OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)
27 – 29 January 2017

OFFICER AND COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

The CEC 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:-

Deputy President
Vice President Administration
Vice President Communications
Vice President Community
Vice President Education
Vice President Equal Opportunity
Vice President Representation and Research
Vice President Student Support
Student OU Council Member
REPORT OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

This report relates to activities undertaken during the period 26 September 2016 – 8 Jan 2017.
In addition to the Central Executive Committee (C E C) and Officer Team meetings I attended several meetings on campus in Milton Keynes, kept in regular contact with members of the C E C and the wider membership of the Association online via the Association forums, social media and face to face at local student meet ups.

Freshers Events

During Freshers week I took part in several Student Association Facebook events and the OU Student Radio Show. These events continue to grow in popularity and help new and existing students to make connections with other students in their area, get support and find out about Student Association opportunities. I was also a panel guest on two Student Hub Live discussion events. Previous and upcoming Student Hub Live programmes can be found here: [http://studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk/](http://studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk/)

Grassroots Project

The Grassroots Project was created following on from the Student Association Regions Review Implementation Group Meeting (See Report to October C E C meeting). The overarching objective of the project is to consider what structure should be in place for the OU Students Association at a grassroots level for England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe. Plans are under way for a survey of OU students to take place in Feb 2017.

Inclusion Meeting

I attended my first meeting of the Inclusion Meeting, chaired by Vice President Equal Opportunities. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss issues affecting students on a wide variety of issues, including Non-Medical Support, Alternative Formats, the Impact of the Group Tuition Policy and Students in Secure Environments.

Maintenance Loans for Part time Students

I attended a meeting for OU students to discuss issues relating to the Department for Education Consultation on Part Time Maintenance Loans. Further details on the consultation can be found in the consultation document [here](http://studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk/).

National Student Survey (N S S)

Over the next few months the Association is highlighting how feedback students have given via the N S S has helped shape the work of the Association and how it is used by Student Representatives to voice student views. Later in the year we will be asking you to get creative and write a ‘love’ or ‘break up’ letter to student surveys. We will be using the hash tag #ListeningLearningDoing on social media throughout the campaign.
Open Forum on OU Progress

In November I attended an event on campus along with Vice President Education and OU Student Council Member to explore progress on the Student First Strategy. There was an opportunity for a question and answer session with senior university staff. Student Association members emphasised the importance of enabling students to achieve their individual goals and the relationship between Students and Associate Lecturers/Tutors.

Open University Students Consultative Executive

Since my last report work has been ongoing finalising details for the face to face consultation meetings to be held in Exeter, London, Milton Keynes, Manchester and Newcastle later this year.

Students will be invited to register to attend these meetings from mid January. Online consultations have been held on a variety of topics. Students can read the consultation responses and suggest topics for consultation here: http://www.open.ac.uk/students/consultation/

I also gave a short presentation to University staff about how they could get involved with the Consultation process and how important consultation is to improving the student experience.

Outstanding Tutor Award

I assisted members of Association staff in the planning for the Outstanding Tutor Award. Nominations for the award close on 10 January. A panel of students will select the winner who will be presented with the award on Charter Day.

Student Engagement Project Work stream A (Student Feedback and Communications)

The ongoing work of this Project has focused on a new Student Engagement Website highlighting student engagement opportunities, student feedback and consultation. I attended a workshop in November 2016 to identify different user groups who might use the new website and how the needs of different user groups could be met. Further research activities will be conducted in January 2017.

Student Voice Week (11 – 18 March) #OUstudentvoiceweek

The idea for student Voice Week emerged during discussions about the National Student Survey. I wanted to find a way to highlight all of the ways students can make their voices heard at the Open University while at the same time encourage the university to really listen to OU Students and to recognise the good practice that already exists within the University. We are still putting the finishing touches on Student Voice Week but there will be lots of activities happening online and around campus. You can expect to hear about how the Association represents you and how you can make sure your voice is heard.

The Student Engagement Partnership (T S E P) Written Submission

The Open University is one of approximately 50 providers taking part in a pilot commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council to assess the effectiveness
of student voice mechanisms within quality assessment. While plans are still in development, the Association will prepare a written submission. Owing to time constraints it is unlikely that the Association will conduct any new research this year but rather will use existing data (for example data from the National Student Survey and issues raised by Association representatives) to highlight student views on their experience as OU students. The time frame for completion of this work is April 2017.

