

Governance Review Update and Discussion

Update

The Governance Review has now finished its first stage and is entering the second stage. The first stage covered the Officer Trustee and Liberation Officer roles. These have been circulated to Union Council and will be sent to Board of Trustees (as amendment to the Bye-Laws is required).

The second stage of the Review planned to look at Postgraduate and Business School representation, our disciplinary process, Union Council reform and elections. While we can formalise the current structures of Business School representation within the Faculty itself, I do not think anything more than that can be done this year. This will offer us a better understanding which will allow us to provide more support to the elected reps and volunteers.

Timeline

Action	Deadline	Complete?
Publish scope, aims and timeline of review (A4 page summary)	17 th November 2017	Yes
Develop and agree consultation strategy (and survey details)	30 th November 2017	No
Consult stakeholders (phase 1- OT and LO role reviews)	14 th January 2018	Yes
Submit preliminary recommendations and OT changes for Leadership Elections 2018	19 th January 2018	Yes
Discuss recommendations and Constitution & Bye-Laws at Board of Trustees	1 st February 2018	
Consult stakeholders (phase 2- Constitution & Bye-Laws review)	5 th March 2018	
Finalise recommendations and Constitution & Bye-Laws at Governance Committee	?13 th March 2018	
Submit recommendations and Constitution & Bye-Laws to Union Council	20 th March 2018	
Submit Constitution & Bye-Laws to Board of Trustees (Away Day)	4 th April 2018	
Submit Constitution & Bye-Laws to College Council	18 th May 2018	

Currently we are slightly behind on agreeing the consultation details. The deadline was an unrealistic turnaround for myself given the rest of the Union activity in first term. However this has not delayed any other aspect of the Review. We will be able to consult stakeholders during February, in line with the above timeline.

Discussion

I would like Governance Committee to discuss the following topics:

Board vs Council

A discussion to clarify the current ambiguity around Board and Council. A better understanding of the role of Board and Council will help shape potential Council reform.

Board has the ultimate authority:

‘This Constitution has been structured to give the Board of Trustees reasonable authority to manage the affairs of the Union in a professional manner. The Members enjoy the right, which must be exercised in accordance with charity law, to elect a proportion of the Trustees and to dismiss any of the Trustees. The Board of Trustees will give the utmost consideration to the views of Members.’

On our website, Council is described as:

‘The Council is the paramount policy-making, scrutiny and accountability body of the Union and in effect the democratic voice of the student body.’

Motion of No Confidence/Censure

After a motion of no confidence was brought to Council against an ordinary member last term, many members of Council believe that a motion of no confidence is a very extreme action. The only other way to remove a volunteer from their role (not including if they voluntarily stand down) is to lodge a formal complaint with the Union President and have them investigated.

Council have expressed a desire for a middle ground, particularly when addressing this issue within clubs and societies- a situation where a motion of no confidence at Council seems unnecessarily aggressive.