

OPEN STUDENTS' UNION

Student Leadership Team (SLT)

24 – 25 April 2026

Report of the Board of Trustees

The SLT is asked to:-

- i) **Note** this regular report from the Board of Trustees

Introduction/Background

1.1 There is a requirement under the Articles of Association for the Board of Trustees (BoT) to provide a report to the Student Leadership Team (SLT) at each meeting. This report is intended to provide the following:

- a) a formal opportunity for SLT 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 SLT or report on progression of any non-routine matters.

1.2 The Board met on the 28th of January 2026 online via Microsoft Teams and in-person on the OU campus. The meeting minutes are available on the website [here](#).

Discussions and outcomes from the BoT meeting

2.1 The SU President presented the board with their Officer update. This included reporting on the development of the best practice guides and position statements, relating to the Priority areas. They also shared information about communication issues, leading to misinformation and misunderstandings, and there was a discussion on the role clarity and governance of SLT. A proposed solution was for the SLT Liaison to act as a communication bridge between trustees and SLT to avoid misunderstandings in future. Trustees also discussed the CEO/President sharing an update with SLT following each meeting upon approval of the minutes to reduce the time between decisions and sharing these minutes formally.

2.2 The Societies Review was presented to trustees. The review clarified the risks with the current state of societies, and new models for managing societies were presented. Trustees discussed each proposed model, deciding that the CEO and Head of EDI & Belonging should do more work on the model following their input and return for a decision online.

To support this work, our part time EDI and Belonging Officer has been uplifted to fulltime in role. The decision was made a few weeks later to support the move to the following model:

- **Societies:** Independent Groups Operating independently of the Open SU but able to affiliate with us if they meet agreed affiliation criteria.
- **Student Led Groups:** Student Led Groups for students with similar interests, who will be eligible for support and funding from the Open SU. These groups will not be run independently and the Open SU will need to be assured of their governance. A pot of money will also be ringfenced for student-led-groups supporting minoritised students.

2.3 Trustees received the Finance Report, where it was noted that Q1 finances are broadly positive, with underspend caused by staffing gaps and delayed spending, and clearer investment headroom expected in April. Although the deficit budget planned to use reserves for roles such as the commercial manager, current savings may mean reserves aren't needed; April forecasts will confirm this.

2.4 The board received an update on plans to establish a commercial trading subsidiary, with legal steps outlined including drafting governing documents, registering with Companies House, setting up a board, and ensuring proper financial systems and HMRC registrations. Trustees discussed governance arrangements and agreed to approve the subsidiary's creation, timing will be subject to the Head of Finance confirming resource and cost viability.

2.5 Trustees were presented the Elections Review: updates to the SLT role descriptions have been completed to reflect new responsibilities, with nominations opening on 10 March 2026 and results announced on 8 May, live hustings will be held for President and Deputy President. The President and CEO also highlighted the need to reassess international student eligibility in future, with plans to consult affected students.

2.6 Trustees heard the Individual Rep Team business case, which outlined how the demand for the Individual Representation service has grown, prompting a proposal for an increase in staffing. The CEO and Head of Finance confirmed this can be funded this year through contingency and salary underspend, with long-term funding to be reviewed. Trustees approved using temporary, annually reviewed contracts for flexibility. The plan funds the recruitment of a new 0.6 FTE adviser.

- 2.7 CEO Report noted recent staffing recruitments, a recent complaint being closed, and noted there has been a recent spike in staff sickness levels, but this is thought to be seasonal.
- 2.8 The standing papers were received and noted.

Staffing

- 3.1 The last quarter has been one that has seen a few changes amongst the staffing team. On Monday 23rd March, we welcomed both Yash Chawla and Andrea Willette. Yash will be joining the EDI & Belonging team and will be supporting Danielle, as Volunteer Administrator. Andrea Willette has been appointed into the role of Head of Commercial Operations and brings with her a wealth of experience, managing commercial operations in different Charities. Both new starters have settled in well and are enjoying their inductions so far.

Emily Cox has also recently been successful in her promotion to Head of Marketing and Communications. Following a strong interview, Emily has now joined the Management Team and will be line managing Keith Minter, Andy Evans and Jasmine Ewart. We are really excited to have Emily on the Management Team and to see what great work she will be doing.

On the 1st April, we sadly said goodbye to Leanne Quainton. Leanne has been with us for the last 13 years and has been an orb of knowledge and support for the staff team and Board of Trustees over the years. We wish her the very best for her next chapter. As Leanne's role was a job share with another Head of team, we will not be recruiting for this vacancy but will instead be looking at how to best resource the people team moving forward.

Recruitment has been ongoing for the roles of Student Advisor and EDI & Belonging Officer. Student Advisor interviews are scheduled for the 9th April while the EDI & Belonging Officer only went live on Friday 27th March so interviews for this position are not scheduled until end of April.

Beth Pacey
Chief Executive