

ANGLIA RUSKIN STUDENTS' UNION**TRUSTEES REPORT****YEAR ENDED 31ST JULY 2021**

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their combined Directors' report and Trustees' annual report, as required by company law, together with the audited financial statements of Anglia Ruskin Students' Union (the company) for the year ended 31 July 2021. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and financial statements of the company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in January 2015. The Trustees and Directors Reports have been combined under the Companies Act 2006.

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 and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of Anglia Ruskin students.

Anglia Ruskin Students' Union provides a variety of services and activities for students including:

- Representation and Campaigning
Supporting students to campaign for change and to represent their views about their experiences as students to key partners and stakeholders - such as the University and within the local community. We hold annual elections for a variety of leadership positions across course, faculty, campus and institutional level, ensuring our members lead the direction of our Union. Over 400 course reps were elected last year whose voice was heard throughout the switch to online learning.
- The Students' Union runs a successful Student Advice service. This service provides support to students. Last year the advice service heard 526 individual student cases including 109 for late mitigation, 183 for academic offences and 163 individual student appeals.
- The Students' Union provides a choice of over 110 recreational clubs and societies across our campuses for students to join. In March the Union hosted a successful Global Week, bringing together students from different cultures and backgrounds to celebrate diversity at ARU. During Global Week we engaged with over 2700 students through various online events. Over lockdown, we moved our activities online and committed to regular daytime and night-time events to support student wellbeing.
- The Students' Union volunteering service supports students to volunteer in the local communities of our campuses and throughout lockdown has supported students to volunteer online where that has been possible and has provided sessions for volunteers to support each other and their wellbeing. Our volunteers logged over 10,000 hours of volunteering during the last year.

- Commercial Services are offered across our campuses, including a bar and food outlet, shops and online retail although the on-campus services were significantly reduced due to the pandemic. As last year we hosted our Made A Difference and SU Awards events online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020-2021

The year 2020-21 has been a year that has seen much change. The Students' Union began the year with an adapted welcome week with reduced engagement from our student body due to the COVID restrictions. Our officer team outlined a number of campaigns that achieved much success. The campaign for the University to provide an incubation centre which is a hub for students to connect and explore entrepreneurial opportunities was a huge success and the incubation centre fully launched in June 2021.

The officer team ran numerous other campaigns including campaigns on hidden disabilities and multi faith spaces on campus which had successes for our students. Despite the pandemic the Students' Union had seen engagement across the Union improve with increases in society membership and course rep numbers. We delivered an online Global week with the highlight of the week being an online student showcase which was streamed live which had 242 views online

Throughout the year the Students' Union continued to deliver activity online, this included society events, rep training, group chat, elections, student meet ups and our end of year events – SU awards and Made A Difference Awards.

Our London campuses, which are funded separately to the block grant, continues to grow its service offering to students with the student numbers increasing year on year. Engagement continues to grow with 49 candidates running to become the ARU London Vice President with 25% of all London students voting in the election.

Strategic Development

This year's focus was on delivering the strategic plan for the Students' Union. The Strategic plan is detailed below;

Vision – Making a difference to every Student.

The work of the Students' Union is divided into 4 different themes (the words you and your refer to the student/s).

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 shifted to delivery of work through a projects-based system. This structure allows the Students' Union to embed strategic conversations at the outset and initiation of all of our work, to ensure our overall organisational strategy is progressing. This enables staff to have strategy at the forefront of work day-to-day, as well as at key reflection points (e.g. reporting to board).

The Students' Union shapes its work and direction through 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 delivered 44 strategic projects this year to help deliver its strategic aims. These projects included a project to deliver a cultural calendar of events for students, a refreshers week for trimester 2 students, officer induction and training, and also included internal projects such as streamlining its payroll process and delivering a new budgeting project.

The Students' Union hopes that at the end of these 5 years we will have extended its reach to as many students as possible, inclusive of all our hard-to-reach students. This will include delivering activity for our degree apprentice students and PGR cohort. The Students' Union sends out a pulse survey throughout the year via a third party that seeks to measure the impacts we make as a Students' Union. The Students' Union is using 2021/22 to set a baseline and then set targets to reach each year.

The Students' Union aims to have had a positive impact on the student experience and that this be reflected in an overall improvement in NSS scores and student experience surveys.

Financial review

The accounts show an increase to the Union's general unrestricted reserves of £165,201 (2020: an increase of £113,628).

The Union spent £730,664 (2020: £792,144) on Advice and Representation and £372,304 (2020: £423,057) on Student Activities and £272,901 (2020: £255,456) on communications and marketing. The Union's deficit on Student Venues and Entertainments has decreased to £249,426 (2020: £263,670) on a full cost basis.

A designated reserve has been set up to reflect the remaining pension liability of £791,570 which is payable over the next 15 years. The inclusion of the overall pension deficit and other designated reserves results in the total net assets amounting to £70,113 (2020: net liabilities of £172,145).