**Volunteer Steering Group**

Over the past few months I have been working with the Head of Student Volunteering and a small group of student volunteers exploring how the Student Association recognises and rewards the work of Association volunteers. It is hoped that a training and networking event for Student Association volunteers can be organised in the future and a funding request is being put to the Board of Trustees following the CEC meeting.

I hosted a facebook event, 'Volunteering with Us’. Interested students had the opportunity to discuss volunteering opportunities with current volunteers. We also discussed how roles might be developed in the future. From these discussions the volunteering team is exploring new volunteer opportunities. A similar event is scheduled for Jan 2017.

**World Mental Health Day**

On World Mental Health Day I talked about some of the ways I try to keep healthy and how students can access support. As well as taking part in a short video, I hosted a facebook event and wrote a news article for the Student Association website. Several students have recently been in touch to tell us they really appreciated these activities and we are working with students to plan how we might build on this for 2017.

**Meetings attended (at a glance)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 September</td>
<td>Welcome to OU student Association facebook event</td>
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<td>27 September</td>
<td>Student Hub Live, OU Student Radio</td>
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<td>28 September</td>
<td>Student Hub Live</td>
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<td>28 September</td>
<td>Scotland, Ireland Wales Open Event</td>
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<td>29 September</td>
<td>National Student Survey Communications Taskforce</td>
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<td>29 September</td>
<td>Meet OU students in your area facebook event</td>
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<td>1 October</td>
<td>Student Association Meet Up, Belfast</td>
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<td>10 October</td>
<td>World Mental Health Day Facebook Chat</td>
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<td>13 October</td>
<td>Inclusion Meeting</td>
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<td>13 October</td>
<td>University Students Consultative Executive</td>
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<td>14 -16 October</td>
<td>Central Executive Committee Meeting</td>
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<td>19 October</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group</td>
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<td>20 October</td>
<td>OU Student Association Board of Trustees Training Event</td>
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<td>21 October</td>
<td>OU Degree Ceremony, Belfast</td>
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<td>1 November</td>
<td>Student Consultation Staff Event</td>
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<td>9 November</td>
<td>TSEP Pilot Programme Workshop</td>
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<td>10 November</td>
<td>Open Forum on OU Progress</td>
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<td>10 November</td>
<td>Volunteering with us Facebook event</td>
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<td>11 November</td>
<td>Recruitment Activity (Student Volunteer Officer)</td>
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<td>15 November</td>
<td>Student Engagement usability Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 November</td>
<td>Recruitment Activity (Student Volunteer Officer)</td>
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19 -20 November  Open University Student Association Officer Team Meeting
22 November   OU Student Association Board of Trustees Meeting
29 November   T E F briefing event, London
30 November   T S E P meeting
30 November   Student Led Teaching Awards Planning Meeting
30 November   Higher Education Achievement Report Project
19 December   Maintenance Loan Discussion, London
7 January     Student Association Meet Up, Belfast

Future Commitments (at a glance)

16 January   University Students Consultative Executive Meeting
23 January   Student Voice Week Meeting
23 January   Welcome to the OU Students Association Facebook Event
25 January   Senate Reference Group
26 January   T S E P Student Voice written submission workshop
26 January   Volunteering Facebook event
27 January   C E C Media Training
27 – 29 January   Central Executive Committee Meeting
13 February   Enhancing NSS Communications
20 February   Board of Trustees Meeting
25 February   Big February Meet Up
11 – 18 March  Student Voice Week
18 – 19 March  Officer Team Meetings
5 April      Senate Reference group Meeting
21-23 April   Central Executive Committee Meeting

Nicola Simpson  
Deputy President
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT ADMINISTRATION

It has not been long since the October meeting of the Central Executive Committee (C E C) but there has been a fair amount happening as regards the Student Association, some of it very public as you will see from the other Officer reports and some more behind the scenes which certainly describes the VP Administration role. Following on from the C E C meeting the proposed changes in the Bye Laws were presented to the Board of Trustees and, subject to a minor clarification in one, accepted. Also, following the decision by the C E C to create a group for LGBT+ students, PLEXUS, there has been some work to fine tune their constitution and formal recognition of PLEXUS is imminent.

This leads on to Societies and the continuation of the work in progress of approving their annual accounts and assessing their grant applications for the current financial year. I attended the Societies meeting on campus on November 12th 2016. This was my first meeting with this body and it was encouraging to see the wide range of interests covered. After some discussion the Societies Committee have agreed to look at a new way of distributing grants and I will be working with Cath Brown, the Societies Chair, and the Office to implement this. Also, I will be working with the office and our legal advisors to clarify some issues regarding Societies and the Data Protection Act. Finally, regarding societies, I am happy to say that two new ones have been approved the OU TechSoc and the Dr Turing Society. A further one, the OU Reading Nook is in the process of applying.

