

**Edinburgh Napier Students' Association Ltd  
Board of Directors**

**Minutes of 29 November 2023  
B32 Merchiston Campus at 17:30**

**Members Present:** Jenny Rees (Chair, JR), Geou Askhil (GA), Opeyemi Akindehin (OA), Ryan Cairns (RC), Isobel Hall (IH), Ailsa Crum (AC), Andy Houghton (AH), Erin Slater (ES), Tony Garcia – arrived 19:00 (TG), Evan Eghan (EE), Erin Johnson via Teams (EJ)

**Apologies:** Aswin V. Podimon (AVP)

**In attendance:** Dee Bird (DB)

**Taking the minute:** Susan Finn via Teams (SF)

<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>JR welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Aswin V Podimon (AVP)</p> <p>Antonio Garcia (AG) joined the meeting at 19:00</p>	
<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p><b>Minutes for Approval</b></p> <p>JR introduced the minutes of the last meeting in September. As there were no amendments proposed, the minutes were <b>approved</b>.</p>	
<p><b>Action Log</b></p> <p>JR went through the Action Log.</p> <p><b>Staff Retention</b></p> <p>DB and the HRC continue to explore incentives for staff retention. An external review had been commissioned by the HRC and would be produced in due course.</p> <p><b>Scheme of Delegation</b></p> <p>The revised Scheme of Delegation document has been considered by the FRC and would be proposed to the Board for approval.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> DB to look at retention incentives after HR Review. <b>Action:</b> AH to look at salary scales with university HR team.</p> <p><i>(A fire alarm interrupted the meeting for approximately 35 minutes.)</i></p>	<b>DB/AH</b>
<p><b>Presentation from Elected Officers</b></p>	

Officers delivered a presentation on the areas they have focused on, individually and collaboratively since starting in their roles.

**GA President:** highlighted a number of activities and campaigns he has been involved with, including the following:

- Clothing give away in the ENSA space at Sighthill in collaboration with Shrub Co-op.
- Display of halal meat and vegan and vegetarian items in catering menus. An aim for clearer pricing of sandwiches and basic items by next Board meeting
- Celebration of Black History Month with a key speaker and different activities throughout the month
- Encouraging students to form societies: e.g. Indian Society, African Society, Disabled Students Society, LGBTQ+ and Sustainability society.
- He had received an invitation to the international sustainability summit
- Napier celebrated Diwali using £1200 provided by the business school – 400 people attended at Craiglockhart campus
- Developing a collaboration with Foursquare charity
- GA is discussing a Presidents' podcast with the campus radio, ENRG
- Working with SACI to hold a sustainability film screening in December
- The Happiness Project (replacing Napier Fest one off event): a monthly music/dance/stories event is being discussed

**OA Co-President Education & Employability** gave an update on campus pop-ups, Fairs and Rep meetings:

- *Campus Pop Ups* OA has held six campus pop-ups (two at each at each campus) with different university departments attending including ENSA Advice, Student Futures, Disability & Inclusion, Library Services, Academic Skills. This is to increase engagement and allow students to find out more about the services on offer. Over 150 students engaged with the pop-ups and positive feedback has been received from students and staff. More campus pop-ups are planned for next trimester.
- *Graduate Fairs and Student Futures pop-ups* **OA encouraged** students to take part in Student Futures activities where they were given the opportunity to speak to various companies about the process of applying to graduate programmes.
- *Student Communication Channel* OA worked with Craig (Communications Team Lead) and Daniel (Head of Representation and Leadership Development) on starting the Discord channel for Reps and have now extended it to sports clubs and society members. There are 145 students now using the channel.
- *Rep Forums* There have been two university wide forums where Reps from any campus/school can come and ask questions and share issues.

There have been four school forums with the Heads of Learning & Teaching in attendance. Around 50 students engaged.

- *Student Council* There have now been two student council meetings which were well attended with good student engagement feedback.
- *HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Record)* This has now been approved by Steven Logie which means by next year student Reps accomplishments should be recognised and added to their transcripts.

