

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

17 – 29 April 2020

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

The C E C 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 met on 7 February 2020. The meeting minutes can be found [here](#). Sarah Jones, WELS FAR and Lucy Richardson, AAR for Wales both attended the meeting as observers from the CEC.
3. At the meeting, the Board formally appointed Allan Blake as Chair of the BoT. Allan and the Board thanked Cath for her hard work as Acting Chair.
4. Andy Loveless from Pecan Partnership presented the findings and recommendations from the Culture Review Project. The BoT endorsed the recommendations and tasked the Culture Working Group with progressing implementation and ensuring linkage to the main Association strategy and workstreams, with a particular emphasis on one-team working and a governance review.
5. Alan Measures, Chair of the Remuneration Committee, presented the latest piece of work carried out by the Committee which has made recommendations for the remuneration of the President and Deputy President positions for the 2020-22 term. Consultation had been carried out with the current and previous role holders and with the CEC. A benchmarking exercise had also been completed by RSM, the Association's HR provider. The BoT approved the recommendations and set the remuneration for the roles for the 2020-22 term.

6. Trustees approved the key performance indicators (KPIs) and associated tracking metrics for the OU Students Association strategy as well as the proposed revision of some of the project timescales that had been delayed to later on in the year due to the current student and staff workload in the run up to Conference.
7. The BoT approved the Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Panel as well as the revised financial budget for 2019-20.
8. Interviews took place on 11 March for a third external Trustee with a finance background. Mark Price was offered the position and was subsequently approved by the BoT and CEC in their respective forums. Mark is a qualified accountant and currently serves as a Senior Finance Business Partner with Vodafone. Prior to his current role, he had previously served as a Finance Director with BT and as an auditor with Ernst Young (now EY). Mark is also an OU alumni, having completed a Masters in History in 2000. The panel were unanimous in their selection of Mark and he will attend his first BoT Meeting on 22 May.
9. Sadly, the Board accepted the resignation of Steph Stubbins, Deputy President. Steph was extremely committed and hard-working member of the Board and will be missed.
10. Following interviews with three providers, Hope and May were appointed as the Association's DPO (Data Protection Officer) service. They have exemplary knowledge of the charity sector, having been appointed as NCVO's trusted supplier of Data Protection services (and training provider to the sector) and currently serving a number of charity clients. They were established as the first specialist GDPR consultancy for the charity sector and are also endorsed by the Institute of Fundraising, Directory of Social Change and Lloyds Bank Foundation. They had a good understanding of our specific context and the challenging nature of our student body and operations. A meeting is arranged for late April to meet with our lead contact and to discuss the first area of work, a full data audit of the Association.
11. On the Forums, Trustees commented and approved further draft versions of the two shared services agreements between the Association and OSL and the Association and OUSET. They also approved changes to the Association's Privacy Policy. The Relationship Agreement was also approved by the BoT following consultation with the CEC and amendment in conjunction with the University's PVC Students office. It was subsequently also approved by Council.
12. Trustees were kept informed of the Association's Coronavirus contingency planning as it evolved. A staff group was established on 3 March and continues to meet weekly and focuses on how best to support our volunteers and staff during this unprecedented time. Following Government guidelines, the office closed on 17 March and staff commenced working from home for the foreseeable future. Many meetings and events have been rescheduled to be held online: Senate Reference Group, Volunteer Training, the CEC and BoT meetings to name a few. Discussions were held over the arrangements for Conference 2020 and a decision was made to cancel the main face to face element due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place. Subsequently, a large piece of work was undertaken led by the Conference Project Manager to undertake

detailed scoping and consideration of a number of alternative options for handling a replacement for Conference and this resulted in three potentially viable options: postponing the event to later in 2020; holding an online-only event; and holding a hybrid event with a small face-to-face component. Detailed supporting plans including pros, cons, risks and actions required to deliver them were put forward for consultation across the Board of Trustees, Central Executive Committee, Conference Steering Committee and the full staff group, with a recommendation supporting an online-only event but seeking views across the three options. Following the collation of feedback, the President and Chair of the Board of Trustees considered the details and approved the recommendation to hold an online-only event. Detailed further planning work is underway to scope out how this will work and how we might deliver the event.

13. Staffing Matters: Lara Munday joined the Community Team on 20 January 2020 as Projects Officer. Joel McBrearty was offered a full time position with the OU following his secondment in the WELS faculty which he accepted and we approved for him to start without needing to work his notice with the Association on the basis that he will return and assist with any handover to the new role-holder once in position. Magda Hadrys, Head of Operations is currently reviewing the role before going out to recruitment. There have been some changes to the structure of the Student Voice Team: The research part of the team (Pooja Sinha and Rebecca Coster, covering for Beverley Woodbridge) are now line managed by Sue Maccabe, making a wider contribution to many areas of our new strategy and the need for high quality evidence and research to support our work. James Phillips has joined the Digital Communications team to provide extra capacity around comms work. Hannah Whitaker and Allan Musinguzi are now temporarily line managed by Beth Metcalf, who has returned temporarily to full-time hours and taken on leadership of completing and implementing the review of representation, working with the OU to support the outcomes of their own academic governance review and working to review how we can best recruit, induct, inform and support Central Committee Reps moving forward. Hannah Whittaker has since gained a promotion in the OU and is due to leave the Association on 30 April 2020. Beth is reviewing the job description of the role before going out to recruitment. Sam Keneally's temporary contract as Digital Communications Officer came to an end on 31 March 2020, however he was successful in being appointed to the Volunteer Team as Volunteer Projects Assistant from 1 April to 31 July 2020 to assist that team with the planning and delivery of handover and induction and also to provide some extra capacity for both Conference technical delivery and supporting the Operations team in the absence of Joel's replacement. Kate Dungate, Head of Digital Communications, has now returned from maternity leave. Heather Bloomer who covered the role brilliantly in her absence has now been made Senior Digital Communications Officer to provide higher level support. Finally, Trustees also approved an increase in the level of contingency leave available to support staff with caring commitments during this period of home-working due to Covid-19.
14. Trustees approved supporting the national #EveryDayCounts campaign, which is being led by NCVO and CFG, two organisations that the Association is a member of.

15. The next scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on 22 May 2020 and will be carried out online.

Rob Avann
Chief Executive