Jess Smith and I had a meeting with Damon Miller from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to discuss some issues relating to the London Regional Arts Club and until these are resolved that application will be put on hold.

Looking forward, in the New Year I will be, in conjunction with the Deputy President, undertaking a full review of the complaints and disciplinary procedure. I will also, as chair of the Chair of the Controller’s Advisory Panel (CAP) leading a review of the Comprehensive Guide to the Association Forum Service with the support of the other members of CAP and Mentor Mods. When complete draft proposals will be posted for moderators in general to comment on before a final draft is taken to C E C for approval. I am also involved in the ongoing Grassroots Working Group and the Election Review Working Group.

The C E C also has a role to play in putting forward the student viewpoint to the University and to other bodies. To this end I contributed comments to the Association submissions to the Government in regard to the Maintenance Loans for Part Time students in England and also the consultation document on Loans for PhD study for English students. I was also part of a small group of students who had an evening meeting via O U Live with Judith Pickering, the University’s T E F lead on the subject of the Teaching Excellence Framework a key component of the Higher Education
and Research Bill currently going through Parliament. Finally, I was invited to an interview with KPMG to provide student input to the Vice Chancellor’s Executive regarding the OU Strategy and Students’ First policy.

VP Administration also takes the lead in the annual subvention negotiations which this year also includes the three year funding agreement to cover the years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. This is currently in progress and I am working with the General Manager to seek funding for these years in order that the Association can fully implement the strategy agreed by the previous and current CECs.

And finally, on a lighter note, I have been involved once more in the selection process for the University Challenge Team. As always this has been a difficult decision due to the incredibly high standard of knowledge displayed across the applicants. A team has been selected and following the now traditional evening event on campus to give them a chance to take on a team of students and then a team of staff they will be auditioning in London on January 21st 2017.

**Key Meetings since last Central Executive Committee Meeting**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>20 October 2016</td>
<td>Trustees Training Day</td>
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<td>19-20 November 2016</td>
<td>Officer Team Meeting</td>
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<td>22 November 2016</td>
<td>Board of Trustees Meeting</td>
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<td>6 December 2016</td>
<td>TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) Meeting</td>
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<td>13 December 2016</td>
<td>Interview with KPMG (am), Subvention Meeting (pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 December 2016</td>
<td>Arts and Humanities Board of Studies</td>
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**Upcoming Meetings**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>26 January 2017</td>
<td>Subvention Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 February 2017</td>
<td>OUSET Board meeting</td>
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<td>7 February 2017</td>
<td>LTi Student Panel Advisory Group (tbc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 February 2017</td>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-19 March 2017</td>
<td>Officer Team Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>24–25 March 2017</td>
<td>Barbican Graduation Ceremony (volunteer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 March 2017</td>
<td>Arts and Humanities Board of Studies (tbc)</td>
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Peter Cowan  
Vice President Administration
Executive summary

Over the past three months I have worked on producing a new set of social media guidelines with 5 other members of the Central Executive Committee. I have been having weekly meetings with Lucian Hudson, OU Director of Communications, which has strengthened the relationship between the Association and the University. I have worked closely with the editorial team on the magazine to create yet another successful copy which has had 54,000 clicks to date. I have attended the Officer Team meeting and other various meetings related to my role which have proved productive and informative. I have discussed with members of the Association office about our website and virtual learning environment (VLE) forums, I have submitted the website paper for January CEC and will be submitting the VLE paper for April. I have also worked closely with Pooja Sinha, Research & Information Officer, to reproduce the 2014 OU staff (internal and external) awareness survey which will be re-run in the early part of 2017. I am committed to expanding our communication methods and focusing on the internal and external communication of the Association, its elected members, Associate Lecturers and other members of OU staff; this will be my focus going forward and I have several projects relating to these areas in the pipeline to implement potentially by the July CEC meeting.

Social media guidelines

In our October 2016 meeting, I presented a paper on the need for new updated social media guidelines. In this meeting, I discussed with representatives what these guidelines were for and how we could create new guidelines. I invited 5 representatives of the committee to participate in the creation of these new guidelines. We created a working group on the committee forums in which I set out a timeline spanning over 6 weeks in which would use the 5 discussion topics from the paper I had presented. Discussions were had about these guidelines and we looked at how social media was dominant in the student community and how representatives could utilise the space to create exposure of the Central Executive Committee and the Students Association.