### **RC Co-President Sport & Wellbeing**

- *Active Campus – Give it a Go* With the support of the Head of Events, RC has been running the ‘Give it a Go’ programme of informal drop-in activities including games and crafts over the lunch time period and between classes. Activities have included pumpkin carving, test your geography and boccia.
- *Movember* RC created a Movember page to allow clubs and groups of students to join and raise funds for men’s health month. ENSA and the Wellbeing team held a shave off event on campus where students were also given the opportunity for a health check with Nuffield Health which proved to be very popular.
- *Varsity - March 2024* RC is preparing for the annual matches against QMU and is in touch with the QMU sports President. RC hopes to engage the photography school in the photoshoot.
- *Sports & Societies Ball* The venue is Murrayfield this year, ticket sales are planned to go on sale late January 2024.
- *Feel Fab Feb Campaign* RC is working with the Wellbeing team and discussing possible events/activities for students at each campus.
- *ENSA Space at Sighthill* RC has secured an allocated space for ENSA on campus at Sighthill which will allow ENSA Officers to extend their reach and engage more students.
- *Napier Mascot* After over 100 responses on Instagram, Officers set up polling booths at each campus this week for students to vote for their favourite mascot. The Knight and Triangle are the most popular thus far.

### **ROG (Ryan – Ope – Geou) Meetings**

The Officers have weekly meetings with Dee and Catherine to discuss what they are working on and keep each other updated.

### **LGBTQ+ Edinburgh Club Night**

<p>Edinburgh university approached GA and RC about arranging a club night on the 14<sup>th</sup> February. As there is currently no active LGBTQ+ society, it was agreed this would be a good way to offer support.</p> <p><b>Community Pantry</b> The pantry has been running well. It was agreed that the university's £300 donation for the support of the pantry was very low particularly as the free breakfast for students has stopped. This could be discussed further at the next university Court meeting.</p> <p><b>Chat GPT &amp; Me - Use of AI</b> OA and GA have been involved in the second phase of this project with staff in the DLTE. Data is being collected on how students view AI.</p> <p><b>University Court Meeting</b> GA and RC attended the first Court meeting which went well. AH, who was also in attendance, said he was very impressed with how the Officers engaged with the agenda items beyond ENSA-related business.</p> <p><b>Questions</b> AC asked GA to expand on the Happiness Project idea. GA explained this was still in the discussion stage but hopes it will eventually be a monthly event held in an informal space that students will have the opportunity to run for themselves.</p>	
<p><b>CEO Report</b></p> <p>DB noted that things continue to be going very well due to the excellent work of both the Officers and ENSA staff team.</p> <p>The Head of Events &amp; Campaigns has been working on targeted events. The support lunches have been very successful as they bring together students whose home country may be experiencing conflict or a natural disaster. These lunches give students the opportunity to talk to an ENSA adviser and/or a member of the Wellbeing team.</p> <p>The change to pensions has been implemented this month and the employer contribution has increased from 3% to 6%.</p> <p>The data analysis provided to Directors has been carried out for ENSA by a Widening Participation team analyst and does not include data from the Advice team as this data is held separately on Blue Door. The analysis shows that a high number of PG international students engage with ENSA . There is more work to be done on reaching out to other groups of students such as Care Experienced.</p> <p>It was interesting to see the rise in engagement with ENSA from year one (5.8%) to year four students (23.4%) which shows it takes a while for students to learn about ENSA and what services/activities are available to them.</p>	

*JR welcomed TG to the meeting (19:00)*

JR reflected on the student engagement and range of things the Officers are working on with the support of ENSA staff. Previously, the SA would have considered itself successful if there were a lot of students engaging with Freshers' Week, clubs and societies -which were mostly home students. This has completely changed and the level of engagement with international and PG students has greatly improved. JR said that it was important to provide something for a diverse range of students and to identify groups that may have been missed.

It was agreed the Officers are working well with ENU across departments.

GA expressed his appreciation for the freedom ENSA has given Officers to explore projects and campaigns under the leadership of DB.

