CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CEC)
23rd July 2016

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Central Executive Committee (C E C) held on 23rd July 2016 at Kent’s Hill Training Centre in Milton Keynes MK7 6BZ

PRESENT
Ruth Tudor - President
David Humble - VP Administration (via telephone)
Lorraine Adams - VP Communications (and VP Education Elect)
Josh Brumpton - VP Education Policy
Peter Cowan - VP Educational Support & Research (and VP Administration Elect)
Sue Goodyear - VP Representation
Alison Kingan - VP Student Support
Claire Lannigan - South & South West
Claire Smith - Wales
Nicci Simpson - Northern Ireland (and Deputy President Elect)
Dave Milliken - MCT Faculty Rep (and FAR WELS Elect)
Jan Thompson - FELS Faculty Rep
Nicki Hadjipanteli - FBL Faculty Rep (and Student Trustee Elect)

IN ATTENDANCE
Chris Pane – President (Elect)
Rachel Hughes – VP Communications (Elect)
Steph Stubbins – VP Community (Elect)
Cherry Day – VP Equal Opportunities (Elect)
Caroline Poppenga – VP Representation and Research (Elect)
Barbara Tarling – Council Member (Elect)

Alisa Amin – Faculty Association Rep for Arts and Social Sciences (Elect)
Jamie Slater – Faculty Association Rep for Business and Law (Elect)
Norman Kay – Faculty Association Rep for the Open Programme (Elect)
Cath Brown – Faculty Association Rep for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (Elect)
Amelia Gackowska – Area Association Rep for Continental Europe (Elect)
Sarah Couling – Area Association Rep for England (Elect)
Victoria Crawford – Area Association Rep for Scotland (Elect)
Anca Seaton – Area Association Rep for England (Elect)
Patricia Gray – Area Association Rep for Scotland (Elect)
Cinnomen McGuigan – Area Association Rep for Northern Ireland (Elect)
Andrew Cooke – Student Trustee (Elect)
Mary Oparaocha – Student Trustee (Elect)
Peter Bell – Student Trustee (Elect)
Rob Avann - General Manager
Wendy Burrell – Deputy General Manager
Magda Hadrys – Head of Operations
Sally Kitchingman – Head of Resources
David McCann – Head of Digital Communications
INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

A. PRESIDENT’S WELCOME

The President welcomed everyone to the meeting and, for the benefit of the observers, invited the General Manager to give an overview of how the Central Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees work together for the benefit of the Students Association. The General Manager explained that the Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that the Association is run properly and the CEC focuses on policy making, strategy and representing students. The President then gave an introduction to meeting procedure, and drew the attention of the reps to the Jargon Buster.

B. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Nik Morris - Deputy President
Carey Shaw - OU Council Member
Mark Cameron - Scotland
Michail Kasoutas - Southern Europe
Derek Naysmith - Arts Faculty Rep
Anna Jenkins - Student Trustee (Elect)
Leanne Quainton - Executive Assistant

C. MINUTES

C.1 The Minutes (CEC 3/16/M) from the March meeting were approved. Minor corrections that were sent through to the office were included and no others were raised.

D. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

D.1 None recorded.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL AND REPORT

1. STATE OF UNITS AND SOCIETIES

VP Administration introduced the report, which showed an overview of the members and financial position of each Region, Nation and Affiliated Society. Discussion followed, and the following points were noted:
The Shakespeare Society currently has no Chair, however David Humble will be taking up this role next week.

For Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland the numbers of Assembly Members are in single figures. This is because not every member is part of the Assembly; there is still a representative system, which is coming to an end in November.

The numbers for Wales appear to be incorrect and the Head of Resources will check these (Action 1.1).

The Societies AGMs are overdue and the accounts are old. The Head of Student Community will follow up on these. Some Societies are not good at updating the office and could perhaps be reminded more often. It was also noted that the deadline is far in arrears for Society returns.

1.1 ACTION: The Head of Resources to check the figures for number of Assembly Members for Wales.

1.2 ACTION: The Head of Student Community to follow up on the Societies returns.

2. FINANCE

2.1 VP Administration went through the Finance report, explaining that the income and expenditure to date is to 15th July, so that although it appears that there will be a surplus, there are expenditures not yet recorded here. The General Manager reported that there was no update on the subvention, and explained for the benefit of the new reps that the subvention is a grant provided by the university in accordance with the relationship agreement, where the university is committed to providing the Association’s funding. VP Administration leads annual negotiations and the next round for August 2017 begins in the autumn. The financial year runs from 1st August to 31st July.