I would like to thank Anca Seaton, Cath Brown, Stephanie Stubbins, Cinnomen McGuigan, Alison Kingan and David McCann for participating in this working group and creating a collaborative set of social media guidelines for the 2016-2018 CEC.

OU Students Magazine

The OU Students Magazine has been popular as always with 53,556 link clicks for September and 54,000 clicks for December (to date). The September edition introduced a section on the new members of the Central Executive Committee with continuation through to the December edition for the rest. This section was well received from students, Associate Lecturers and other members of the University staff. This insight allowed a face to a name and a bit of background on who we are.
In the December 2016 winter edition of the magazine we ran an opt in survey asking students about the content and layout of the magazine, to date we have received 127 responses. Question 7 of this survey asked 7. ‘What would you like to read more of in the OU Students Magazine?’ one of the options was ‘I would like to hear more from the student representatives, such as the projects they have been involved in and how they are addressing concerns raised by students’.

As shown in figure 1, 40.80% of the respondents would like to hear more from Association representatives. Therefore, we ask members of this committee to provide insight to the communications team into what they are currently involved in, how they are having the student voice heard and report back sooner than the quarterly committee reports (see reporting back).

Other results shown in figure 1, provide us with further insight into what students wish to see in the OU Students magazine. With 58% of students wishing to see more student related content such as an advice column or study tips. 50% of respondents would like to see more information from the Open University such as policy news or any changes that would impact on the student experience. 25% would like to see more student association related content and 25% would like to see more short stories or poetry. These figures indicate what students wish to see in their magazine and myself and the editorial team of the OU Students Mag will discuss how we can implement these responses into our future editions.

We would also like to encourage more reps to provide content for magazines and the website, we have had the offer of blog creation from some members and this is appreciated.

I have discussed with Lisa Booth about including our magazine (quarterly) on OU life which will allow us to increase our readership to OU Staff members. I have also contacted the editor of the Associate Lecturer magazine ‘Snowball’ about sharing the OU Students Mag in an article of sorts which will help us create awareness of the Students Association for AL’s. I will provide an update to both promotional spaces in the April CEC.

**Raising awareness and reporting back**
I have had many discussions with reps about the use of acronyms in reports and the benefits of reducing unrecognisable terminology for students. Therefore, we have decided that all reports and papers will have the first mention of an acronym expanded. We have also discussed producing a jargon buster which would be attached to the minutes of the committee meetings to provide students with an insight to what the various acronyms are and what they stand for.

I have had discussions with the Digital Communications team and the Deputy President about exposure of the achievements and projects that this committee is working on, and the communications team have decided that we will create a round robin internal newsletter that can be updated by every member of this committee via email and then the information would be taken from it and reproduced for the website and any of our other communication medias. Although this will create some extra work (of roughly an hour every two weeks) it would be a useful way for reps to update the electorate and the university with information about what they are doing and provide an easy sheet of information to aid the creation of their officer and representative reports.

I have included an executive summary in my officer report to allow the editorial team for the magazine to pull the highlights of this report in the magazine. In the Winter 2016 edition, we pulled information from the officer reports to share with students, this required condensing 28 pages of information to get the highlights into the magazine. Therefore, we ask the CEC to trial including an executive summary of around 300 words in their committee reports.

I have created a paper with Cath Brown for this CEC which proposes inviting 1 x OU Faculty Representative and 1 x Associate Lecturer Representative to attend Central Executive Committee meetings, the hope from this is that we can promote awareness of the Association with these stakeholders and encourage relationships to be formed. This paper will be submitted in the April CEC meeting.

Communication must remain a priority for reps and the Association; exposure of our achievements, what we are working on, how we are doing and how we are ensuring that the student voice is heard continues to be a necessity for our term. Communication with the wider student body in an understandable and insightful way is needed.

**Website**

At the officer team meeting, myself and David McCann raised the ongoing website development issues we are facing, such as the restrictions of the OU platform and long lead times when working with their ‘trusted’ developers. As the last major change to the website was in 2013, we feel it is now due an overhaul.

We want to look at including a gallery, a blog space, volunteering forms and more information, as well as updating the website to co-inside with our branding. We also wish for the website to be the central hub of information for the Association, linking it to our social media platforms and the VLE. We also wish to update the resources page to involve a search function in which we can use tagging to search for items of interest such as hot topics.

