

Two new female directors join the Association of Commonwealth Universities

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Tuesday, 2 November 2021

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) is pleased to announce the appointment of two new female directors to its Senior Leadership Team. Barbara Kasumu joined the organisation in September 2021 as Director of Membership, Programmes & Development. Beth Button joined as Director of Strategic Communications in October 2021.

The new directors join the ACU as the organisation begins the next stage in the delivery of 'The Road to 2030' strategy to build a better world through higher education. Along with the rest of the Senior Leadership Team, they will support an ambitious programme of work to champion the critical contribution that universities make to sustainable development across the Commonwealth and beyond.

Bringing decades of experience in higher education and the third sector, Barbara and Beth will play a central role in securing impactful policy change and developing new partnerships and opportunities for ACU members to strengthen capacity and deliver educational opportunities.

Dr Joanna Newman MBE FRSA, Chief Executive and Secretary General, said:

'I'm delighted to welcome Barbara and Beth to the ACU. They – together with the other members of our Senior Leadership Team – will lead our work to promote the transformational power of higher education, in support of universities across the Commonwealth and beyond.'

As Director of Membership, Programmes & Development, Barbara Kasumu will provide strategic leadership to the Membership, Programmes and Business Development teams. Overseeing the membership strategy at the core of the ACU's mission, she will work with teams to create a dynamic, responsive and relevant offer that meets the needs of the organisation's diverse member base, and the design and funding of best-in-sector programmes that will have a meaningful impact on ACU member universities.

Barbara brings with her over 15 years of senior leadership and board experience working across a range of sectors and organisations, including her previous role as Director of Membership, Talent and Inclusion at the National Union of Students. An award-winning third sector leader, she has represented the UK on international platforms including at the G8 and G20 Summits.

Barbara Kasumu said:

'Working in partnership with global partners across the public, private and NGO sectors, I look forward to championing and connecting with our member universities across the Commonwealth and beyond. With a strong focus on collaboration and innovation, this is an exciting time to be joining the ACU to scale our impact and reach in building a better world through higher education.'

As Director of Strategic Communications, Beth Button will provide strategic leadership to the Marketing, Communications and Events, and Strategic Partnerships and Policy teams. She will lead policy engagement and public relations that maximise the value and impact of the work of the ACU and its members and drive

change for universities and their communities.

Before joining the ACU, Beth worked at University Alliance where she was Head of Communications and Public Affairs. A skilled campaigner and strategic communicator, Beth has a wealth of experience gained in positions at Universities UK and the European Students Union, where she led the organisation's work on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Beth Button said:

'I am delighted to be joining the ACU at what is an exciting time for the organisation and international higher education. Universities across the Commonwealth have a vital role to play in addressing the many global challenges we face, and I believe passionately in the importance of international collaboration and cooperation in tackling them. I look forward to working with our global network of member universities, and our strategic partners, to help bring to life this impact and build greater recognition and support for their contribution with stakeholders, funders, and governments across the Commonwealth.'