

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**Central Executive Committee (CEC)**

22 – 24 January 2021

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **note** this regular report from the Board of Trustees

1. There is a requirement under the Articles of Association for the Board of Trustees (BoT) to provide a report to the CEC at each meeting. This report is intended to provide the following:
 - a) a formal opportunity for CEC members to raise any questions arising from the minutes or other matters relating to the role of the Trustees, and
 - b) the opportunity for Trustees to raise any specific items with the CEC or report on progression of any non-routine matters.
2. The Board have met twice since the last CEC meeting. These meetings took place online on [15 October](#) and [3 November](#). The minutes are available via the links. The 3 November meeting was an extra meeting, arranged to deal with some urgent business.
3. The first meeting of the new term in October focussed on the 2019-20 Accounts with Mike Farwell, the Association's External Auditor from James Cowper Kreston, in attendance to present the Accounts for the approval of the Board. Following a few minor amendments, Trustees approved the accounts. These were then submitted to the Open University's Council as part of the Association's Annual Report at their meeting in November 2020.
4. Trustees approved the Student Submission to the Quality Engagement Review, following endorsement by the CEC. They also received the first live Strategy Performance Report detailing the update on strategy projects, staff team business plans and KPIs.
5. Trustees received an update on the recovery planning in relation to the COVID-19 restrictions which will see staff continuing to work from home until at least April 2021. As part of this, they approved a recommendation follow the University's approach of no face to face events until end July 2021 which had been raised by VP Community. This will be reviewed as and when necessary.

6. As stated above, an additional meeting of the Board was called for November 2020 to address the changes proposed to the Appointments Committee procedures and documents. The recommendations produced by VP Education, the Deputy President and Head of Volunteering and Representation were considered in detail by the Board and largely approved with minor alterations.
7. Mark Burnett, the Association's appointed Data Protection Officer from Hope and May presented his first report of compliance and the Deputy Chief Executive (Finance and Resources) presented an action plan developed by the Association's GDPR Group. The report was accepted by Trustees and the action plan was subsequently approved. The revised Staff Handbook was also presented to Trustees and following some minor amendments this was also approved. Trustees also considered recommendations around changes to the Association's senior management team which was approved in principle subject to some further work on remits.
8. On the forums, Trustees commented on the invitation to tender paperwork for the Governance Review. The President, VP Admin and External Trustee Mark Price volunteered to be involved with the selection process to appoint an agency to carry out the work. Following shortlisting and interviews, Almond Tree Consulting Services were appointed to undertake the Governance Review. A scoping meeting took place on 15 December where the scope of the project, core elements and timeline were discussed and confirmed, and this project is now underway.
9. The Trustees continue to be kept updated on the ongoing situation with the USS.
10. The Association's Annual Report 2019-20 was shared following being presented and warmly received at Council in November 2020. This has also been shared with CEC members and will be published on our website shortly.
11. Trustees were invited to complete a short consultation survey to assist the production of the scoping document and invite to tender for the website which is being led by the Digital Communications team. The President, Deputy President and VP Admin volunteered to sit on the panel for selecting the website provider in February 2021.
12. The latest revised version of the national Charity Governance Code was shared with the BoT.
13. Following the By-Elections, Selina Hanley was elected as a Student Trustee and will join the Board for her first meeting in February. A full induction has taken place to bring her up to speed.
14. Staffing Matters: Ellie Milnes-Smith, Volunteering and Representation Officer joined the team on 25 November and is settling in well. Amy Undrell, Projects Officer (Student Community) had her daughter slightly earlier than expected and started her maternity leave in October. Pete Turner, who currently job shares the Head of Student Community role on a part-time basis, will cover the Projects Officer role while Amy is on maternity leave, increasing his hours to cover both roles. Leah McDougall, Digital Communications Optimisation Officer left the Association in November. Recruitment for her replacement started straight

away, with interviews being held just before Christmas. At the time of writing an offer has been made and the necessary paperwork is going through at present. James Phillips, Media and Projects Officer temporarily increased his hours to full time to assist with the staffing shortage in the Digital Communications team and he continues to do so until the new appointee is in place. Sam Kenealy who has been working with the Volunteering & Representation Team moved over to the Digital Communications Team to also assist with the workload until the new staff member joins the team.

The Head of Executive Support & Staff Welfare announced her pregnancy and is due to go on maternity leave in mid-March 2021. Recruitment for her maternity cover is due to start in early January. We will also shortly be recruiting for a lead for the individual representation service which we intend to be able to roll-out in the Spring and completing internal recruitment for the two new senior management positions, assuming approval from Trustees for the finalised remits. Should either or both roles not be filled through this process, an external recruitment process will follow.

Following a staff consultation, all staff will continue working from home until the other side of Easter, April 2021. Our team Coronavirus Contingency Group continues to meet to discuss recovery planning in line with Government guidance and in dialogue with the University's pandemic response team and this will be reviewed again in February as the situation develops. A volunteer and representative survey is currently being developed and will be rolled out shortly.

15. The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for 11 February 2021.

Rob Avann
Chief Executive