Therefore, we have submitted a separate paper to this meeting highlighting these issues, potential options for moving forward and ballpark costs of moving to an
external provider. As this will be a capital investment we will then need to present a report to the Board of Trustees.

Social media

To date we have 27,032 likes on our main Facebook page and 199 likes on my Facebook role page. The Association main page continues to be the central hub of communications for students on Facebook. We are looking at sharing more news stories from the Association such as Central Rep activity and other news stories such as what the Central Executive Committee have been up to. To do this we require the cooperation of our volunteers in sharing news and information as often as possible.

We are also continuing to grow on Twitter with a followership of 18,000 users.

We have used Facebook for some virtual events since October 2016. We hosted a ‘volunteer with us’ event which had 48 students and volunteers attend (out of 117 who were invited). This event was hosted by Beth Metcalf (Head of Student Volunteering), Nicola Simpson (Deputy President) and Peter Cowan (Vice President Administration). This event had over 50 posts during the hour it was live. We are looking at using social media for more events throughout 2017 and welcome suggestions on what we can do in these virtual events.

We are continuing to promote student meet ups through our Facebook page by adding them to our events section (found here https://www.facebook.com/pg/OUstudents/events/?ref=page_internal) which is linked to our website news and events page.

As per the New Student’s Survey findings (CEC October 2016 paper 10.16.9) we will be getting any event dates released as soon as possible. This will maximise exposure of the events and promote inclusion, it will also help students to plan which virtual events they will attend.

Virtual Learning Environment (Students Association forums)

As the Central Executive, have decided to withdraw from the trial of the ‘Yammer’ community tool project, we now need to look at what more we can do with the existing platform we have available. At the Service Review meeting we asked the Learning Teaching and Innovation representative whether there were any new updates for the virtual learning environment forums. However, we were informed that there was no development work being planned for the Association in the foreseeable future.

Therefore, a decision was made at the Officer Team meeting to work on improving the forums with the tools we have at our disposal. The Officer Team was made aware that now the Operations Team would be managing OUSA-Controller and oversee the Association’s forums.

I have submitted a paper to the office with the intention of submitting to the CEC in April which will request a cluster of working groups be set up so that we can start restructuring the forums to create a space which works and is not so confusing for students and volunteers to participate in.

The aim for these changes is in line with Fresher’s/Welcome back week in October 2017.
Group tuition and University communications with students

During my weekly meetings with the OU’s Director of Communications, we have discussed various communications that were scheduled about Group Tuition, which were due to be sent via the StudentHome news bulletin. However, I consistently gave feedback to say that most students bypass StudentHome and will either go straight to the dashboard or into their module websites; therefore, bypassing any StudentHome news bulletins. I reiterated the importance of inclusive communications especially at this current juncture because of how group tuition had impacted students during the rollout. All subsequent messages were sent directly to students via email.

The University were unsure about mass communication and the impact on students receiving information. However, I explained that although not all students may have been impacted by this policy it is more than likely that they know someone who has. By sharing this information with everyone, every student in 16J presentation will be kept in the loop with the policy updates and the proposed reviews.

The KMPG Group Tuition Policy Survey on how students were affected in the 16J presentation was scheduled to go out to students around the 12th of January 2017, with a two-week completion deadline. The university have advised that this survey will be going out on email and discussions with the findings will take place once complete. I worked closely with Lucian Hudson (Director of Communications) and John D’Arcy (National Director, Ireland) to ensure that the wording of the survey and the communications sent to students was accessible, available and understandable for all students.

OU Staff awareness survey (Internal and External staff)

In 2014, the OU Students Association ran a targeted survey to university staff members (Campus based staff and Associate Lecturers). This survey provided the Association with insight into how we were perceived by members of staff and their understanding of what we do. This enabled us to use some of the information in the strategy document and target areas of staff engagement with the Association.

We are looking to re-run this survey in the early part of 2017. This will provide us with an updated picture of perception for the Association. This survey will allow us to adjust the strategy to reflect the new findings and improve awareness of the Association for all OU staff over the next 12 months.

