

OPEN STUDENTS' UNION

Student Leadership Team (SLT)

17 – 19 October 2025

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 23rd July 2025 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 Trustees received training for expense claims via the Moss app and website. The Moss system will replace Iplicit for expenses, whilst the Xero system will replace Iplicit for financial reporting.
- 2.2 Trustees were given the SLT Officer update, which referred to the July SLT weekend, and the subjects discussed. This included better use of the MS Teams space to support communication.

It was agreed that the President and CEO would provide a BoT update to SLT much sooner than at the next meeting since this often means a period of up to 3 months before decisions are shared.

- 2.3 Trustees reflected on the recent Elections. It was noted that improved Elections communications have seen larger numbers of SLT applicants but no higher turnout for election votes.

Director of Engagement was actioned to create a proposal for the next BoT meeting in October, about piloting a shortlist approach for the President and Deputy President roles in Spring 2026.

- 2.4 Trustees discussed the shop/commercial review, including the advantages of added income through sponsorship or partnership with organisations that fit with Open SU values, and will benefit our members.

Trustees discussed whether having ticketed student events was an avenue to explore. It was noted that these would not be a high-earning income stream and location would be a key issue, so trustees identified this as a low priority.

Regarding past exam paper downloads, a £1 opt-out charge for past exam papers was approved, ensuring students can still choose not to pay. A “pay-it-forward” option will let students cover the cost for others. It was noted that the statement about proceeds supporting OUSET should be made more visible online if this is the chosen destination for the funds.

Open SU is exploring print-on-demand for merchandise as a flexible, low-risk alternative to a warehouse model. It allows customisation, reduces staffing needs, and suits future rebrands. Graduation stalls may become more varied and continue to be volunteer-led. Improvements to supplier due diligence and the returns process are needed to reduce delays and stock downtime.

- 2.5 Trustees received the finance report. The Director of Finance and People highlighted the timing of subvention payment was still being negotiated. The transition to the new finance system is on track despite challenges.

It was also highlighted that more cuts at the OU are expected, but the OU is predicting to break even this year and return to surplus next year.

- 2.6 The standing papers were received.

Staffing

- 3.1 The last quarter has been a lot quieter, with no new additions to the team. We have however said goodbye to several members of the team. Back in July, Diane Woodford (Finance Administrator), Sandra Carter (Projects Administrator) and Anna Mahon (EDI & Belonging Administrator) left the team to start their next venture. We were able to give them a lovely leaving do, in the form of an Open SU Olympics.

Taz Gardner (Finance Officer) kindly agreed to stay on for a bit longer to assist the Finance team with the audit. Her official last day is the 30th September, however she booked some leave meaning we said goodbye to Taz on the 18th September. We will miss Taz hugely but wish her well in her next chapter.

There are no upcoming recruitments.

Beth Pacey
Chief Executive