

# Report of the business of the Board of Trustees for the Annual General Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

## Aims, objectives and activities

The Union is governed by Articles of Association and the object of the Union is the advancement of education of students at Anglia Ruskin University for the public benefit by:

- Promoting the interests and welfare of students at Anglia Ruskin University during their period of study and representing, supporting and advising students
- Being the recognised representative channel between students and Anglia Ruskin University and any other external bodies
- Providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities

The Board of Trustees meets at least four times each academic year. At time of writing, since the last Annual General Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020, the Board met in June 2020, September 2020, December 2020 and February 2021. The Board of Trustees also has three sub-committees which it delegates particular areas of work to. These are:

### Finance and Risk

The finance and risk sub-committee has provided financial oversight this year to ensure the student union has robust finances in place. The committee have worked closely with the external auditors to oversee the accounts for 2018/9. The committee have also worked hard with the CEO on the risk register and are pleased to note that the new risk register is a live document that helps inform on key decisions.

### Human Resources and Employee Engagement

This sub-committee over sees the SU HR function. The group has provided oversight and direction with regards to employee morale and has ensured a staff survey has occurred. The committee also ensure that the SU is compliant and legal in all of its HR affairs. The committee have set an aim of providing more engagement with its student staff team through the use of more town halls. In this year with lockdown and working from home, the committee has also worked hard to ensure all staff have the correct equipment to carry out their roles effectively

### Appointments and Governance

The appointments and governance sub-committee ensures that the Trustee Board is effective. The trustee board was observed by a governance expert who provided a series of board recommendations. The Sub-committee has reviewed all of these actions and began a phase of implementation. This committee ensured a new student trustee was recruited to sit on The Trustee Board. The committee is also reviewing sub-committee membership of its experts to ensure correct skills are being supplied.

The Board of Trustees is currently made up of five elected Officer Trustees, one appointed Student Trustee and five appointed External Trustees. The Trustees discussed a range of issues including:

### Finance

The management accounts year to date and cash flow forecast were scrutinised by Trustees at each meeting. Budgets for 2020-21 were approved. The Trustees approved the audited accounts 2019-20, which will be received at this Annual General Meeting. These will shortly be available on our website.

### Strategy

The previous strategic plan has come to an end. This year's focus was on developing a new 5 year strategic plan for the Students' Union. The Union has embarked on a year of research with students, staff, university staff and other student unions being used as sources of research to help develop a new strategy. We are really proud of the plan we have created which sets out a bold vision underpinned by four strategic themes that will shape all that we do. The new Strategic plan is detailed below;

#### **Vision – Making a difference to every Student.**

The work of the Students' Union is divided into 4 different themes.

*Theme 1. Conversations with You* – We will have meaningful and honest conversations together, which shapes what we do along your journey

*Theme 2 Belonging* – We will help you form strong communities and friendships to have fun and feel supported by the University, by us and by each other.

*Theme 3. Improving your Learning* – We will place your education at the heart of our work. Collaborating with you and the University to make a positive impact now and for the students who come after

*Theme 4. Broadening your Horizons* – We will help you develop and discover your ambitions for the future. We will support you to be brave, resilient and explore opportunities on your journey through ARU.

This is underpinned by a new set of values that shape our behaviours and our ways of working

*Creative – We think outside the box, learn from mistakes and use our imagination.*

*Challenging – We push ourselves, the University and students to think and do things differently.*

*Inclusive – We will champion the diversity of our students and of the communities we are part of.*

*Sustainable – We will champion wellbeing, equality, and justice, make ethical decisions and help to grow a cleaner, fairer planet.*

*Collaborative – We are better when we work together.*

The Strategy is set for 5 years, the strategy is measured by way of a balanced score card that is seeking to measure the strategy in numbers but also to measure the impact it makes to students by way of a narrative.

The Students' Union will shape its work and direction through future consultation with students. All staff are actively encouraged to talk to and listen to students to find out their needs. Projects are shaped from these conversations. The Students' Union will measure its impact via these projects and these projects will feed into the Students' Union balanced score card.

The Students' Union at the end of this 5 years hopes to have extended its reach to as many students as possible and to ensure that all students feel that the Students' Union is there to support them throughout their university journey.

## Operational Updates

The Board received regular operational updates from the Chief Executive Officer including:

- Key union events e.g. Welcome Week, Elections.
- Commercial services performance
- Staff engagement Executive Officer reports

In March the global pandemic took hold and this saw the resultant lockdown in the UK. This led to all students studying online and staff working from home. The Students' Union made huge efforts in this time to switch all of its activity online including society events, course rep meetings and advice appointments. The engagement with our students, ensured that the feedback and critique from students was fed back to the university and was invaluable to ensuring course and teaching quality. The Students' Union was able to switch its end of year award ceremonies to online versions to huge success. The Students' Union was very proud of the impact it made over the course of the year and its ability to adapt quickly

The Board received regular updates from the Executive Committee and work of the full time officers. Student Trustees We have appointed one student trustee and will be looking to appoint another in the new academic year.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees,

Avinash Miriyam

President & Chair of the Board of Trustees

March 2021