Looking ahead

The Digital Communications team and myself have several projects planned for the early part of 2017. These are as follows:

- Virtual Learning Environment (forums) restructuring with the operations team (Submission of paper at the April CEC)
- National Students Survey campaign across social media.
- Website restructuring and migration (Submission of paper to this January CEC and work will start ASAP if approved by this committee).
- OU Students Association awareness survey.
- Restructuring and updating of the Communications strategy for the Association (current strategy was created and passed in July 2015).
- Improving and increasing OU Students Association awareness and exposure of our services, areas and achievements (not limited to this committee).
- Updating the OU Students Association Wikipedia page.
- Continuation of magazine surveys to gain opt in information from OU Students.
- Inclusion of more ‘hot topics’ in the OU Students magazine and on our website/forums/social media pages.
- Creation of a feature for Snowball (the Associate Lecturers bi-monthly magazine).
- Re-working of the Fresher’s mailing to include a welcome back email for returning students.
- I will also be discussing in more detail with the communications team and the director of communications about promoting the Association across various university platforms as well as our own. This will help with increasing the awareness of the association for tutors, students and moderators.

Meetings attended since 17/10/2016

20/10/2016  Communications team monthly
27/10/2016  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University).
1/11/2016  Communications team bi weekly chatter
3/11/2016  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University).
8/11/2016  Communications team monthly
10/11/2016  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University).
15/11/2016  OU Students magazine update and survey discussion
17/11/2016  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University).
18/11/2016  OU staff inclusive of AL and SST awareness survey meeting
18/11/2016  Communications team bi weekly chatter
18/11/2016  Communications and Community meeting
18/11/2016  Induction meeting with Sam Dick Head of Quality and Insight (Open University library).
18/11/2016  Service Review meeting
18/11/2016  Accessibility of the forums meeting with VP Equal Opportunities and Vice President Student Support
19/11/2016  Officer team meeting
24/11/2016  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University).
29/11/2016  Communications team strategy meeting
1/12/2016  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University).
8/12/2016  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University).
12/12/2016  Communications team bi weekly chatter
12/12/2016  Communications team strategy meeting (part 2)
15/12/2016  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University).
15/12/2016  Communications team monthly
03/01/2017  Communications bi weekly chatter
06/01/2017  Meeting with Internal Communications Manager (Open University).
13/01/2017  Meeting with Director of Communications (Open University), Head of Strategy and Corporate Communications (Open University) and Internal Communications Manager (Open University).
17/01/2017  Communications team monthly
27/01/2017  Meeting Head of Strategy and Corporate Communications (Open University)
27/01/2017  Central Executive Committee meeting

Rachel Hughes
Vice President Communications
I have had an interesting and rewarding 6 months in the role of O U Students Association Vice President Community. I have networked with O U staff, other volunteers and students, learning more about the needs and requirements for building a supportive student community. I have regular skype meetings with the staff Community team within my remit. I have regular communications with Vice President Communications, Deputy President and Area Association Representatives (A A R s) who continually support me in my role.

Freshers week 26th – 30th September 2016

Freshers week planning went well; it became an exciting time for new and existing students as they interacted through online activities during the week. I helped to host some of the live Facebook events and participated with the rest. I participated with chat during the Student Radio Show and Student Hub Live. I hosted the D S G (Disabled Students Group) Freshers event with acting D S G Chair Sheila Cameron on 28th of September. I also made a Freshers video with Deputy President Nicola Simpson which is on the Freshers website.

Regions Review and Grassroots Project Working Group

Following discussions at the previous C E C and the Regions Review Implementation Group meetings, a new Grassroots Project Working Group has been established. This project will consider the structure of the Students Association at grassroots level. I am joint lead of this working group alongside Deputy President Nicola Simpson. We are joined by many C E C colleagues, including A A R s and F A R s (Faculty Area Representatives). The working group started from 1st December 2016, the terms of reference were decided on 25th November 2016 and discussions are continuing. We are aiming to have option/s available for the CEC meeting in April 2017.

Local Community Project/Student Meet-ups

The Local Community Project continues to do well, meet-up hosts advertise their gatherings through the Association’s website and social media. More support packs were sent to existing student hosts of local meet-ups. I created a video to promote the Local Community Project’s aims in supporting students setting up their own meet-ups which will be released when needed. I wrote an article for the OU Students Magazine on Local Communities explaining about student meet-ups. I continue to support hosts and students that attend meet-ups.

We have been trying OU live online meet-ups. Amelia Gackowska (A A R for Continental Europe) has been doing regular European Student Online Meet-Up’s using OU live. I helped to host ‘O U Students Christmas Get-Together’ which was an online meet-up to support students who were alone at Christmas; we had 18 students that participated during our 2 hour meet-up on OU live.
Big February Meet-up

We are holding a Big February Meet-up on 25th February 2017. This will be a simultaneous meet-up for OU students all over the UK and beyond, both online and face-to-face. We will be linking these up through social media and will be holding some competitions so there will be chances of prizes. I did video footage for the Local Community project which will be released in January 2017 to encourage participation from students in this Big Event; inviting new and existing hosts to take part by organising a meetup themselves or attending one near them.

