



University of York Students' Union

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22 September 2020

Dear Andrew

The proposal for a TPUK York Society to be formed

The Trustee Board met this month to review the latest information you provided on the proposal for a TPUK Student Society along with the information you had previously provided. The Trustees were reviewing the ratification request from a governance perspective. They were not exploring their own personal views and opinions. Given the extent of public interest in the ratification process, the Trustees have taken the decision to make this correspondence publicly available for wider information.

The Trustees in particular considered:

- Your previous assurances that TPUK York would hold no affiliation or link to TPUSA.
- Your previous assurances that TPUK York would not in any way prohibit the free speech of students and staff at the University of York. That this would include specifically NOT participating in or promoting campaigns such as 'Professor Watch List' or similar initiatives.
- Your previous assurances that you would respect and honour the YUSU Code of conduct and our approach, relevant policies and commitment to matters of equality, diversity, equal opportunity and inclusion, which are very much at the heart of our Union and student life at York.
- The advice provided to Trustees by the University; this was requested under the University's regulation 10 which sets out expectations for ensuring freedom of speech within the law on University premises for Members, employees and students.

The Board retains some concerns, in particular regarding the absence of any formal constitution. This was requested on several occasions and you have subsequently confirmed that this does not exist beyond a Chapter Charter handbook that formalises the relationship between a proposed York Chapter and the TPUK body. In addition, the Board recorded further concerns regarding the lack of detail or documentation about the funding relationship for the society, and the attacks on your social media using spoof accounts that have and could detriment both your and YUSU's reputation.

On balance, however, Trustees felt ratification was appropriate and reasonable in the light of the responsibilities that the institution imposes upon the Students' Union to uphold freedom of speech within the law; and because the facilitation of political debate with a diverse range of views is one way of delivering the Union's objective of advancing education, provided that

these views are not unlawful. In order to ensure that proposed student group meets its prior commitments and develops a suitable society constitution (as would be required of all new societies) the Board has requested that the approval is subject to:

- Your agreement that YUSU will be given due access to review and scrutinise the society's activities and associations to ensure they are not in breach of any YUSU, UOY or wider legal frameworks. The UoY Head of Governance (or a nominee) would be invited to support that process. Any activities to be undertaken by the Society should strictly adhere to the purpose of furthering the education of students at the University of York. Our Code of Practice with the University is available [online here](#).
- Your completion of YUSU approved equality and diversity training in advance of any events or activities taking place by the society.
- Your completion of a society constitution (as required by all YUSU societies) that sets out how the group will comply with all aspects of the law and the YUSU Code of Conduct / University regulations in advance of any events or activities by the society.
- Swift consideration of any breach of the Code of Conduct including anything that threatens our expectations on equality and diversity.

We would be grateful for your assistance confirming which are your official social media channels, making these clearly identifiable as official accounts on the channels themselves and providing any support you can to ensure that spoof accounts are deleted.

We would like you to confirm receipt of, and agreement with this in order to proceed to the next steps of ratification.

Best wishes,

Patrick O'Donnell

YUSU President and Chair of the Board of Trustees

By email