OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

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

OFFICER AND COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

C E C is asked to:-

i) receive the reports

ii) note that unless this paper is starred for discussion prior to the meeting, printed copies will not be supplied.

Reports submitted by:-

President
Deputy President
Vice President Communications
Vice President Education Policy
Vice President Education Support and Research
Vice President Representation
Vice President Student Support
O U Council Member
REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

This report covers from the beginning of July through to mid-October 2015.

Student Engagement

Students and staff continue to be involved with the working group. There will be a Student Engagement Conference on the 23 November which will be hosted by the OU and will bring other institutions together to share their experiences and discuss how best to engage with students. OUSA has been offered places for this Conference so I would encourage students to attend if they can. We are currently working with the university on the next steps of the project.

Learning Systems Advisory Group (L S A G)

This is the group which brought you Dashboard which is now available on student home. Another workshop was held in September where a different set of students were invited to offer their input into the next stage of Dashboard. One comment made was that it would be helpful if Dashboard could ‘talk’ to StudentHome so this has been taken on board and the OU staff will go back to see if this is possible. These students were also asked to pass comment on ‘Technology Enhanced Learning’ which was a draft set of principles for online learning. I think it would be fair to say that there was robust input! However the member of staff in question has been back in touch to ensure student input into any further work on the principles.

Faculty Changes

July saw an extra Senate session where we were asked to consider the proposed changes to faculties which would see the OU go from seven faculties down to three super-faculties with the Faculty of Business and Law standing on its own. This now means that Science and Maths, Computing and Technology are one super-faculty, Arts and Social Science are another super-faculty and the Faculty of Education and Languages and Health and Social Care is the third super-faculty. They are headed by an Executive Dean and so V P Education Policy and I have managed to meet with two of those Executive Deans to understand what the future holds and where we can ensure student representation. I am pleased to report that both of the faculties we have spoken to have committed to have as much student representation as is practical.

Locations Analysis

Since the middle of August much of my time has been occupied with the proposed closure of English regional offices. Throughout this process OUSA has had a student on the working group and regular updates have been provided to C E C meetings. The University Secretary – Keith Zimmerman - has maintained very regular contact with me. I decided that OUSA should maintain a distance at first to allow the University time to interact with the staff who would be affected if this proposal goes through Council and
so a meeting was arranged for the Officer Team weekend at the end of September. Keith spent time answering questions from the Officer Team which was then followed up by an OU Live meeting on the Monday to allow the rest of the CEC to ask questions. Another session with the Senate Reference Group was held prior to Senate on the 14 October which enabled more students to ask questions of the University. A robust discussion took place at Senate where everyone got their opportunity to ask questions of Keith and a motion was carried that asked Senate to call on Council to reject the recommendation. Council members have been advised of the decision of Senate, Council will meet on the 24 November where, no doubt, another discussion will take place. My contact with the University will continue, certainly until Council. After that it will depend on what Council decides.

University Appointments

I have been keenly involved in the recruitment and selection processes for three key university roles: University Secretary, PVC Research and Academic Strategy and Director, OU in Scotland.

Diary

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<td>15 October</td>
<td>Student Consultative Executive</td>
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Future Dates

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<tr>
<td>4-5 November</td>
<td>Various Meetings on Campus</td>
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<td>12-13 November</td>
<td>Various Meetings on Campus</td>
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<td>6-7 January 2016</td>
<td>Various Meetings on Campus</td>
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<td>14 January</td>
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<td>20-21 January</td>
<td>Various Meeting on Campus</td>
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<td>22-24 January</td>
<td>CEC Meeting</td>
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Ruth Tudor
President
REPORT OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Since the last CEC meeting most of my activities for OUSA has involved changes to the staff team. I'm really pleased with those changes and for the members of staff who have now taken up their new roles. I'm sure everyone else will join me in welcoming those staff in their new roles.

