

**The book with
the
Board of
Trustees
report in...**

Report of the Board of Trustees 2018/2020

Current Membership

Allan Blake – External Trustee (Chair)

Cath Brown – President (Vice-Chair)

Caroline Cowan – Vice President Administration

Alison Kingan – Student Trustee

Kirsty Lamb – Student Trustee

Annabel Lane – External Trustee

Cinnomen McGuigan – Student Trustee

John Paisley – Student Trustee

Mark Price – External Trustee

Adelaide Ribaud – Student Trustee

Claire Wallace – Student Trustee

Introduction

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the management and administration of the Association, subject to relevant legislation and the Association's Articles and Bye-Laws. This includes responsibility for the governance, staffing, finance and strategy of the Association. The Trustees also have the ultimate responsibility within the Association to ensure the viability and sustainability of the organisation.

This report provides an overview of key decisions and activities undertaken by the Trustees during this term within each of the four key headings: governance, staffing, finance and strategy. For those seeking more information, this report can be read alongside other published information and reports including:

- the non-confidential minutes from each meeting which are published on the Association's website www.oustudents.com under 'Board of Trustees' in the 'Your Association' section.
- the regular reports from the Board of Trustees to the Central Executive Committee which are published on our website under 'Student Leadership Team, Meetings, Agendas, Papers and Minutes' in the 'Your Association' section.
- the Association's full audited accounts, which are published on our website under 'Accounts' in the 'Your

Association' section or via the Charity Commission's website

Governance

Conference 2018 provided overwhelming support from delegates to progress the incorporation of the Association, changing the legal structure from an unincorporated association to a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee. After considerable work from the team and assisted by an external project manager, including many drafts and edits of the new Articles of Association, we concluded the process to transfer the entirety of the Association's assets and undertakings to the Students Association Limited at midnight on 31st July 2019. Despite having a few tasks still to finish, including completing various legal agreements between the new Association and the University and dealing with the winding up of the shell of the unincorporated Association, the process was smooth and completed successfully.

After the change approved by Conference that the President would no longer automatically chair the Board, Trustees agreed to appoint an external Chair and Allan Blake was recruited in autumn 2019 and welcomed to the role of Chair as of February 2020. To further reinforce the Board, and provide added financial expertise, Mark Price was also appointed as an external Trustee following external recruitment in May 2020. Our thanks go to Andrew Hulme for his contribution as an external Trustee providing this financial insight for five years before he stepped down in the Summer of 2019. We feel very fortunate to work with outstanding external

Trustees who provide us with support over a wide range of experience skills and valuable expertise which in addition to finance, includes human resources, business and law.

With GDPR regulations requiring significant expertise to ensure compliance, Trustees agreed to tender for Data Protection Officer services and in the early part of this year, following a detailed selection process, Hope and May was chosen as our provider for their exemplary knowledge of the charity sector and their understanding of the Association's context and challenges.

A recent exercise was undertaken in conjunction with the Central Executive Committee to update the Bye-Laws and the revised document appears on the business agenda of this Conference. Work included a wholesale update of the Complaints and Misconduct procedure and the addition of several safeguarding recommendations relating to volunteer roles and CEC eligibility.

Trustees approved funding to initiate an external review of current Association culture. Consultants reported back in January 2020 and recommendations included the necessity for improved collaborative work, better adherence to our stated values and the need for a thorough review of governance processes. A working group of students and staff is drawing up next steps to take this work forward.

The Remuneration Committee, a subcommittee of the Board, carried out two detailed considerations during this term. The first was a review of senior management pay levels.

This work, which included an extensive and comprehensive external benchmarking exercise, reported recommendations back to the Board in November 2019. The second was a review of the remuneration for the President and Deputy President roles which again included an extensive external benchmarking exercise and stakeholder consultation. This work reported recommendations to the Board and final decisions were made at the meeting in February 2020 ready for the election process to begin.

Staffing

The staff team now numbers 31 members. Additions to the team through this term included the appointment of a third member of the senior management team in the shape of a Deputy Chief Executive responsible for Finance and Resources, and an appointment to the new role of Policy and Public Affairs Manager.

The Executive Assistant role supporting the Chief Executive and including all matters of HR administration and the administrative support to the Central Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees was promoted to the Head of Executive Support and Welfare. This was to recognise the calibre of work involved and the growing amount of HR duties required for such a large team. A new part time role of assistant to this role was also created, reflecting the substantial workload.

Following a small reshuffle, current staff teams consist of Student Community, Digital Communications, Student

Support, Strategy and Research, Operations, Policy and Public Affairs, Resources and Volunteering including Representation.

Finance

The finances of the Students Association, OU Students Educational Trust and the OU Students Shop can be viewed in the audited accounts.

The Finance and Resources team, in conjunction with Vice President Administration, continue to work with the appointed auditors, James Cowper Kreston, in carrying out their external audit and assisting on various financial matters.

At the time of writing, ongoing work is being undertaken to deal with the implications of COVID-19 and to rearrange the work of the OU Students Shop. Vice President Administration, in conjunction with the President, continues to lead on our annual grant funding (subvention) from the University and continue to negotiate for further funds to support our strategic objectives.

Strategy

Trustees approved a new strategy in September 2019, covering the period 2019/20 to 2022/23. The strategy was drafted following a lengthy process of consultation and workshops that included the Central Executive Committee, Central Committee Representatives, Trustees, Students Association staff and OU staff. This project was coordinated by a joint student and staff steering group. Following approval, the new strategy was launched at several central and nation events.

A number of new strategy projects have been identified, some of which will be initiated following Conference 2020.

Implementation plans have been developed that include key performance indicators (KPIs) and tracking metrics, a process for strategy performance management reporting and an initiation plan for a number of new strategic projects which will be initiated following Conference 2020. Annual business planning and budgetary planning will be aligned to these strategy projects.

The key strategic KPIs agreed are Awareness, Relevance, Engagement, Reach, Impact and Culture. A working group will be tracking, monitoring and reporting against the agreed measures of success.

For further insights and information on strategy visit www.oustudents.com/our-strategy

Meetings 2018 – 2020

11 October 2018

3 December 2018

8 February 2019

10 May 2019

13 June 2019

26 July 2019

14 October 2019

6 December 2019

7 February 2020

22 May 2020

The handover meeting to the new Board takes place on 24 July 2020.

Wendy Burrell

Deputy Chief Executive (Students and Staff Engagement)

Open University Students Association.

