The CEC is asked to:

i) **participate** in the focus group as part of the consultation based on the Adaptive Organisation and Culture strategic objective from the Students First Strategy.

ii) **to prepare for the session** by considering and bringing with you:
   - 3 words to describe the current culture at the OU.
   - 3 words to describe the culture the OU needs to develop to successfully deliver the strategy

1. **Background**

1.1 Putting students first will be the OU’s key priority over the next few years. Students First: Strategy for Growth seeks to address how the OU will remain true to its mission and deliver their potential to do even more for students in a changing and challenging external environment.

1.2 The Students First: Strategy for Growth was approved by Council on 10 May following an extensive process of engagement with staff, students and external stakeholders. On 12 July, Council agreed a package of strategic investments to support the strategy for growth and the Vice-Chancellor, Peter Horrock’s announced the details of these investments during the Students First – Making it Happen event. Council also agreed the measures and targets that they will use for judging success in achieving the Students First strategy.

1.3 There are six strategic priorities that make up the aims and objectives of the Students First strategy; More Students Qualifying; Academic Excellence; Enhanced Employability and Career Progression; Leadership in Digital Innovation; Adaptive Organisation and Culture; Income Diversification and Cost Reduction.
2. **Adaptive Organisation and Culture Strategic Objective**

2.1 This session focuses on the Adaptive Organisation and Culture Strategic Objective.

2.2 **The aim** (taken from the Students First Strategy): Our people are focussed on delivering the best for and with our students. We will work with our staff to put in place all that is needed to support a high performance culture, supporting them to develop the skills they need and investing in processes and systems which enable us to deliver flexibly and meet the needs of our students.

2.3 **The approach** (taken from the Students First Strategy): Work with our staff to identify together how the OU as an organisation can support them to be proactive, engaged and focussed on supporting our students to meet their goals.

- Invest in our staff, with an expectation that they will proactively seek to develop themselves, including a leadership development programme to build leadership, performance management and change capability.
- Foster a culture in which staff are engaged with and responsive to the external environment, including the role of the University across the nations of the UK, with the agility to move quickly and flexibly to pursue new opportunities.
- Prioritise and conduct fundamental reviews of key university business processes.
- Develop a business architecture capability to deliver the expertise to match business needs with sustainable and flexible business processes and operations.
- Do more to underpin our understanding of performance with access to data, information, analysis and insight including developing transparent performance indicators for all areas of the University.
- Consider upgrades to core IT systems to enable more effective use of our finite resources.

3. **Consultation**

3.1 To inform the shaping of the University’s Adaptive Organisation and Culture strategic objective action plan, external consultants, Pecan Partnership have been holding a series of staff focus groups. The purpose of these focus groups is to explore and understand current ways of working; what is working well, how the culture will support the OU to deliver the Students First Strategy and what needs to change to ensure the continued success of the University.

3.2 Ella Overshott and and Angella Hill-Wilson will be in attendance at the CEC Meeting to hold a student focus group. The purpose of the session is to gain perspective from OU students into the OU culture validation and plan.

3.3 The outline for the session will be:
• A walkthrough of the cultural characteristics we have identified in the validation phase to date.
• Table discussions to explore how you experience these characteristics as students of the OU.
• Table discussions to gather recommendations for developing further an adaptive, “students first” culture.

3.4 The illustrations shown in the appendix will be used as part of the discussions.

Ella Overshott, Pecan Partnership
Angella Hill-Wilson, Pecan Partnership