ELECTIONS REVIEW

The CEC is asked to:

i) note the update from the Elections Review Steering Group.

1. Background

1.1 The Elections Review Working Group had two meetings so far, on Wednesday 14th December and Wednesday 4th January respectively.

1.2 Members of the Working Group are Caroline Poppenga (VP Representation and Research), Peter Cowan (VP Administration), Cath Brown (FAR STEM), Claire Smith (AAR Wales), Patricia Gray (AAR Scotland), Pooja Sinha (Research and Information Officer) and Rob Avann (General Manager).

1.3 The first meeting mainly consisted of a brainstorming session during which areas to be reviewed were identified and thoughts compiled for each area, which are as follows:

• **Nominations**: It is to be reviewed whether candidates should be allowed to stand for more than one position as well as better guidance on time commitment that is required from candidates.

• **Manifestos**: A proposition was made that candidates should answer a set of standard questions which are to be included alongside the candidate statements in the manifesto in order to allow for a more structured manifesto as well as giving students the opportunity to make a better comparison between candidates.

• **Hustings**: The use of forums and in how far hustings are obligatory and if non-participation could result in exclusion from the election process are to be reviewed, as well as the usefulness of potential live hustings.

• **Campaigning**: Current campaigning rules are to be looked at and their effectiveness in comparison to the last elections is to be evaluated, potentially leading to a revision of these rules.
• **Barriers to participation in the elections:** The wider student body has been consulted by means of survey questions in order to identify how student engagement with the election process can be widened. This does not only include increasing the number of students voting, but also the number of candidates nominating themselves for the election process. At the same time, it will be looked at the information available for candidates, to enable them to decide whether they would like to stand for election.

• **Election provider:** It was discussed that it would be advisable to use ERS again to carry out the elections, because students are already familiar with their processes and it would ensure consistency with the previous elections.

• **By-elections:** A date for the bye-elections is to be set by the Returning Officer for April 2017. An online meeting with all members of the CEC would be held ahead of the April CEC meeting in order to consider potential changes ahead of the by-elections. For future by-elections it will be looked at whether fixed dates could be implemented.

2. **Current Work**

2.1 A survey has been prepared to consult students on various aspects of the election process, with two sets of questions, one for candidates and one for students. The methodology used includes a combination of closed and open questions to allow for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data.

2.2 The results of this survey will be analysed and evaluated and will form the basis for the wider review. The analysis will be completed on 20th March 2017 following which a working group meeting will be held as well as a forum discussion for the entire CEC to participate in. This will then result in change items to be proposed and implemented, in line with the above aspects. Using the survey data as guidance for decision making will ensure that the review fulfils the main objective of improving election processes in line with what the wider student body wants.

**Caroline Poppenga**
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