I attended my first inclusion meeting at the end of September. Whilst I don't intend to go in to detail about that meeting (as I was too intent on finding out who was there and what their roles were) I can say it was fascinating to see how some of the inclusion issues are dealt with. Vice President Student Support chairs this meeting and I am sure will provide detail in her report.

I attended the Postgraduate (P G) Induction day at the beginning of October on behalf of OUSA and gave a quick 5 minute introduction and, along with Jess Smith (Head of Engagement & Support), we then did an hour long session in the afternoon with all the students. We really feel this was a very positive activity strengthening ties between OUSA and its P G community on campus and as a consequence now have a couple of people actively engaging with us. On the back of our involvement with the Postgraduate poster competition I am really keen to continue these close ties and am very appreciative that Vreeka Scott (Manager, Research Career Development, IET) keeps OUSA in mind at any of the P G events they run. I will continue to pursue these ties with our P G community.

As is usual at this time of year we had our Freshers fortnight at the beginning of October.
Once again I have to thank all the staff and students who put their time and effort in to making it a success!
Somewhat worryingly the staff thought it would be a good idea to leave myself, Sue Goodyear, Cherry Day and Jack Jevons to our own devices for the radio show! If you didn't listen, do find it and listen to it. We had great fun on the night and many complimentary comments from students afterwards (and mostly behaved ourselves!). It's a brilliant experience and I'd really like to encourage people to volunteer their services for the radio show (no experience necessary!).
One thing that did become clear to myself and Jess (as we were both running the live chat on Facebook) is that two of us just isn't enough to cover all the questions. If we hadn't been joined by experienced students with some knowledge of OUSA, like Rachel Hughes for example, we'd have really struggled to keep up with the numbers. With that in mind I'd like to ask people to put themselves forward to assist with these activities for future Freshers events.

Candidates for the OU University Challenge team will be put through their paces this month, and once again we've got some good strong candidates. Some of the rounds are taking place the week prior to the CEC meeting so it may be possible to give a verbal update on progress. I'm sure everyone will join me in wishing those candidates the best of luck.
As many of you will probably know our President graduated recently in Edinburgh. It was an absolute privilege to have been able to attend and share that day with Ruth and I've no doubt that everyone would like to congratulate her on her achievement. However, probably less well known was another student graduating that day, a past Vice President Finance (a forerunner role to V P Administration), Carole Radcliffe. It was a wonderful weekend catching up with other students who I've met through OUSA and it got me thinking! Many of us have made very good friends through OUSA, friends we'd never have met had it not been for the Association. I'd really like to see people capitalising on this and making sure that wherever we go we highlight the social side of OUSA alongside the serious work we do representing students.

I've a series of meetings lined up around and after the C E C meeting –

OUSA Community Tool
Student Engagement Conference
Prevent Meeting
Consultative Executive Agenda Setting Group
Learning Systems Advisory Group (L S A G)
Group Tuition
Learning and Teaching Advisory Group (L T A G)
Students Consultative Executive

I will endeavour to update on these activities, and others that come up, at the next C E C meeting. In the meantime if anyone has questions or input they wish to have please contact me.

Nik Morris
Deputy President
Central Executive Committee (C E C)
13 – 15 November 2015

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Strategy was passed at the July C E C and the action plan will be part of the OUSA Strategy presented at the November C E C.

In order to increase the number of students reading the OUStudents magazine we have decided to trial different publishing dates over this academic year. The next edition will be out on 3rd December 2015.

Here are some recent statistics about our social media accounts, including the magazine and radio/podcast.

Facebook: 21,474 likes
Twitter: 14,621 followers
Instagram: 1,411 followers
Magazine: Autumn Issue - 23, 117 views
Radio: 239 live listeners
Podcast: 1.2K listens (latest full podcast episode on the theme of “Isolation”)

I had been using OUSA Comms as my Facebook account as it was thought a good idea to have a generic identity when it was set up a few years ago. However, rules on Facebook have changed and it is now necessary to have a named account, so I have set up a new one in my name which will be used only as V P Communications until June next year.