IH asked what is being done about planning for future years and the long-term impact of work that has been put in place and suggested policies or student motions.

RC noted they have added what has been done so far to the Student Mental Health Document and he is starting to think about a handover document.

OA agreed she would have found a handover document useful and she is keeping an updated document on Share Point where future Officers can easily find helpful notes.

GA noted they will be working on revising the Student Partnership Agreement at the beginning of next year.

AH said he was impressed with the work of the Officers this year. He went on to say that he felt that it was important that the Board hold Officers accountable if their level of work is not satisfactory.

**ENSA Annual Plan 2023/24**

**DB/JR/AC**

DB introduced the Annual Plan for this year and highlighted a number of things:

The Social Media Assistant has recommended developing campus personas to aid in targeting ENSA activities according to student demographics.

Look After Your Mate Training: The Head of Student Activities, Craig Stephen, has been through the training and, along with a few members of the Wellbeing team, has been delivering this to club members. This was something we had hoped to do last year but it never happened.

GA and DB are exploring options in relation to ENSA's partner bar.

JR noted the annual plan includes activities, performance indicators and targets but doesn't seem to have a way of measuring success for some areas. DB said the performance indicators and targets were agreed when the strategic plan was developed so these are the same each year and may not match all the activities.

JR wondered if there is a way to measure if there are students who have nothing to do with ENSA or if they know it exists?

DB said the annual plan is closely linked to the three-year strategic plan which focussed mainly on student engagement. Work on the next strategic plan will begin over the next few months and this will provide an opportunity to develop new KPIs.

AH would like to see the metric map against particular goals to make it more transparent.

AC suggested adding in some additional indicators for some of the areas not captured, particularly the 'intangibles'. She offered to provide some information on how to approach this (an evidencing value framework).

IH suggested considering using an external organisation for a student satisfaction survey.

AC noted there were activities that involved student commitment as well as a range of activities that students can drop into. This could generate useful evaluation information.

TG suggested the option of an online pop up while students are on the website "Has this helped you?"

TG noted the annual plan was good and it underpins the link to the strategic objectives.

EE agreed the Officers were doing an amazing job and it was a good idea for the Board to pick activities that could be maintained.

ES said she likes to see diagrams and agreed Officers were working well.  
EJ agreed the plan sound good.

GA noted that discussions are underway with the Communications Team Lead, about possibly having a tablet available at the ENSA office door where students could rate their experience, bearing in mind that students come to ENSA for a range of different reasons.

<p><b>Action: Establish how the next strategic plan should be developed.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Build a fuller suite of indicators to go with the new strategic plan.</b></p> <p><b>Action: AC to send DB the Evidencing Value link</b></p>	
<p><b>Draft F&amp;RC minutes 16 November 2023</b></p> <p>AC reported that the committee considered the range of financial reports and there were no real concerns in this area.</p> <p>There is an operating surplus and a good forecast for the end of the year. The historic pension liability is getting lower and going in the right direction.</p> <p><b>Revised Scheme of Delegation</b></p> <p>There have been adjustments to do with the financial limits relating to staffing. It was likely that the figures would have to be revisited on an annual basis due to cost of living and inflation.</p> <p>The F&amp;RC considered and agreed the adjusted version of the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the adjusted Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p><b>Action: The three chairs to arrange to come together to review the scope of the Scheme of Delegation document.</b></p>	<p><b>JR/DB/AC</b></p>
<p><b>Reserved Business</b></p> <p>The CEO and Clerk to the Board left the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>Date of next meeting: 28 February 2024 on Teams</b></p>	

Reserved Business minutes follow below.

