

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

22 - 24 April 2022

UPDATE ON ATHABASCA RELATIONSHIP AND REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **note** the update on the relationship and activities; and
- ii) **approve** the continuation of the informal partnership arrangement set out in the Memorandum of Understanding (appendix 1)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper is put to the CEC by the Students Association President and the Director of Engagement.
- 1.2 The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by all parties (OU Students Association, Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU), and Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association (AUGSA)) in March 2021 states that the relationship agreement should be reviewed on a 6-monthly basis by each party's respective governance processes.
- 1.3 This paper provides an update on the developments in the relationship over the last 6 months and asks the CEC to approve a continuation of the agreement for a further 12 months.

2. Update on Recent Developments

- 2.1 *Establishment of International Distance-Learning Student Forum (IDLSF):* In partnership with AUSU we developed the idea of a quarterly meeting to discuss best practice in distance-learning student leading. This would be an opportunity to share ideas, achievements and challenges between the partners. Each meeting would have a predetermined theme and each partner would present on that topic, before an informal discussion and opportunities for questions at the end. We held the inaugural IDLSF meeting in November on the topic of *Student Community*, which was attended by 17 students and staff members, and the second meeting in February was attended by 24 and focused on issues around equality, diversity and inclusion. Feedback from the meetings has been overwhelmingly positive, and the next meeting will take

place in late May/early June due to elections both at the Association and Athabasca.

- 2.2 *Advice on student chat app:* Representatives from AUSU met with our Head of Community Team to generously provide advice and insights regarding their student chat app as we develop proposals to pilot a similar app for students at the OU.
- 2.3 *Involvement in Benchmarking activities:* AUSU have agreed to be involved in benchmarking activity in the future. This work has been pushed back, but will hopefully be picked up later in 2022.

3. Approving the continuation of the MoU with Athabasca

- 3.1 The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by all parties (OU Students Association, Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU), and Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association (AUGSA)) in March 2021 states that the relationship agreement should be reviewed on a 6-monthly basis by each party's respective governance processes.
- 3.2 The MoU is a non-legally binding agreement that commits the Association to exploring opportunities to develop mutually beneficial partnership activities and share knowledge, ideas and best practice. It sets out agreed principles that will underpin the working relationship.
- 3.3 The partnership agreement and activities with Athabasca cost the Association nothing at all.

4. Recommendation and Decision

- 4.1 This paper recommends that the CEC approve the continuation of the partnership arrangement under the MoU for a **further 12 months** rather than 6, based on the establishment of the IDLSF and the obvious benefits of the arrangement, which will save the CEC from having to discuss the matter every 6 months.

Sarah Jones, President

Dan Moloney, Director of Engagement