If you would like to get involved in the Big February Meet-up or would like to find out more about attending or hosting a meet-up you can contact student-community@open.ac.uk or go to our dedicated page ‘Meet Students Near You’ for more information.

Societies, Clubs and Groups

I attended the Societies Committee meeting chaired by Cath Brown on 12th November 2016. There was also a chance for me to talk to Cath and Peter Cowan (Vice President Administration) with our Head of Community (Jess Smith) before the meeting started; to discuss the ideas and future plans for clubs. The societies meeting was a great opportunity to catch-up with societies and find out how they are doing. It was mentioned there are ‘up and coming’ societies that may soon be affiliated to the OU Students Association. It was also mentioned that PLEXUS was no longer a society and were becoming an affiliated group. I proposed a societies weekend event for 2017; whereby all society committees could be invited to participate; to share ideas, motivate each other and for support.

I met with a new member of the community team (Jodie Denton) on 7th December; we discussed the previous society gathering in 2015 which I attended, so that we could start mapping out ideas for June 2017. We are preparing a business case to be put forward to the Board of Trustees.

Officers Meeting

I attended our first Officers Meeting on 18th November 2016. The discussions were less formal, giving us a chance to share ideas. I took the opportunity to ask for specific time with the A A R s during C E C weekends for teambuilding.

Other areas within my remit.

I continue to enjoy my role within C A P (Controller Advisory Panel), learning a lot from my colleagues and O S L (OU Students Association Services Limited) having approved its accounts in October 2016. I have talked to students and volunteers during the G T P (Group Tuition Policy) issues. This was a very difficult time for many, students needed extra support during this time.

OU Registration System Reference Group

I became a volunteer on the Open University Registration System (O U R S) Reference Group. During 27th – 9th October 2016 I took part in a consultation on student registration capabilities and between 1st – 7th December 2016 I reviewed the V C E paper and gave back feedback.
Social Media Working group

I have enjoyed my time on this very organised working group, between 20th October 2016 to 13th November 2016. Discussions led to some firm decisions for updating the Social Media Guidelines; which will be presented by V P Communications as a separate paper at this C E C meeting. I proposed an ‘OU Student Community Facebook Group’ as a Pilot for the new Social Media Guidelines, which was accepted by the working group. This proposal will be entered into the C E C meeting as an independent paper for approval.

T E F Update online conference call meeting

My first online conference call meeting was a T E F (Teaching Excellence Framework) update with Judith Pickering. Discussions were regarding the submission from the OU and around getting input from C E C and the student voice, including possible future consultation with students for long term objective.

Freshers 23rd to 30th January 2017

Freshers planning is now well underway again. I am helping to host some online Events and will be participating in the OU Student Radio Show. I am also participating in a short interview slot for Student Hub Live. You can read more about Freshers here.

Looking to the future

Planning for representation at day schools and residential schools will begin soon, as well as for ‘clubs’. I am representing the OU Students Association in helping to take forward an OU student consultation on ‘Building the Student Community’, which will be ready for the Student Consultations this year.

List of Activities/Meetings I have attended since the last CEC

10th October 2016 A A Rs and Assembly Executives (online)
14th-16th October 2016 C E C Weekend
19th October 2016 Senate Reference Group Meeting
12th November 2016 Society Meeting
13th November 2016 European Online Chat
16th-20th November 2016 Officers Weekend
6th December 2016 F B L Faculty Assembly Meeting
7th December 2016 Society Event Planning Meeting
7th December 2016 T E F Update Meeting
7th December 2016 Local Community Project Meeting
8th December 2016 Staff Induction (Grassroots Project Leader)
8th December 2016 Freshers Planning Meeting for January 2017
9th December 2016 Student Voice Week Meeting
16th December 2016 Grassroots Project Discussion
21st December 2016 Maidstone, Kent Meet-Up
25th December 2016 O U Students Christmas Get-Together (Online)

Future Commitments:

11th January 2017 Student Engagement Project Meeting
12th January 2017 Online Room Steering Group Meeting 2
17th January 2017 Birchington Kent Meet-Up
15th January 2016 European Online Chat
21st January 2017 Hosting Meet-Up At Canterbury, Kent
23rd January 2017 Developing Topics for Student Consultative
23rd January 2017 Hosting OU Student Radio Show
23rd-30th January 2017 Freshers Online Events
25th January 2017 Senate Reference Group
26th January 2017 Samantha Harding (Head of Student Voice) re Student Voice Week

