STUDENT CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

The CEC is asked to:-

i) note the updates provided

1. Online consultations since last meeting (22-24 January 2016)

1.1 A consultation on the topic of assessment ran from 11-25 January 2016. There were 431 posts in total, with more than 50 students making more than 1 post. There was strong opposition to group work being assessed and to the proposal that peer assessment could replace tutor-marked assignments (TMAs). Overwhelmingly, students asked for greater clarity and improved communications regarding assessment.

1.2 A consultation on the emerging University strategy took place from 26 January to 8 February 2016. There were 335 posts, with 33 students making more than one post. Respondents felt that the proposed strategy was not quite right for the Open University and should focus more on supporting students as individuals with differing goals and less on employability and the needs of employers. There was concern with the goal of having ‘more students qualifying’, with respondents preferring the goal of having students achieving what they aimed to achieve. CEC members can read the full summary at http://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/forumng/view.php?id=11755.

1.3 The consultation on ‘entering OU study’ ran from 9-21 February 2016. There were 174 posts, with 31 students making at least one post. The consultation provided a good volume of useful information about advice, guidance and information before commencing study. Respondents were opposed to compelling students to follow advice. The entry policy is being further developed at present and is scheduled to present to Senate in June 2016.

1.4 A consultation on the Student Charter ran from 1-14 March 2016. A summary is yet to be posted at the time of writing, but the consultation explored awareness of the Student Charter, whether students’ experience was consistent with the content and principles of the document, and finally whether respondents had any changes to suggest.
1.5 Upcoming consultations yet to be scheduled include technology enhanced learning, employability, module information and the University’s new academic strategy.

2. **English Regional and Nation consultative meetings 2016**

2.1 There have been 4 English regional consultative meetings so far: London, Oxford, Birmingham and Manchester. All events were oversubscribed with between 150 and 300 applicants. 30 student places were allocated in each case but no show rates have been high with only 11 students attending in London, 17 in Oxford, 13 in Birmingham and 8 in Manchester.

2.2 There are three topics on the agenda for each meeting: tuition, assessment and supporting student success. Students have reported that they found these topics relevant and engaging with sufficient time being allocated to allow full discussion.

2.3 The main issue has been the 42 page document, the University’s assessment handbook, which had been distributed to attendees prior to the events. It has been agreed that a different way of presenting the necessary information will be found for the April 2016 meetings.

2.4 The question and answer session has been handled differently in each of the meetings so far. In Oxford, the whole session was taken up on just one question on the topic of print versus online. In London, a number of questions were taken and addressed. Following these meetings, feedback from students and university staff suggested that the session would be better placed at the end or later in the meeting rather than at the beginning. In Manchester, it was placed after lunch and it would appear from feedback that only 1 question was addressed. In Birmingham it had been intended that it would take place just before lunch but in the end it did not take place at all.

2.5 The Students Association meetings in the afternoon have provided an opportunity for feedback and for an overview of the Association. There was no Assembly Executive input in either Oxford or Manchester, limited input in London and substantial input in Birmingham. There has been considerable interest in both Conference and the upcoming elections process.

3. **International students consultative meeting**

3.1 This online consultation is scheduled to take place over 20-27 April 2016.

3.2 A forum was open on the main student consultation website from 9-16 March 2016 for international students to suggest topics for this event.

3.3 At the time of writing, a number of suggestions had been made including fees; assessment; expectations of tutor support; provision of study materials; currency fluctuations; and student support.

4. **Students Consultative Executive**

4.1 The 2016 annual effectiveness review of the process is about to commence. The first meeting of the sub-group that is overseeing this process is scheduled for 14 April 2016.
4.2 At the last meeting on 20 January 2016, a proposal was agreed to pilot a ‘student ideas’ website to garner student suggestions for consultation topics using IdeaScale. Further work is underway on this.

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