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Annual General Meeting

Friday 18th March 2022, 1700hrs

Air Bar, Level 4, DUSA

1. Introduction and opening remarks
   1. Dimitris Vidakis welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of 2022 and shared his happiness in standing here after 8 months of hard work.
   2. Dimitris explained that quorum was not met, as there were only 11 matriculated students present at the meeting. He provided that presentations would go ahead regardless, but any motions or objections would have to be voted on at the Student Representative Council (SRC). Furthermore, for this reason, the previous year’s minutes could not be approved; however, these had been shared via email and on the DUSA website.
2. Financial report
   1. Cheryl-Ann provided that the period of time considered at the AGM was always quite out of date, as the audit concluded each year in April.
   2. Cheryl-Ann outlined that the organization had entered 2019/20 in a healthy financial situation, which allowed for a good starting point during the pandemic. However, COVID-19 had a substantial effect on the organization as it saw the interruption of all trade on the 23rd March 2020.
   3. Cheryl-Ann highlighted that despite the financial losses, which amounted to just over £200K at the end of 2020, the organization became a living wage employer in October 2020.
   4. Cheryl-Ann outlined the difficult decision of closing the club nights – she explained that these were already a cause of loss of money in 2019, and the decision was made to close them in October 2021. However, after engagement sessions with the students, these re-opened in January 2022.
   5. Cheryl-Ann explained there had been an 11% increase of the subvention from university; however, the organization was yet projecting losses for 2021/22.
   6. Cheryl-Ann emphasised that all of the money spent in DUSA was then reinvested in DUSA.
   7. Cheryl-Ann shared the desire of being able to become the number 1 student association and trade as efficiently as they were before COVID-19.
   8. Marcin enquired on the exact amount of additional funds received by the university and Cheryl-Ann stated DUSA had received an additional £1.5M for the impact of COVID-19.
3. Executive Committee: a semester in office
   1. Dimitris explained that the Interim Report was the product of the work that had been done up until that point, it outlined the accomplishments of the Executive in this challenging year.
   2. Dimitris shared that the effort the team had put into providing the best possible student experience would stay with each one of them.
   3. Dimitris highlighted the following successes: the results of the Pulse survey – within their 8 months in office, overall student satisfaction had increase to 50%. Moreover, Dimitris stated that more students had voted in the survey, therefore they had been successful in engaging more with students who were apathetic to the survey.
   4. Dimitris outlined that the team had been working on many campaigns and focused on raising awareness on key issues. He shared that they were now working with Ukrainian student associations to see how they could support them.
   5. Sarah Craig asked Dimitris what had been his proudest moment in office and he recounted of an interaction he had had with a 17-year old student and how his parents had later contacted him to thank him as this boy was now inspired and encouraged to work hard and apply to university. Dimitris then shared that as a team, he was unable to pinpoint a single moment and instead he affirmed he was proud of the devotion and commitment the team had to the cause and the strength to not give up.
   6. Marcin asked Dimitris why he thought there was only 11 matriculated students present today. Dimitris provided that the student movement had been in crisis for the past 20 years, and provided that only those who wanted to be involved were present. He clarified that this was not a problem exclusive to DUSA. Dimitris recognised that there is a problem with engagement but explained they had done all they could to mitigate it.
   7. Eamonn asked what was the most surprising thing he encountered during office. Dimitris explained his misconception of time when he first came into office – he share that he thought he would come in post and get things accomplished within a week. This year for Dimitris has been about evolution and development both in himself and others. Dimitris said witnessing how they each pushed their boundaries and outgrew themselves was a rewarding surprise.
   8. Jake Mace asked how to repair and safeguard future members of the executive. Dimitris explained the best way was through awareness, be prepared to expect exposure. Dimitris then emphasised of the importance of the team, they were the support needed.
4. Operations Update
   1. Chris Gourley started by recounting that summer had been a challenging time with the many regulations the organization had to work within due to the pandemic. He outlined that throughout the pandemic the organization continued to make use of the furlough scheme and worked closely with the student services.
   2. Chris shared that the planning for Semester 1 occurred in a very short period of time as regulations were only communicated four weeks prior to the start of the new academic year. This resulted in an extensive recruitment drive in August ahead of Freshers.
   3. Chris shared the objective for Freshers Week was to have more accessible and inclusive activities and highlighted that they were successful in doing so. He outlined that DUSA had worked closely with societies, hosting coffee mornings in collaboration with them. Another success story was that of Cement Day, which was the first of its kind.
   4. Chris provided that the focus had shifted in Liar – focusing on improving the menu offering and the overall daytime operations and reported that this shift had been a successful one and Liar had now become predominantly a daytime venue.
   5. October featured Black History Month and events tied to that, such as hosting guest speakers in collaboration with the city council and having traditional African food on the menu.
   6. Chris explained that club nights were stopped in October but that caused uproar from the student body. The response was not an anticipated one, seeing the lack of engagement that the night time operations had had. Instead there was an outpouring of support toward that side of the organization with many students reaching to express they had always appreciated the safety and inclusivity of this venue. This gave the organisation an opportunity to engage with the student body and a period of open consultation started, which resulted in the re-opening of club nights in semester 2.
   7. Semester two was a challenging one as there were less people on campus which resulted in less footfall – overall, a student who wasn’t in Dundee would not be able to make the same of the services we provide.
   8. Chris highlighted than another important venture of the past year was the launch of the strategic plan, which was a long-term work and had taken twelve months to develop. Chris shared that another change was the addition of a new position within the senior management team and the aim of this was to bring the difference facets of this organization together and maximise its resources. This position resulted in two head of operations: one looking at the student experience, which was vested by Chris, and one looking at hospitality and events, which was the role taken on by Claire Lornie.
   9. Claire explained that the first objective had been the re-opening of the DJCAD cantina as students had shown interest in it.
   10. In January, as mentioned by Chris, club nights started up again with the launch of Home on Tuesdays and Flashback on Fridays and emphasised on how the safety aspect of our venue seemed to be a key one.
   11. Claire explained that one of the focuses had been to support and further develop society-led events, and they would be looking to reintroduce these yearly.
   12. Claire shared that both the Foam Party, which had been the closing party for the LGBT+ History Month in February, and St Patrick’s Day had been two successful events and praised the customer safety team for their work.
   13. Claire gave an outline of what was to come in the coming months, such as Deecon in April, Degree Show in May, Garden Parties and Gradball in June, looking at opening the Terrace from April, refurbing Liar, rebranding the DJCAD cantina and reopen Air Bar as a bar venue.
   14. Marcin, the editor from the Magdalen, asked for more details around the rebranding of the DJCAD cantina and Claire explained she had already met the DUSA marketing team and the school president of DJCAD and they were now looking to carry out consultation with the students.
   15. Jake Mace explained that the vegan society was planning to push for a 100% plant-based campus and Claire explained that it would be feasible as an association they needed to ensure that they provided something for everyone otherwise the organisation would become exclusive rather than inclusive.
5. Dimitris thanked everyone for coming and shared his excitement for the future.