



University of St Andrews Student Representative Council

January 2024

R-24-01 Motion to Endorse and Support the Association Change Programme

Owners: *Cam S. Brown – Director of Education*

In Effect From: *Immediately*

Review Date: *N/A*

It is noted that:

1. As per the St Andrews Students' Association (SA) Constitution, the Student Association Board (SAB) [1] is "responsible for its governance and strategic leadership". [2]
2. On October 5th 2023, the Association Board unanimously supported and passed the 'Motion to Initiate a Change Programme'.
 - a. The paper was prepared by Cam, *Director of Education*, edited and seconded by the whole Sabbatical Team and Student Trustees.
 - b. The paper established the Change Committee as a specialised subcommittee, to take decisive action to address challenges faced by SASA, particularly in the areas of governance, financial stability, operational efficiency, and strategic and operational planning. The Change Committee is held responsible and accountable for the success of the Change Programme.
 - i. The membership of the Change Committee:
 1. Chair: Jen Munro, *Lay Trustee*
 2. Convenor and Vice Chair: Cam Brown, *Director of Education*
 3. Barry Will, *Association President*
 4. Sam Gorman, *Director of Student Development and Activities*
 5. Lucy Brook, *Director of Events and Services*
 6. Clare Peddie, *The Proctor*
 7. Will McFarlane, *Lay Trustee & acting SAB Chair*
 - c. To facilitate a seamless transition, the paper authorised the appointment of a Change Director. The Change Director will take the lead extensive reviews of the Association, focusing on all aspects commercial and representative. The reviews will be completed consulting with SA Senior Management and Staff, Sabbatical Officers, Student Officers, and the wider student community. Upon completion of such, the Change Director will then develop and execute a Change Plan. Through collaborative efforts, this individual will play a crucial role in influencing the strategic, representational, and operational trajectory of the Association.
 - d. A timeline within the paper set out:
 - i. The Paper be shared with the Principal's Office [3] by 13/10/2023
 - ii. The First Meeting of the Change Committee be completed within Oct 2023
 - iii. Recruitment for the Change Director to be initiated within October 2023
 - iv. Interviews for the Change Director be completed by December 2023
 - v. Appointment of the Change Director to be completed by January 2024
 - vi. Initiation of the Business Health Review and Association Review Reports to be initiated in January 2024 and completed by May 2024.
 - vii. The Change Plan be published in May 2024, with the possible extension of up to the end of June 2024.
 - viii. Implementation of the Change Plan to start in June/July 2024.
 - ix. Completion of the Change Programme by December 2024
 1. This was amended with an extension to Summer 2025.

3. On the 20th of October 2023, the Association President and Director of Education met with the Principal, Professor Dame Sally Mapstone DBE FRSE, to discuss potential University support for the Change Programme.
 - a. On October 23rd the President and DoEd were notified that the University had allocated a generous increase to the Block Grant, over two years, to support the Change Programme up until Summer 2025.
 - i. Despite financial pressures facing the University, challenges which are also affecting the entire Higher Education Sector, this is the single largest increase to the Association Block Grant secured since the redevelopment.
4. At the meeting of the SRC in November 2023 the Director of Education initially introduced the Change Programme.
5. On November 20th, 2023, the SAB agreed to engage Peridot Partners [4] to recruit for the Change Director.
 - a. This appointment ran from November 21st 2023 until December 18th 2023.
 - b. Candidates were shortlisted 13th December 2023, and interviews were held on December 18th 2023.
6. On December 19th, 2023, the Change Committee formally appointed Antony Blackshaw [5] as the Change Director.
 - a. Antony brings over thirty-five years of student organisation experience to the project, twenty-five of those in a Chief Executive, Interim Chief Executive and Change Director roles. Antony has completed thirteen Interim senior roles in UK students' associations and unions; five of them in Scotland, seven in England and one in Northern Ireland.
 - b. Through Blackshaw Consultancy Graeme Woods and Natalie Bates will be join the 'Change Team'.
 - i. Graeme will be focusing on the commercial wing of the Association.
 1. Graeme was the Commercial Operations Manager at Sheffield SU for almost 15 years before moving to Leeds Students' Union where he was the Deputy Chief Executive (Operations). Graeme is also a partner in Moneypenny's Business Solutions, who provide advice and project work for SUs across the UK as well as other prestigious clients.
 - ii. Natalie will be focusing on the Representation and Activities wing of the Association
 1. Natalie started her career in Students' Unions at Royal Holloway where she rose quickly to the post of Student Voice Manager. A move to Scotland saw her take a role at the University of Dundee before becoming the Student Voice Manager at the Highlands & Islands Students' Association. Natalie has a particular interest in the impact of organisations and will be involved in the research around the best practice in this area across the UK and beyond.
 - c. Antony has preliminarily set out the following timeline (subject to change):
 - i. Dec 2023, Appointment and Initial Briefings
 - ii. Jan-Mar 2024, Data-gathering and Interpretation
 - iii. March 2024, Draft initial report to Change Committee
 - iv. Apr-May 2024, Implementation Plan prepared and agreed
 - v. Summer 2024, Work with staff team and incoming officer team on implementation and operational planning for 2024/25. Including support for officer induction and staff training/development as required
 - vi. Autumn 2024 to Summer 2025, Implementation continues. Reports on progress to Change Committee and Board of Trustees as appropriate.
7. On January 22nd, 2023, the SAB published the following press release: [See Appendix 1]

It is believed that:

1. The Trustees of the Student Association Board rightfully acknowledged and understood the challenges facing the SA- and our endeavour for the SA to be the No.1 Students' Association on the UK.
2. The Change Programme is necessary to address the challenges facing the Association
3. As elected-Officers and Representatives, the SRC and its members have a crucial part to play within the Change Programme.
4. The funds the increase to the block grant by the University to support the Change Programme underlines the commitment to the Association and student body.
5. The experience Antony brings is unparalleled in understanding of issues affecting students' organisations from a real-world perspective, enabling him to find solutions to issues where others struggle.

It is resolved that:

1. The Student Representative Council endorses and supports the Change Programme.
2. The Student Representative Council endorses and supports the timeline set out by the motion passed by the Student Association Board but notes that it is subject to change as the Change Programme evolves.
3. This Student Representative Council endorses and supports the appointment of Antony Blackshaw as the Student Association's Change Director.
4. All SRC Officers will engage with the Change Programme to the best of their ability, in order to better the student experience.
5. The Director of Education, as the Convenor and Vice-Chair of the Change Committee shall keep the SRC updated, as necessary, on the progress of the Change Programme.

Proposer:

Cam S. Brown, Director of Education

Seconders:

Barry Will, Association President

Lucy Brook, Director of Events and Services

Sam Gorman, Director of Student Development and Activities

Caitlin Ridgway, Director of Wellbeing and Equality

References:

[1] <https://www.yourunion.net/about/board/>[2]

<https://www.yourunion.net/pageassets/union/policiesandprocedures/constitutionandlaws/Constitution-May-2019.docx.pdf>

[3] <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/governance/principal/principals-office/>

[4] <https://www.peridotpartners.co.uk/students-union-recruitment/>

[5] <http://www.blackshawconsulting.com>