Our Communications Officer resigned in August to take up a position with the OU but I’m pleased to say our intern, Heather Bloomer was interviewed and is now our new Communications Officer. The question of a new intern will be taken up next year.

There are still ongoing issues with sending emails to students as we are dependent on the OU providing us with students’ email addresses and the system for sending them (known as CAMEL) is not the best, to say the least. As a result we have an “engaged students’ mailing list” which students can opt into from OUSA’s website or Facebook page. 1550 students have signed up and we will be advertising this more as it seems it’s something students want.

I will be attending the Combined Communications Conference (C C C5) 11 November, the theme being Part-time Matters.

I attended the October Senate as a replacement for a C E C member who was unable to attend. Most of the lively discussion was about the Locations Analysis where it is recommended to close all but 3 of England’s regional offices. The recommendation was voted against, but it will go to Council for final approval in November.

I continue to attend more meetings of the O U Analytics Ethics Policy Working Group by phone. They are about every 2 weeks although some have been cancelled and I can’t
attend all due to work commitments. OUSA V P Student Support and I continue to give as much input as we can.

I usually don’t report about my role as an OUSA Central Representative as it is separate from my role as V P Communications, but I thought I would mention it in this report as it is the beginning of a 2-year term and I am a member of the new Student Experience Committee and also the OUSA Senate Reference Group where members give their views on Senate papers to the 6 OUSA members who attend Senate. The experience gained on O U Committees gives an overall view of how the O U works and is a definite advantage in any OUSA officer role.

Meetings Attended

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<tr>
<th>About every 2 weeks</th>
<th>Analytics Ethics Policy Working Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>25 - 27 September 2015</td>
<td>Officer Team Meeting</td>
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<td>14 October 2015</td>
<td>Senate and Senate Reference Group</td>
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Future Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Analytics Ethics Policy Working Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>11 November 2015</td>
<td>Combined Communications Conference (C C C 5)</td>
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<td>22 – 24 January 2016</td>
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Lorraine Adams
Vice President Communications
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION POLICY

This report gives an overview of some of the major or ongoing developments since the time of the last C E C meeting. In addition to these, I have continued to attend a number of other meetings and deal with a range of issues by email.

Central Reps

The annual seminar took place late July, with generally positive feedback. 16 continuing and 12 new reps were appointed at the seminar with a further 4 new appointments since that time.

Some programme committees continue to be difficult to fill, with 8 vacancies at this level at the time of this report. Discussions between OUSA and the university have resulted in some targeted recruitment efforts for these vacancies and we will hopefully be able to fill more positions in the near future. In addition to this, general recruitment is now open again and applications are being received.

Quality Assurance Agency (Q A A) Review

The student submission to the Q A A review of the university has been submitted. Initial preparations have begun for the review visit (early December) and OUSA is currently working on providing student groups for the reviewers to meet - the timing of these meetings will be confirmed on 11 November. A verbal update on this can be provided at the meeting if required.

Periodic Programme Reviews (P P R)

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee has confirmed that student members will permanently be included in P P R panels following a successful pilot. Arrangements have been made for the reviews taking place in 2015/16 and recruitment will be undertaken for the following year.

Joint Honours

A proposal for a framework in which students could claim degrees with two subjects recognised in the title has been approved. Initially this will be for a limited selection of combinations and each subject will have a fixed 180 credits, but it is hoped that if this proves successful it could be expanded to allow a greater amount of choice and flexibility. Proposals outlining which “half degrees” will be included will be brought forward in February for implementation from the October 2016 presentation.
Postgraduate Taught (P G T)

There has been agreement that all P G qualifications will use a standardised classification system (fail, pass, merit, distinction). There has not yet been confirmation on where the boundaries will be for the classifications beyond Pass or when precisely the change will be implemented.

The possibility of including P G T students in a graduate school (so far proposed primarily for P G Research students) is being discussed - particularly in light of the university’s desire to build stronger academic communities for students. No details are available on exactly what this might look like and no decisions have yet been made, but it is likely to develop in the coming months.

