

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

18 July 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 22 May 2020 via Microsoft Teams. The meeting minutes can be found [here](#). Mark Price, our newly appointed External Trustee attended his first meeting and Danielle Smith, England AAR and Mark Cameron, Scotland AAR both attended the meeting as observers from the CEC.
3. Trustees were informed of the actions that staff had taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery planning. Trustees approved a further extension of staff Contingency Leave for COVID-19 reasons in-line with the OU's offer to 28 August 2020.
4. The final draft of the Bye-Laws was approved following extensive consultation and discussion with the CEC at their last meeting and subsequently in the BoT and CEC forums. The Bye-Laws were then submitted onwards to Conference delegates for ratification. Trustees also approved the continuation of the website procurement project previously presented to CEC.
5. A forecast outturn report for 2019-20 was presented to Trustees following substantial changes to the forecast due to the impact of the Coronavirus restrictions on the Association's face to face events. Trustees also received and approved in principle an outline draft budget for 2020-21.
6. A report on the financial position of OUSA (Services) Ltd (OSL) was presented along with a recommendation from the OSL board to cease trading in its current

form and to bring trading into the OU Students Association Ltd. The loss of income from exam papers in 2016 had resulted in cumulative annual losses for the company and Trustees, staff and our external advisors had been working on the issue of the charity continuing to support the subsidiary for some time. A business plan was in place for recovery and was progressing to target up until lockdown restrictions came into place in March 2020 which had knocked trading and operations off course. Trustees therefore agreed with the recommendations and next actions in reviewing the administrative operations and stock ranges.

7. On the forums, the formal responses made to the the Higher Education Commission's Disabled Students Inquiry and the Parliamentary Education Committee's call for evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on education were shared and warmly received.
8. Trustees were kept informed of the response to the OU's Pandemic Planning Committee on the Association's approach to recovery planning. Taking into account feedback from a staff survey and the fact that staff continue to work and deliver effectively whilst working from home, it was agreed that there was no business critical need to return to campus in the first phase of re-opening and that Association staff would continue to work from home for the foreseeable future which would be reviewed regularly following any changes to Government advice. Trustees further approved a default position that all Association events should continue to be held online until the end of 2020 unless there was an exceptional case for altering this approach.
9. Trustees fed into the BoT Report that went to Conference as one of the business documents for ratification by delegates.
10. The Association's statement on Black Lives Matter, drawn up by the President and CEC members with staff input was approved by the Chair of the Board and published on the website. In both sessions, there were a lot of shared experiences and learning but also a commitment for us to do our part on moving forward. The statement contains a number of actions including implementing a working group to develop an action plan which will be developed further with CEC and BoT input and discussion.
11. Trustees agreed to move some of the Association's reserves into a 95-day deposit account to protect funds from negative interest rates after they decrease in July. Future work around investment and other income generation opportunities will commence this month through a new working group which will report back to the Trustees later in the year.
12. Staffing Matters: Beverley Woodbridge, Research Assistant, has resigned having chosen not to return to work in August following her maternity leave as her family are re-locating. Rebecca Coster, who has been covering this role, has been made permanent as a direct replacement. Jess Smith, Head of Student Community was due to return from maternity leave in May, however she has delayed her return to the beginning of August using contingency leave to help with caring responsibilities. She will return for 1 day a week throughout August and hopes to be back to her contracted 2 days in September, childcare dependent. Pete Turner has continued in the full-time position and will cover until Jess returns to full capacity. Sammi Wright, Projects Officer (Student Community) has started her maternity leave earlier than planned due to her

baby arriving earlier than expected. Myles Smith-Thompson is covering the role and joined the team on 10th June. Myles has had the challenge of being fully inducted and having to learn the ropes online and remotely but is settling in well. Beth Metcalf, interim lead for representation, is currently reviewing the role of the vacant Representation Officer position which will be recruited for soon, hopefully in July.

13. The next scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on 24 July 2020, with our incoming newly elected Trustees observing the meeting. This will be the last meeting of the term for our departing Trustees Cath Brown, Caroline Cowan, Cinnomen McGuigan, Kirsty Lamb, Adelaide Ribaud and Alison Kingan. Thank you to our outgoing Trustees for their dedication and contribution over the term and all the very best wishes for the future.

Rob Avann
Chief Executive