STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNCIL

The C E C is asked to:-

i) comment on the paper
ii) agree proposals to take forward to the Governance and Nominations Committee

1. Background

1.1 The Council Governance Review (CGR) recommends that Council membership should be reduced by about a third - from 25 to 16 or 18. The Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC) is considering different ways to achieve this but it has already agreed that student representation on Council should remain at its present level.

1.2 The CGR also recommends that Council should increase its engagement with key stakeholders. It suggests setting up a number of stakeholder groups, including one for students, but this recommendation was put on hold until after the Senate meeting on 25 January. Current indications are that the stakeholder groups will not be implemented.

1.3 However, Council is still interested in increasing its engagement with the Students Association and (possibly) the wider student body and the University Secretary has asked us to propose ways to facilitate greater interaction. After discussion at the Officer Team meeting in November it was agreed that CEC should be asked to approve proposals for the student member of Council to take forward to GNC.

1.4 Two small steps have been taken already:

- in the future Council will be holding two meetings each year away from Milton Keynes. On 7 March it will meet in Cardiff and on 18 July in Manchester. There will be a formal reception and dinner the evening before each meeting and I have asked that the AAR for Wales be added to the guest list for the Cardiff event. If CEC are in agreement I will ask that one of the AARs for England and the STEM FAR be included on the guest list for the Manchester evening and I will suggest that whenever Council meets away from home the relevant AAR and FAR should be invited guests.
at the last Council meeting the President issued an informal invitation to all members of Council to contact him personally and/or to drop into the OUSA office whenever they are in Milton Keynes.

2. To Discuss

2.1 The next step is for CEC to agree a set of proposals to present to GNC. Following discussion at the Officer Team meeting this paper suggests that we begin with the simple measures outlined below:

a) Request a regular slot at the annual Council Induction and Development Day in September to showcase aspects of our activity that would be of interest to Council. These might include Building Student Communities, Student Support initiatives such as DSG, Nightline and Through the Gate, or the work done by FARs, AARs and Central Reps. The standard format is a presentation followed by time for questions and discussion.

   The presentation would be led by two or three CEC members and should not involve the student members of Council, although the President might introduce the speakers. If the speakers were invited to join Council members for lunch this would provide an opportunity for follow up discussions and informal networking.

b) Invite one or more members of Council to the Autumn dinner (on a rotation basis) with the option of attending a CEC session as observers if they wish.

c) Suggest to Conference Steering Committee that they invite one or more Council members to Conference 2018 - possibly to give a brief talk on the work of Council or as part of a session on University Governance and the work of Central Reps and LERs.

d) Explore the possibility of sending occasional CEC observers to Council meetings if we can overcome any issues of confidentiality.

e) Encourage more informal contact between Council and the Association. Possible avenues might include:

   • Helping Council to increase their visibility through a feature in the magazine. I'm sure the Chair of Council would be willing to do an interview - and so would I.

   • Engaging with Council members who attend graduation ceremonies - could we suggest that they spend a few minutes talking to the volunteers manning the stall?

   • Undertaking more pro-active networking - for example, there will probably be Council members present at Charter Day so let's make sure they know where to find us.

Barbara Tarling
Student OU Council Member