OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

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

STUDENT COMMUNITY TOOL

The C E C is asked to:-

i) note the progress on the Student Community Tool Project

Since the last update to the C E C in July (CEC 7/15/20) the project proposal was signed off and agreed by the I T Change Board on 6 July 2015. The recommended solution of Yammer was upheld so is dependent on the roll out of Office 365 to students, estimated for quarter 1 2016. Until this happens, the current proposal from I T is to set up a temporary instance of Yammer for a pilot, which would require student sign-up.

Recent work on the project has focused on developing a suitable pilot with students, so we can evaluate and experiment with the system ahead of the full solution being available. The pilot would also enable the proposed solution to be tested against the business requirements and would provide valuable learning, which could be applied to the full implementation.

Promotion will play a key role in the success of the pilot to ensure widespread interest and uptake from students. At this stage, the main known advantage of Yammer is that it will be set up as a ‘walled garden’ on OU infrastructure and closed to the outside world.

Initially the project team considered the Disabled Students Group (D S G) as primary testers for the pilot. However, as the D S G have an established forum and Facebook Group, it was thought there would be little incentive for members to migrate to a new system, when their existing communities are working well and are already closed spaces. However, the project team fully intend to work with the D S G in testing the system, to provide feedback on its usability and accessibility.

A wider ‘open-invite’ pilot is now being discussed to coincide with the February 2016 intake, by which time Office 365 could be available to students, thus avoiding a sign-up process into a temporary set up.
The project team will be meeting on the 13 November 2015 with colleagues from Learning & Teaching Solutions and IT to consider the pilot, revise the project time plan, as well as discuss:

- Evaluating success criteria for the pilot test.
- Monitoring usage against evaluation criteria.
- Promoting the pilot and generating student interest.
- Identifying moderators.
- Providing user and moderator guidance.
- Incorporating OUSA branding.
- Update on Office 365 roll out to students.

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