## **Edinburgh Napier Students Association Ltd**

**Board meeting on 29 November 2023, reconvened on Zoom on 6 December 2023, given lost time due to fire alarm**

**Human Resources Committee report to the ENSA Ltd Board of Directors considered as a reserved item with only directors present**

### **Minutes and actions**

#### **In attendance**

29 November: All directors

6 December: Jenny Rees (Chair), Andy Houghton, Geou Akshil, Opeyemi Akindehin, Ryan Cairns, Isobel Hall, Erin Slater, Eghan Evans, Tony Garcia, Aswin Vazhakkootathil Podimon

#### **Apologies**

6 December: Ailsa Crum (provided comments in advance which were shared at the meeting), Erin Johnston (technical difficulties)

#### **The Chair introduced the reserved item as follows:**

At its last meeting of the 2022/23 academic session, 28 June 2023, following consideration of the staff survey results and recent high levels of staff turnover it was decided to refer this to the HR Committee and it was agreed that the HRC would meet to discuss staff retention and wellbeing with a focus on policies and salary scales.

The membership of the HR Committee during the summer comprised only the three lay directors, appointments of sabbatical directors and student lay directors to the HR and Finance & Risk Committees awaiting the appointment of the student lay directors in the autumn.

In addition to the referral above a number of informal representations had been made to Board members and UNISON. The HR Committee decided to commission an external consultant to carry out an HR review of organisational culture and team wellbeing & retention.

Ahead of the meeting, Directors received a folder of confidential papers comprising an introductory paper by the Board Chair; slides from a presentation by the HR Committee Chair; the report of the consultant; the CEO's response to the consultant's report.

The Chair explained that this meeting's purpose was to discuss the papers and identify the actions that would take forward the recommendations of the HR Committee including those in the HR review which it had commissioned to address the issues highlighted.



Several directors sought further information about the issues alluded to in the papers. There was a thorough discussion of the issues, the consultant's report and the CEO's response.

A range of actions was identified as follows:

### **Actions**

1. Board and ENSA staff to meet for an offsite evening/day event in Q1 to build relationships and align around the broad, longer term strategy of ENSA into which annual plans and KPIs would then be connected.
2. Build a clear organogram and place on wall and website of ENSA so that names and faces of ENSA staff and Board directors are known.
3. Refresh the approach to the staff survey. It should include open commentary and should be administered and hosted externally. The Board should see the full report.
4. Review ENSA's whistleblowing policy and, once refreshed, communicate this to staff with a clear explanation around who to talk to if they are concerned about any aspect of staff behaviour or workplace culture that they cannot raise through the normal line management structure. Ensure that staff are reminded of the university's EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) support service for which they are eligible.
5. Review ENSA's PDR process for those staff with leadership responsibilities including the CEO to build in online 360 feedback, Consideration should be given to administering and hosting the 360 tool externally.
6. Ensure that all line managers take part in training in relation to:
  - a. Employment law overview
  - b. Harassment & Bullying
  - c. Managing Conflict

HR committee to review staff feedback and response to this training.
7. Scheme of Delegation to be reviewed and extended in scope beyond financial delegation to ensure coherence in outlining extent of delegated responsibilities of the CEO and their team.
8. Chair, a member of HRC and the three elected officers to meet termly to provide an opportunity to share reflections and identify and discuss any live issues. Note that these meetings should not replace business that would normally be discussed at Board or Board sub-committees.
9. The CEO, a student lay director and an external lay director should meet termly to provide an opportunity to share reflections and identify and discuss any live issues. Note that these meetings should not replace business that would normally be discussed at Board or Board sub-committees.
10. Chair to convene termly meetings with the Chairs of HRC and F&RC to promote more transparency and ensure agendas are aligned and cross-committee interdependencies are named and issues resolved.
11. Elected officer handover processes to be reviewed to ensure comprehensive coverage.

12. CEO is encouraged to approach any member of the Board with issues or concerns at any time.

**Next steps**

The Chair will communicate actions from the HR Review to the CEO before Christmas holidays begin.

A report will be made to the Board at its next meeting about progress with the actions. A date for the Strategy event will be set and communicated as soon as possible.

The Chair will email all ENSA staff with an update on the actions emerging from the HR Review and host a face to face gathering on campus early in 2024 for a fuller explanation of the process and next steps and to encourage dialogue between staff and the Board.