There has been an initial proposal to explore the possibility of an Open Masters. I have asked that students be included in discussions around developing this.

Curriculum Programme

There is a strong feeling that this should not continue as a programme but rather use a variation of the current steering group (with new Terms of Reference and modified membership) as an advisory body for the Pro-Vice Chancellor Research & Academic Strategy and Executive Deans on university wide curriculum related issues. All are keen for student input to continue.

Meetings with Executive Deans

OU SA has been meeting with each of the new Interim Executive Deans to discuss the future of student involvement in faculties. So far two such meetings have occurred. In both instances, they have been enthusiastic about having significant levels of student input in the formal faculty governance processes (which are currently being restructured) but also in building closer ties with OUSA generally.

Josh Brumpton
Vice President Education Policy
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT & RESEARCH

Since the last Central Executive Committee meeting in July there has been a fair amount of activity for the new academic year. For my part this has involved work on curriculum development, the Student Engagement project and the pilot study into student views on the presentation of tuition material. This last proved to be very successful with a good response from the representative sample by IET (Institute of Educational Technology) and some very constructive posts in the OUSA Research Forum. The survey answers and the comments will be very helpful in finalising the design of the main survey which will be open to the whole student body.

Along with my colleague, V P Student Support, I met with the new Director of the Student Support Hub, Pat Atkins, and we were able to discuss matters of concern particularly regarding the late allocation of tutors in Regions 1 and 13.

Additional to my Officer role I have also been active as a member of the Controller’s Advisory Panel for the OUSA forums, the Appointments Committee and was the co-ordinator for the London Graduation Ceremonies held this September. I also attended the West Midlands Freshers’ event at the OU Regional Centre in Birmingham. I am also involved in the selection process for the OUSA team for the 2016/17 season of University Challenge which is currently under way. Finally, I chaired a shortlisting panel for the OUSA award for tutors – not an easy task as the quality of those tutors nominated was extremely high and while we could only select three to go forward all those nominated displayed the best aspects of OU tutors.

Attended:
24–26 July Central Representative Seminar. Apologies tendered for Appointments Committee meeting on July 27
14 September Module Production Efficiency Workshop
18-19 September Graduation Ceremonies, London Barbican Centre
25-27 September Officer Team Meeting
28 September OU Live meeting re Locations Analysis between C E C and Keith Zimmerman
8 October Student Engagement Project; Entry Project Advisory Group; Library Support User Group
10 October West Midlands Freshers’ Event

Forthcoming:
16 November Board of Trustees
23 November Student Engagement Workshop
Ongoing Entry Project Advisory Group (online)

Peter J Cowan
Vice President Educational Support and Research
Since the July C E C meeting I have had a busy summer within the role. I hope that you have been able to listen to the Freshers Radio show on catchup. A couple of hours of laughter and interesting info.

Residential Schools

Residential Schools are the main event over 7 weeks of the summer, Nottingham, Warwick and Bath volunteers took time to welcome students to their respective resi school campuses, chatted with, sold merchandise to, and socialised with them including holding a quiz designed by a student Joan. Huge thanks to all who volunteered their times to make our presence possible and bearing with us with the new changes for this year. I can report that next year Bath will be the only Resi School that will be running. I will continue to have meetings with the OU residential school team and will be looking at ways of having a volunteer presence at other study events. Volunteers are always wanted for these events so please contact OUSA office ousa@open.ac.uk if you would like to be part of it.

Degree Ceremonies

As well as Resi-Schools my remit encompasses Degree Ceremonies. Training for the Degree Ceremony coordinators was held at Kents Hill in Milton Keynes. Again if you are interested in this role which is vital for our presence at the marketing area at the ceremony venues please get in touch. Why not put yourself forward to lead a small team for a busy, and enjoyable experience.