2.2 It was queried why the management charge for OUSET has increased from £14,000 to £45,000 and it was explained that this includes the recharge of staff time, to reflect the true cost. This has previously been steady over the past 5 years. The charge for the work of Election Reform Services (ERS) and accommodation charges for Conference 2016 are still coming in, so these figures are lower at the moment.

2.3 It was queried as to what the Discretionary Spend is, and the General Manager explained that this is a carefully considered opportunity fund, agreed with VP Administration and the Board of Trustees, for new projects throughout the year, such as taking forward suggestions from the CEC.

3. REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

3.1 The General Manager introduced the report from the Board of Trustees, mentioning that there is a Constitutional requirement for the Board to provide a report to the CEC.
at each meeting. The Board of Trustees held its last meeting on Monday 24th March 2016.

3.2 The major piece of work carried out by the Trustees since its last meeting has been the consideration of payment for the President and Deputy President. Trustees discussed the proposal and various options at length, and received HR and legal advice. There were 150 posts in the student consultation held in May. The outcome was supportive of the idea but there were good issues raised. The results were put to Conference and a debate was held, with 76% of delegates voting in support. The overall decision now lies with the Board of Trustees and the discussions and deliberations are ongoing with a decision due imminently.

3.3 The Deputy General Manager spoke about another large piece of work approved by the Board of Trustees in May. A business case was drawn up to implement the recommendations made in the Regions Review Project, including resources for six new staff roles. These roles and the funding bid to the university have been agreed in full, which is excellent news.

3.4 The next face to face meeting of the Board will be held on 24th July during the Handover Weekend with the 2016-18 cohort of Trustees present.

4. OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION STRATEGY UPDATE CEC 7/16/4

4.1 The General Manager gave an update on the first year of the new strategy, which was agreed in November by the CEC and Board of Trustees. It will be refreshed later this year to include new members’ input and to remove completed items. The strategy update contains many achievements to be proud of, and some areas at Amber which need further work, for example, individual representation.

4.2 It was suggested that the document could be shared with the wider student body, as it is very useful, and it lends itself to video and other student-friendly media. It was noted that care should be taken to manage expectations should this be implemented.

5. STUDENT CONSULTATIVE PROCESS CEC 7/16/5

5.1 The General Manager introduced the report on the Student Consultative Process. Attendance at the Regional and National consultative meetings was down on last year; in London nearly 400 students wanted to come, 40 were offered places, but only 30 attended. There are clearly barriers to attendance, and these were discussed. The main points are summarised as follows:

- The university needs to overbook the venues to be sure of having a larger number of students attend.
- It is important to make it clear what will be involved, people are often not sure what to expect.
- We need to look at how to further engage students who don’t get a place at a consultation, perhaps by keeping our own lists.
These Minutes will remain subject to approval until the next meeting of the CEC

- As a way to catch students, perhaps we could have an alternative consultation, just with the Students Association, for example some OU Live sessions discussing the same topics as the consultation.
- Students could be reminded more often to attend, perhaps by text message. There could also be a message requiring confirmation.
- Students do experience forum fatigue when the consultations are back to back. To address this the review recommends that the pool of students will be doubled to 200 and the consultations opened for three weeks instead.
- There is a reserve system for face to face meetings, however the issue lies with last minute drop outs, and people not attending on the day.
- The university has been too quick in the past to extrapolate the student voice from a small number of students. They are aware of this and are taking steps to address it.
- Many people will not add a post to a forum only to agree with someone else. Perhaps the ‘like’ button could be emphasised.
- Unless students feel like they’re heard, then they will not see the point in participating. We know that students want to be involved, but the response time varies greatly between departments. This issue has improved this year however it does have an impact on new people.
- Lots of different terminology can make the online consultations difficult to understand, and there is often a lack of assistance, however this is something that the report addresses.
- It was suggested that an incentive could be offered. This is something that the OU has used a little, but not in consultation forums, so could be looked into.
- A disadvantage of the online forums is that there is no option to have a quiet word at the end if you are not comfortable to share your view with your audience. A new email system will be introduced as a regular feature of forums to provide an alternative feedback option.
- One idea is a nominal charge for no shows, however this would be controversial.
- It is important to use the ‘You Said, We Did’ model to show that the Association is listening as well as the University.

