

Appendix 4 – Governance Review Consultation Forum Feedback

Background

The Students Association held an online consultation between 25 August and 8 September. The consultation was held via the Open University's Student Consultation Forum using the University's Student Consultative Panel (213 students selected for the panel in order for it be representative of the overall make-up of the student body), and invited feedback on key areas of the Governance Reform such as the Student Leadership and Representation recommendations and the proposed format for an online Annual General Meeting.

9 students participated in the discussion, with a total of 40 individual posts.

Discussion topic 1 - New structure for the Student Leadership Committee

<i>Discussion topic</i>	<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Themes</i>
The principle of portfolio- or skill-based election of committee members	It would be useful to take into consideration the workload of different posts and the time commitment required of the committee members: <i>"without full role descriptions it is difficult to know whether you would need a small number of people qualified across a number of areas or alternatively a larger number of people with particular focused skill sets"</i>	Workload on committee members Time investment required of committee members
	One contributor saw specific portfolios such as Student Support, Student Community, EDI, and Education as important and would prefer such a portfolio-based to a more skills-based approach.	

Discussion topic 2 – Student Representation Forum

<i>Discussion topic</i>	<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Themes</i>
<p>Mix of student members of the Forum</p>	<p>The feedback to this question included different suggestions, with places reserved both on the basis of different <u>student groups</u> (such as those studying in the same faculty, living in the same Nation, or sharing a group characteristic such as students with a disability or those who are single parents) and on the basis of different <u>student needs</u>.</p> <p>One contributor suggested Forum seats to be reserved to accommodate a good mix of Forum members, listing:</p> <p><i>"a) Faculty representatives (as at present), b) Nations Representatives (as at present), c) protected characteristics - LGBT+, female, disabled (physical), disabled (other), ex-offenders, secure accommodation (including prison), Black and ethnic minority, young students, retired students, single parents, [any other underrepresented or disadvantaged groups]"</i></p> <p>Other contributors (one) similarly supported reserving places that enabled better representation of students with protected characteristics.</p> <p><i>"I would still like to see roles dedicated to capturing those aspects of university life which affect all students (i.e., welfare, research/internship opportunities, etc.)."</i></p>	<p>Reserving Forum seats based on faculty, Nations and other protected characteristics</p>

<p>How Forum members could gather student views</p>	<p>The different ways in which student views could be gathered included suggestions around surveys, polls, focus groups, newsletter, social media, notifications on StudentHome, forums.</p> <p>One contributor also mentioned "<i>discussion on WhatsApp groups, and focus groups (which could be held online or in a hybrid (mix of face-to-face and online) format</i>"</p> <p><i>"a dedicated site for those who are keen for their views to be considered"</i></p>	<p>Reaching students using a wide variety of channels/platforms, similar to what the Association uses currently.</p>
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Discussion topic 3 – Scrutiny Panel

<i>Discussion topic</i>	<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Themes</i>
How the SLC's work could be scrutinised	One contributor suggested the recording and/or live broadcasting of Student Leadership Committee meetings, but another disagreed with making these meetings public.	Ways of ensuring that the student body is aware of SC meetings, papers and minutes
	Other suggestions mentioned practices that are already in place at the Association, such as committee papers and minutes to be shared with the wider student body	
	<p><i>"The work of the Trustees and the CEC should be subject to the scrutiny of an annual conference attended by delegates selected by ballot."</i></p> <p><i>"There should be a regular review of classified papers with classified papers remaining classified for no longer than is necessary and subsequently declassifies. Reports of the Scrutiny Panel, together with reports of the Student Leadership Team/CEC and Board of Trustees should be regularly published as a Bulletin on the OUSA website."</i></p>	
How the SLC's work could be communicated to the wider student body	Suggestions included increasing the visibility of student representatives within the student body, seeking student feedback on their work.	Increasing visibility of SLC within the student body

	<p><i>"Regular press releases from the Student Leadership Committee (SLC) should be prepared and released notifying the students of the work undertaken, the decisions reached and the upcoming work plan. It should be possible for any student to easily communicate to the SLC and its members and to ask questions of the SLC and to receive an answer. Support from paid staff from the association should be provided to enable this two-way communication between the SLC and the student body."</i></p>	
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Discussion topic 4 – New Annual General Meeting

<i>Discussion topic</i>	<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Themes</i>
Types of business/discussions that students would like to see	<i>"I would like to see the ability for any student to be able to propose a resolution for debate at the AGM. And procedures in place to choose those items of business that will be placed before the student body for debate, amendment and voting on to be adopted as OU Students Association policy."</i>	The ability of students to propose resolutions for debate at the AGM
	Suggestions included ensuring that all business items are presented in an easy to understand format and can be easily understood by students new to the Association.	Ensuring language around Business elements is clear and jargon free
What would encourage students to attend	<i>"For me, the prerequisite for an AGM would be for all students to have a vote. What happened until now with Conference, was that only students who got a spot at Conference could vote for the Business side of Conference, therefore only a few hundreds of students out of the tens of thousands of OU students."</i>	Enabling all students to vote at the AGM
	<i>"What would encourage me to attend an AGM/Conference is that I would have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on the future of my Association."</i>	
	Together with opening voting to all students, some contributors wished to retain a face-to-face element for the AGM.	

Discussion topic 5 – Student Engagement

<i>Discussion topic</i>	<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Themes</i>
Lower costs, alternative activities/events	<i>"Perhaps smaller, focused networking events - with accommodation on the main campus or at regional locations - be considered throughout the 2-year period to effect the sort of face-to-face communication which builds communities. Or should shorter events out in the regions without accommodation provided (and thus cheaper) be considered?"</i>	Smaller events paced throughout the year

Other comments and questions raised outside of the consultation topics

- Call for a student mandate on accepting the recommendations of the Governance Review or inviting student views
- The role of the external agency/Trustees
- That students be consulted on other issues and not just on *Student Leadership and Representation* and the *Annual General Meeting*
- Cross-over/conflation of the proposed *Student Representative Forum* with the *Central Committee Representatives*
- Whether the Student Leadership Committee posts would be paid or not
- More information about how decision-making would work with the combined *Student Leadership Committee* and *Student Representative Forum*
- How student representatives would be appointed to the *Student Representative Forum*.
- Whether the new format AGM means that the current biennial Conference would be cancelled.
- One contributor supported the Governance Review recommendation of term limits, noting that it would encourage new students to participate and stand for elections.
- Two contributors shared concerns that the new Student Leadership Committee might place power with just a few committee members.