The Trustees note the Union has ended the financial year with a surplus of £242,258 (2020: Deficit of £22,742) and retained General Reserves, excluding the pension deficit, of £722,445 (2020: £557,244).

The Union had net assets of £70,113 at the year-end (2020: liabilities of £172,145), and remains financially strong.

At the year end, restricted funds of £6,491 (2020: £22,005) represent the unspent part of the University grant which has been ring-fenced for use in relation to ARU London

The Union has a general reserves policy of 3 - 6 months operating costs which is in line with Charity Commission guidance. The Board has sanctioned reserve levels being at the top end of the range or higher during the Covid 19 pandemic on the grounds of prudence. Reserve levels are monitored by SU staff and the Finance and Risk sub-committee. As/when things become more normal the Union will revert to meeting this guidance.

Structure, Governance and Management

Anglia Ruskin Students' Union (the 'Union') incorporated as a company limited by guarantee (Company no. 08064796) on 10th May 2012, and on 15th August 2012 registered as a new legal entity with the Charity Commission (Charity no. 1148574). The Charitable Company took over the assets and activities of the existing unincorporated Union on 1st September 2012 from which date it commenced operations.

The Trustee Board operates three sub-committees to support their work and decision making. The Finance and Risk Committee oversees the financial and risk management of the Union. The Appointments and Governance Committee oversees the appointment, induction and development of the Board and Senior Management Team of the Union and the HR and Employee Engagement Committee oversees the support and development of employed staff and volunteers. This includes the oversight of the Union's pay structure, which includes the pay & remuneration of senior personnel.

Officer Trustees are elected by the student body; External and Student Trustees are appointed by a constituted Appointments & Governance Committee and their appointment is ratified by Union Council. Trustees receive a full induction into the Union and all categories of Trustee are offered training and development opportunities to support them to be effective in their roles.

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit and other areas in deciding what activities the Charity should undertake.

The Scheme of Delegated Authority is reviewed annually by Trustees and delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive to manage the Union by implementing the policy and strategy adopted by and within a budget approved by the Trustees.

The Union is principally funded via a block grant from Anglia Ruskin University. The Union works closely with the University and our Strategic Plan, recognising the importance of being a key partner with the University, reflects our desire to work in partnership with the institution to deliver their Corporate Plan.

The Union does have a subsidiary trading company, however that company is currently dormant.

The Senior Management Team

The Chief Executive is supported by two Directors, and together form the Senior Management Team. The senior team provides strategic management of the union, manages its operations and provides leadership for the staff and volunteers. The Senior Management Team report to the Board and its sub-committees, ensuring they are kept informed of all aspects of the organisation. The board approve the strategy and budgets for the union.

Key Personnel Salaries

The salaries of key personnel are determined by placing the role within a grade boundary on the Union's pay scale and are subject to the approval of the Trustees. Annually remuneration is reviewed and appropriate increments are awarded to employees in line with budgets. Each time the Job Description or responsibilities of a role are changed consideration is given to the grade boundary best suited to the responsibilities of that role.

Risk Management

The Trustees regularly review the Union’s key strategic risks. The Finance and Risk Committee consider risks at each meeting as circumstances and events unfold. This year has seen the enhancement of the Risk Register developed last year which continues to be shaped by the Finance and Risk committee with advice from the committee’s external risk expert. In practice the risk review this year has been dominated by the global pandemic and the resultant impacts that it has had on the Students’ Union and students.

The current key strategic risks are on the Risk Register and remain as identified in prior years. However due to the current pandemic and the challenges that the current pandemic presents additional risks have been identified and subsequently added to the Risk Register. These are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Trustees and the Finance and Risk Committee to ensure the identified risks, and the associated actions, remain relevant to the Union’s developing needs and environment.

The sections in our Risk Register cover the following subjects; measuring internal and external risks:

- Compliance
- Pandemic
- Financial
- Governance & Strategy
- Operational
- Reputation
- People
- External Risks

The trustees have paid particular attention to potential impacts on funding from the University and commercial trade and how this has been affected by the pandemic.

The SUSS pension deficit is included in our Risk Register and further information on the pension scheme can be found in note 9 of these accounts

The key strategic risks facing the Union are:

Internal	External
Ongoing Funding	Government Policy – HE Policy (particularly TEF and NSS), Non-HE Policy;
Adaptation to government rules and legislation with regard to the global pandemic	University Strategy – Recruitment success & Funding
	Legislative Framework – with reference to Charity Law

Relationships And Networks

The Union has a key stakeholder relationship with Anglia Ruskin University, who is the primary funder. Under the Education Act 1994 the University has a statutory duty to be assured that the Union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is held to proper account for its finances. The formal relationship with the University is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding and is supported by regular communication between the senior management teams of both organisations.

ARU Students’ Union is affiliated to the National Union of Students. NUS is a confederation of students’ unions and affiliation therefore has no impact on the operating policies adopted by ARU Students’ Union.



John Valerkou
CEO
22nd March 2022