Meetings and events

Out and about in the regions and nations, I finally made it to Scotland where I joined Patricia Gray and Mark Cameron (S A R Scotland) for our first time at Scotland’s Freshers at the S E C C Exhibition in Glasgow. Over 8000 students came through the hall over the 2 days and we were able to speak to OU students both new and continuing about their study issues and then we met one evening for a social event. Attendance at next year’s event will be reviewed so watch your forums for any adverts

I continue to attend the Equality Objective Steering Group which involves discussions with the OU. I am also continuing to review how attendance and knowledge gained at these meetings can also be used by OUSA and more specifically my role.

The Officer Team meeting took place at the end of the summer in Birmingham a busy but constructive weekend.
Freshers

Thank you to the elected students of the regions and nations who gave of their time in innovative ways with Freshers events. I was able to participate in the online elements of live chats with students which is great that we are using this technology and making students learning journeys a little bit better when we can help direct them to resolving their issues. Or encourage attendance at any social groups.

Regions and Nations

Finally I am fully aware since taking on the role of V P Rep that changes with the students in the regions and nations volunteering their time would be under scrutiny during my elected time. A lot of students with a lot of knowledge have left their studies for various reasons e.g. course fees and graduating etc. This has left the regions and nations with a skill shortage and students who would have volunteered now not coming forward. Training for those who have been elected or who have volunteered for events has proved worthwhile, however, the bigger picture is the way forward. So I am pleased to announce that I am part of a project which is called the Assembly Structure Review. Elected students past and present are being consulted individually, in a consultation forum and at working groups over the coming months. So please if you receive an email do please respond as we want to take the regions and nations forward for the future.

The process for me involves meetings and emails with the OUSA office and meetings and emails with Claire Taylor M B E from S U M Ms Consulting. Looking forward to reviewing the responses in due course.

Elections

As I type this report I am reminded that the current elections are taking place now within the regions and nations and I am looking forward to supporting the elected students.

Future events include meetings online and face to face in Milton Keynes as well as the continuing tasks of answering student emails and queries, checking the forums of the regions and nations as a moderator and studying.

That concludes my report.

Sue Goodyear
Vice President Representation
The Student Support role generally involves trying to help students who have particular barriers to study. It includes attending various meetings but also keeping involved with Peer Supporters, the Disabled Students Group and O U S E T (O U Students Educational Trust) plus responding to students who contact me directly.

Support and Engagement Staff Changes

It was with much sadness, tinged with a bit of fear of the unknown, that I said goodbye to Wendy Burrell, the member of staff who has supported me since I became Vice President Student Support. I have a feeling she sought promotion to become the Deputy General Manager of the OU Students Association so she could shake free of me, but she assures me this was not so. I wish Wendy all the success for the future and thank her for her wisdom, knowledge, support and sense of humour, which will no doubt come through in her new role too.

So, my little staff team has undergone a little change since my last report, with Jess Smith taking over Wendy’s role. Jess will not be unknown to those of you who have listened to the OU Students Association’s radio broadcasts and I am sure will be a welcome addition to all the new areas she is becoming involved with. Thanks also goes to Sandra Carter who has taken on a few additional tasks while Jessica’s previous role is filled.

Peer Support

Our Peer Supporters are continuing to support students as well as answering one off queries. More information and details of how to post messages to the Supporters can be found here.

Problems with Alternative Formats

Some students reported lack of, or incorrect, information about alternative formats or their late arrival for some of this October’s modules. I have had, and will be having, meetings with various OU staff to emphasise the importance of alternative formats arriving before a module starts. I will also discuss the necessity for early and accurate information about alternative formats. I have already informed the OU that information available before registration is currently inadequate. Module websites have extremely useful information about what alternative formats are available but this can be too late for students who require specific formats.

Some students reported lacking printed versions of transcripts. I was told they are available for students who require this due to a disability. Please contact your Student Support Team to acquire printed versions.
Whilst on the subject of alternative formats, you do not have to use the Print on Demand service if you need your study materials in print format due to a disability. Instead, please consider contacting your Student Support Team to discuss your additional needs.

