

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

25 – 27 October 2019

**ELECTIONS REVIEW**

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The C E C is asked to:-

- i) **note** the progress of election review working group
- ii) **discuss** the scope of the review and keys areas

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Caroline Cowan (Vice president Administration) and Stephanie Stubbins (Deputy President) are co-leading the Elections Review Working Group, which includes Barbara (OU Council Member), Lucy Richardson (Area Association Representative for Wales), Verity Robinson (Head of Student Support) and Beth Metcalf (Head of Volunteering) with the support from Student Voice Team.
- 1.2 The aim of this Election Review Working Group is to analyse how the main elections worked out in 2018 and the subsequent bye-elections, looking to make recommendations to improve the process and engagement for the general elections in 2020. Initial discussions began in December 2018 followed by a recent election review planning meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019, to start shaping the scope of the elections review.

**2. Scope of Election Review**

- 2.1 Initial ideas of scope for this review are: -
  - 2.1.2 **Timing of the elections:** C E C have previously agreed an earlier March/April slot. Suggestions made were early to mid-March for publicity and nominations. Candidates announced and hustings at the beginning of April and voting from mid-April with results announced on April 30th.
  - 2.1.2 **Raising awareness:** suggested areas are 'what the elections are about', 'voting numbers', 'communications', 'how to increase student engagement with elections' and 'key documents – what is useful'. Research is needed around this subject area. [ask the Student Voice Researchers, to look at current and previous data].

- 2.2.3 **Expectations on candidates versus/and voter expectations:** It is important to understand the expectations of and from candidates that put themselves through this process; while also understanding our voters too. Other areas to consider are 'manifestos and pledges,' 'accountability for those elected', 'support around/after elections', 'fact checking' and 'clarity over the roles' [remit review is in process].
  - 2.2.4 **Elections and Culture:** Review of work and practice surrounding elections [via Culture Change Working Group) could feed back to this election review working group. Other areas for discussion are 'elections and representation - how we can truly represent students' and 'conflicts of interest - rules for Trustees and C E C membership'
  - 2.2.5 **Elections Data:** What data and statistics do we record and how do we present this? How public is this information?
  - 2.2.6 **Process for Staff:** support and process for staff members involved with the elections process.
  - 2.2.7 **Key points for C E C and Trustees:** looking at induction and handover process (timing of both) for outgoing and incoming elected students
- 2.2 Stakeholders would be asked to feedback into this review to gain a better understanding of how the elections have worked previously and area that need to improve.

[These could include and not limited to: - current/past C E C and Trustees, other student representatives and volunteers, candidates that were not elected in elections, students who engaged in elections, students who do not engage in election process, association staff members]

### 3. Key Areas for Discussion

3.1 The C E C are asked to consider the above scope of the elections review.

**Q.1** *Is the scope of this election review appropriate?*

**Q.2** *Are there any other considerations that need to be taken on board with this election review, not outlined above?*

3.2 Please discuss the following:-

**Q.1.** *What is the most efficient timing and timetable for the general elections in 2020?*

**Q.2.** *What sort of publicity is appropriate to inform and engage students around the elections, while increasing voting numbers?*

**Q.3** *Do we raise awareness of the elections in the right way and how do we prevent election fatigue?*

**Q.4** *What should candidates or voters expect from the elections?*

**Q.5** *How can there be better accountability for those elected?*

**Q.6** *Are there any specific areas of the election process or culture that needs improving or works well?*

**Q.7** *Are we talking to the correct stakeholders?*

**Q.8** *How does the election review sit with the strategic direction of the organisation?*

**4. Moving Forward**

4.1 The Election Review Working Group will drive this work going forward, making recommendations for the Elections to the C E C and Board of Trustees for the term 2020-22

4.2 Election Review Working Group will report back for January C E C.

*[Please feel free to talk to members of the Election Review Working Group at any time to help inform this work]*

**Caroline Cowan**  
**Vice President Administration**

**Stephanie Stubbins**  
**Deputy President**