnership.

8. Collaboration with University:

- Strengthening collaboration with various university departments.
- Supporting direct entry and online students.

9. Student Council and Campaigns:

- Efforts to improve student council engagement and campaigns.
- Edinburgh Student Housing Strategy discussed.

10. Advice Service:

- Promotion of the advice service and initiatives to support students.
- Welfare posts, stalls, and campus rotations mentioned.

11. Financial Support for Students:

- Investigating options for providing financial support to students experiencing hardship.
- Options include shopping vouchers and crisis grants.

12. Community Building:

- Initiatives to build a sense of community among students through forums, events, and improved communication.

13. Events and Campaigns:

- Plans to hold flagship events and partnerships with external organizations to enhance student engagement.

14. Student Spaces:

- Efforts to improve student spaces and receptions to make them more student-friendly.

15. Communications Strategy:

- Reviewing communication channels and ensuring transparency in decisions and policies.

16. Career Planning and Alumni Engagement:

- Working with the university's career service and alumni to support students' career planning and fundraising efforts.

17. Staff Development and Governance:

- Focus on staff development, networking opportunities, and improving governance and sustainability.

18. Next Steps:

- Completion and adoption of the plan.
- Onboarding new Board Directors and staff.
- Aligning appraisals with objective setting.
- Planning for salary increases and potential staff changes.
- Training for new sabbatical officers.

19. Questions and Feedback:

- Discussion about financial support options, including food banks and partnerships with local organizations.
- Engagement with specific student demographics, such as graduate apprentices.
- Prioritization and resource allocation for planned activities.
- Ensuring staff well-being and sustainable workload.

Participant Feedback:**1. Erin Slater:**

- Raised a question about financial support options, specifically whether leftover food from refectories or canteens could be provided to students in a food bank setup.
- Feedback acknowledged the informal basis of food distribution at Craig Lockhart and suggested formalizing the process.

2. Debs Chapman:

- Expressed appreciation for the thoroughness of the plan and looked forward to seeing it come to life.

3. Ryan Cairns:

- Asked if the Board would be shown a more in-depth report on the staff survey.
- Tony Foster confirmed that a summary would be brought to the next Board meeting for discussion.

4. Lang Banks:

- Encouraged staff teams to think about priorities and map them out.
- Suggested considering shared priorities, cross-team objectives, important KPIs, time constraints, and accommodating new sabbatical officers' ideas.
- Acknowledged the impact of the hard work and offered support between meetings if required.

5. Tony Garcia:

- Acknowledged the progress made with the strategic plan and highlighted how it reflects the value of the new leadership.
- Praised the appointment of the new CEO and Chair, and the efforts of the ENSA team, especially when compared to the period when ENSA was without both a Chair and CEO.

6. Tony Foster:

- Thanked staff and sabbatical officers for their hard work and the Board for listening.
- Agreed with Lang Banks' advice and noted that the last plan was a five-year plan, whereas this is a rolling plan.

Action Items:

- **Tony Foster (ENSA CEO):**
 - Complete and adopt the plan.
 - Publish impact reports.

- Bring a summary of the staff survey to the next Board meeting.
- **Staff Team:**
 - Incorporate feedback into the final plan.
 - Onboarding for new staff and Directors.
 - Improve staff communications by holding a new weekly Wednesday meeting.
- **Finance & Risk Committee:**
 - Prepare for the meeting on 20th May.
- **Communications Team:**
 - Improve transparency and communication channels.
 - Share more good news stories for ENSA and students.
 - Review communication channels to see what students are using most.
- **Events Team:**
 - Develop a program of events with 8 partnered with EUSA.
 - Continue working to improve relationships with student groups.
- **Advice Team:**
 - Promote the advice service.
 - Continue welfare Wednesday posts.
 - Ensure an advice office presence on each campus.
 - Develop student listening service with trained volunteers.
 - Develop a student guide for the 2025/26 session, both online and printed copies.
 - Investigate options for ongoing financial support (e.g., Aldi vouchers, small crisis fund).

Next Meeting:

- **Date:** 11 June 2025
 - **Location:** Hybrid - C83a Merchiston campus
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