**Student Support Team Meeting**

I recently had a meeting with a senior member of staff about some issues relating to the Student Support Teams (S S T). Some students do not realise they need to complete Special Circumstances forms if they had told their tutor or S S T about matters possibly affecting their E M A, their exam or their T M A scores. More will be done in the future to ensure S S T staff and tutors tell students they need to use specific forms to report these circumstances if they want the OU to take them into account when it comes to final grades.

Details about those forms can be found here. This includes dates by which these need to be received by the OU, please be aware that the deadlines are very tight, often reporting the special circumstances online has to be by midnight the day following the exam / E M A submission date.

Further meetings may be held in the future to discuss issues as they arise.

**Disabled Students Allowance (D S A) Consultation Submission**

The Government has proposed changes to the Disabled Students Allowance and a consultation was conducted by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (B I S). I was involved in the submission by the OU Students Association to this consultation. Of most concern was the apparent lack of understanding about how OU students’ study experience differs from students attending campus based universities.

One change already implemented is that students from now on have to contribute £200 if they are awarded, and agree to receive, a computer or laptop as a result of their D S A Assessment. The OU has agreed to fund this £200 for students on low incomes; more information can be found here

**Consultation for Disabled Students**

The OU has been holding online consultations on various topics for a while. The OU held its first consultation for disabled students in September and it seemed to be a great success with over 100 students contributing. A number of issues were discussed, including the D S A and what additional help contributors thought the OU could provide. The posts can be read here but if you want a flavour of the posts, a Summary is available at the top of that forum.

**Disabled Students Group (D S G)**

The D S G and its Chair, Cherry Day, continue to work on behalf of students with disabilities. If you would like to get involved in the work of the Committee, the time is right because their Annual General Meeting and elections for the Committee are taking place in November and December. Please follow this link for more information - here. If you would like to be a member of the D S G, it has closed forums for members but most activity seems to take place on the closed D S G Facebook Group. Students contribute
useful information about studying with the OU but cover a range of other topics related to disability.

Inclusion

The Inclusion meeting, which takes place twice a year, has recently enlarged to include more OU staff. The OU Students Association can raise any item which relates to students with particular barriers to study.

At the most recent meeting we were told that anyone with a DSA computer / software who is wondering whether to upgrade to Windows 10 needs to be aware that it is the student's responsibility if you upgrade to Windows 10 and it goes wrong. The advice received is to ask your supplier about this or look on their website for more information. Your DSA Assessor might also be able to help. The expectation is that eventually assistive technology will be compatible with Windows 10 but please do not just assume it will be compatible already. You might need to discuss with your DSA Assessor or Funding Body if you need to upgrade to later versions of the assistive technology you currently use to be able to continue to have that function in Windows 10.

Tripartite

Tripartite meetings are held 4 times a year when OU Student Association Reps meet with OU staff to discuss anything relating to online activities. We continue to raise the issue of Eduroam being available for students. We continue to be told that the OU is looking into this.

The OU is still looking into making module websites open for 6 years instead of 3 but that will not include retrospective longer opening. Evidence suggests not many students use this facility. If you haven't looked recently your previous module websites should be open to you for at least three years, this includes all the module materials.

If you are using Shared Activities, this function will soon be closing and it will not be replaced.

Library

The Library never lets the grass grow under its feet, continuing to include more training sessions for students new to the OU, as well as those taking Level 3 and Postgraduate modules. It is in the process of adding a new online environment called Open Tree, which can be found here.

Ethics working group

I have been involved in fortnightly meetings into the ethical use of student data for learning analytics, along with Vice President Student Communications. The OU says it has a moral responsibility to intervene if it is aware that students might be at risk of failing or withdrawing from a module. One way of doing this is to notice particular warning signs through analysing learning data and to be proactive rather than reactive with respect to providing appropriate support for students. We have been assured that the purpose of using this data is to provide the right support and not to collect it for selling your personal data elsewhere. There are more details about this here.
Future Commitments:

11-12 November       Meetings with OU Staff
13-15 November       C E C Meeting
14 – 18 December     Meetings at the OU
14 January 2016      Tripartite
27 January 2016      Senate Reference Group

Alison Kingan
Vice President Student Support
The July meeting of Council took place on Tuesday 14 July, with Mr Richard Gillingwater (Pro-chancellor) in the Chair.