6. REGIONS REVIEW PROJECT

6.1 The Deputy General Manager went through the report, which gives the background to the consultancy held last year. Thanks was given to VP Representation, VP Administration and VP Education Policy for their hard work on the project.

6.2 There was an update on the Learning Experience Reporters and how this new layer of Reps might operate. There has been the suggestion of pilot exercise in the autumn, and this will be discussed with the new VP Representation and Research.

6.3 The Community Groups were launched at Conference, as this was an excellent opportunity. 99 pledges were received and these are now being formed into the first groups, which will be the basis for expansion after Freshers.

6.4 Following the recommendations of the review, a pilot volunteer project was created encouraging students to provide a Students Association presence at day schools and
other OU events. The results of this project are now being collected to assess the value for the Students Association.

6.5 The business case for funds to implement the review's recommendations was successful, including a bid for a new staff team. Discussions are in place to ask the University to consider new premises on the OU Campus for the Students Association to include a social and meeting place for visiting students.

6.6 Discussion followed, and the main points are as follows:

- It is brilliant that there were 99 pledges, and it will be important to close the loop and let other students know the outcome of the pledge drive, such as through the radio and newsletters.
- The groups will form part of Freshers, and will be a base going forward, as new students always ask, “who’s near me?”
- Although the concept of groups is simple, it is complex to arrange things on a local scale, and so it will be a lot of work to organise practically. It was requested that public transport links are taken into account, and not just geographical proximity. Groups will be properly resourced, with a role with a specialist focus on groups in the staff recruitment.
- Perhaps groups could have pop up events at tutorials and day schools, to give them greater visibility.
- It was queried how involvement with groups could be linked to careers and employability, and explained that the bid included that the Students Association is able to give really good experience.

7. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

7.1 VP Education Policy introduced the update from the Appointments Committee. The changes to the OU Academic Governance structure have resulted in an increased number of student member categories and it will be necessary to recruit new Central Reps to ‘top up’ the current team of reps. A new Appointments Committee is usually formed at the first CEC meeting of the year, however, this will need to happen as soon as possible this year. Reps are invited to enquire if they would like more information about the role of members of the Appointments Committee, and to signal their interest.

8. OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

8.1 The Head of Student Community reported on the Conference, for which a full evaluation is underway, as well as a detailed survey and discussion within the Steering Committee.

8.2 There were 60 students who did not arrive and did not tell us, which was a huge disappointment after all our efforts. A discussion followed, the main points of which are summarised here:

- A requirement for an active reply, such as saying that if we do not receive a confirmation from students then we will allocate their place to someone else, could help students to see the value of their place at Conference.
- A refundable charge could be required, however this is controversial and a potential barrier to people registering. Even a small fee would be a problem for
some, and there is no point having a fee unless losing it would be a disincentive.

- It is made clear at the beginning that expenses can be claimed back.
- The Operations Team were still registering students on the Wednesday before Conference, from a waiting list so long that not everybody on it would have been contacted. Conference was originally overbooked by 50 places, which came down to the right number for Conference, but then dropped right down due to non-attenders, leaving it 27% under capacity.
- It may help new students to understand that the Students Association is a charity.

9. **FORWARD PLAN**

9.1 The General Manager introduced the Forward Plan, which details the upcoming discussion and decision items in future CEC meetings. This will be helpful to new reps as they have their handover meetings.

10. **GENERAL MANAGER’S BUSINESS**

10.1 The General Manager gave a brief thank you to all.

11. **PRESIDENT’S BUSINESS**

11.1 The President gave a brief thank you to all.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

12.1 Alison Kingan reported that Eduroam, which enables internet access at other universities, will soon be available to all students. There will be a period of testing first, so anyone interested in volunteering should speak to Alison.

12.2 Peter Cowan mentioned that the Controller Advisory Panel (CAP), which monitors discussion on the forums, is in need of new members. Anyone interested should signal their interest.

12.3 Nicci Simpson thanked everyone for a fantastic handover process, where reps have been provided with great resources and feel very supported.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

13.1 It was confirmed that the date of the next meeting would be over the weekend of 14th – 16th October 2016.