OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (C E C)
13 - 15 November 2015

UPDATE ON THE OU STUDENT ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

The C E C is asked to:-

i) note progress to date on this University project

The Student Association’s President, Vice President Representation, Vice President Educational Support and Research together with the General Manager and Deputy General Manager have been involved in the Open University’s Student Engagement Project since February this year. Expressed here, student engagement is the role that students might play in the decision making that shapes their student experience and in recent years, this theme has become an important aim in the higher education sector.

At a meeting in June 2015, the project team considered a gap analysis which identified the Open University’s current student engagement opportunities and suggested where the institution needs to be in terms of student engagement for the future and considered possible action to make this happen.

At the most recent meeting in October, the team used this analysis to identify work streams, prioritise them in terms of low, medium and high priority and allocate them to units to take forward.

Some high priority work streams identified were as follows:

1. Student feedback
   To develop principles of handling ad-hoc feedback, producing guidelines about how units should deal with student feedback outside of normal channels.

2. Students Engagement in Curriculum Design
   To develop standard policies and procedures to facilitate student involvement in curriculum design and learning design.

3. Feasibility study re Internships.
   To investigate the possibility of how this initiative might work in the University.
4. **Encouragement of faculty led student engagement initiatives.**  
   To create a proposal for a pump-priming scheme for faculty led student engagement initiatives with submissions for funding to be approved by a joint student-staff panel.

5. **Societies and how the University could support them.**  
   To further develop student societies as a mechanism for deep learning, community building and student-faculty engagement.

Following these latest discussions, proposed work streams are being circulated and resources identified. Progress reports are expected at the next meeting set for 6th January.

The upcoming Student Engagement Conference, being organised by the project team, is taking place on 23rd November where a number of other universities are showcasing student engagement initiatives and discussing their progress and good practice in this area. These include contributions from the Universities of Lincoln, Exeter, Winchester, Manchester and Sheffield Hallam. The Student Association’s President will be providing a welcome to the event, alongside the Vice Chancellor, Peter Horrocks and up to 12 further OU students and a number of OU Student Association staff will be in attendance. The half day conference will be followed by a workshop where the project team will get the opportunity to further discuss with the contributors the challenges of translating student engagement activities into the part-time distance education context.

**Wendy Burrell**  
**Deputy General Manager**