In his report to Council, the Vice Chancellor, Mr Peter Horrocks, announced that the University Secretary, Mr Fraser Woodburn, had indicated his intention to retire in three months’ time. Following consideration and discussion, especially in the light of the general reorganisation of the upper echelons of the University, and the Vice Chancellor’s Executive in particular, it was indicated that issues that had formerly related to the Director Students and other parts of the University not otherwise represented via the academic members of the Vice Chancellors Executive (V C E) would, in future, be represented via the new University Secretary, who, in addition to the University Treasurer, the pro Vice Chancellors and the Vice Chancellor himself, constituted the new V C E.

He also indicated that external influences would affect the Open University’s own future, that part-time education as a whole was disadvantaged by funding and other aspects being based on Full-Time Equivalent figures and that he envisaged that work externally would be necessary to influence this.

It was planned that Q A A assessments would probably be less frequent in future years but fuller details were not at that time available.

The Vice Chancellor’s paper on “Students First” was received and followed by extensive discussion, it being noted by the Vice Chancellor that there was a need for a considerable dialogue on many aspects, to be taken forwards for development into a refreshed Strategic Plan, which would return to Council as a focus for the future, as well as for the present. Key issues were seen to be the devolvement of decision making, where appropriate, to the lowest level in the governance structure, closer involvement of academics with students, increased inclusiveness and networking, both within the organisation and externally, including Global students, innovation and improvement in collaboration and in employability for O U graduates.

The Strategic Plan for O U Estates over the next ten years was presented, it being highlighted that there was more than adequate scope for improved utilisation of the University’s existing spatial provision, most especially on the Walton Hall campus.

The Staff Strategy was presented, highlighting that the Locations Analysis would bring with it considerable challenges and, together with changes to the A L structures, would impact on all parts of the university, in order to support organisational reshaping to provide improved service and cultural changes through improved ways of working.

Investment in Futurelearn strategy was discussed.

Financial reports and Audit reports were received.
Reports from the Staff Strategy Committee, Estates Committee, Strategic Planning and Resources Committee and Senate (issues for discussion being as indicated above).

The revenue budget for 2015-16 provided for a surplus of £3.7m.
An appointment committee was set up to appoint a replacement for the University Secretary.

An additional meeting that I attended was a meeting at Birmingham on 8 October, of the Q A A, on the topic of student engagement - entitled Quality Matters 2015. This offered presentations and discussions (break-out sessions) on Enhancement through Partnership, How to Use the Quality Code for Partnership, Involvement of Students in Curriculum Design. A presentation by a member of the N U S top table was also included. Rather an attractive menu, I thought, thinking that at least it would present opportunities to discern just how well other universities were progressing on the road to student engagement (and even partnership). From what I learned at the symposium, I concluded that we at the O U are not far behind other universities in the development of student engagement, involvement in curriculum design is in its infancy. Not personally being a great supporter of the N U S at all times, I did contemplate missing out the N U S presentation; nevertheless, my sense of duty prevailed and I have to say that the speaker delivered a message suggesting what we might expect to be most probable in the near future on the government/H E front (the opinion expressed concurring very closely to the speculations agreed, between the V P Representative who had accompanied me to the meeting and myself, at the lunch interval). Unfortunately, despite the apparent accuracy of the N U S assessment, proactive solutions were not forthcoming – either from the N U S or from the audience!

The next meeting of Council will take place on 23 November 2015. The meeting of the O U Council due to take place in March 2016 will be held in Edinburgh.

*Carey Shaw*
*Student Member of O U Council*