27th January 2017 Media Training
27th-29th January 2017 C E C Weekend
30th January 2017 Disabled Student Voice Workshop (Sega FAS)
12th February 2017 European Online Chat
25th February 2017 Big February Meet-Up
25th February 2017 Hosting Meet-Up At Canterbury, Kent
27th February 2017 Online Room Steering Group Meeting 3
17th-19th March 2017 Officer Weekend
5th April 2017 Senate Reference Group

Stephanie Stubbins
Vice President Community
Central Executive Committee (C E C)
27 – 29 January 2017

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION

Having just re-read through my report it seems that I am in the centre of bureaucratic committees, and basically I am. However the OU is run by committees and students contributing at every level allows the student voice to be heard, and hopefully improve the student experience while studying.

Central Representatives

A lot of my time has been taken up with the Central Representatives Appointments Committee (A C), working our way through a large number of applications and placing the successful applicants on appropriate committees and Boards of Studies (a new layer of committees within Faculties). The online meeting of the A C in December brought up a number of issues which need reviewing, including the actual name of Central Representatives, online training, and the 2-year term being out of sync with the 2-year term of the C E C. The new Faculty structure has brought teething problems to a number of committees, but hopefully they will improve during the second round of meetings.

Grassroots Working Group

The regions review paper was not accepted at the October C E C so a new working group was set up to replace the Regions Review Implementation Working Group. This is conducted online and a paper with the findings and recommendations will be presented at a future C E C.

Group Tuition Policy Programme Board

After the disastrous implementation of the Group Tuition Policy for students who started in October, the Group Tuition Steering Group ceased to exist and a Group Tuition Policy Programme Board was set up. This group will meet every 2 weeks until October 2017 at least, and the most pressing business is ensuring students who start their modules in February will have no problems with their tutorials.

Senate

I attended Senate just after the October C E C meeting and, as expected, the majority of time was taken up with members’ views and concerns about the Group Tuition Policy. I will continue to write a short report after every Senate giving an overview of what took place, although the official minutes of Senate are the exact record.

Learning Experience Reporters (LERs)

We now have volunteer students who are gathering information about issues or concerns and are reporting in a specially set up forum. It has started slowly, but some LERs are already providing useful information that will be helpful to Central Representatives and myself when attending meetings.
Other meetings with people from the OU have been to explore how students can become more involved with decision making and querying assessment procedures. I also took part in a Q & A session held by the Vice Chancellor, together with two other CEC members (Nicci Simpson and Barbara Tarling) where we asked what the University is doing to improve retention rates, highlighted the importance of the relationship between students and tutors and suggested improved sharing of best practice across the university.

I have also answered emails from students and/or passed them onto the appropriate person and asked or replied to queries from other members of the CEC and am partly involved in the planning of the Student Voice Week to be held in March.

My report mentions Senate and the Qualifications and Assessment Committee (looking at regulations to modules and qualifications) as I am an ex officio member on both. Also please note that the deadline for this report is of course before the CEC in January, therefore some meetings are listed as future, when in fact they will have taken place before the CEC. Back to the Future!

Meetings Attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 October 2016</td>
<td>Meeting with several Association Officers and Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 October 2016</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group Briefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 October 2016</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group</td>
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<td>19 October 2016</td>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 October 2016</td>
<td>Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Steering Group Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 2017 ongoing</td>
<td>Grassroots Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 November 2016</td>
<td>Qualifications and Assessment Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 November 2016</td>
<td>Open Forum on OU Progress on the Student First Strategy (Q &amp; A – Vice Chancellor et al)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 – 20 November 2016</td>
<td>Officer Team Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Nov – 19 Dec 2016</td>
<td>Appointments Committee Online Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 December 2016</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 December 2016</td>
<td>Induction meeting with Director, Library Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 January 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with Director, Strategy Planning &amp; Resources, Learning &amp; Teaching Innovation</td>
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Future Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 January 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 January 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 January 2017</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 January 2017</td>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 January 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with several Association Officers and Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 January 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with Associate Director, Library Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 January 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with several Association Officers and Staff</td>
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<td>27 – 29 January 2017</td>
<td>CEC Meeting</td>
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<td>6 February 2017</td>
<td>Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Steering Group Meeting</td>
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<td>7 February 2017</td>
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<td>15 February 2017</td>
<td>Qualifications and Assessment Committee</td>
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<td>21 February 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 March 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<td>11 – 18 March 2017</td>
<td>Student Voice Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 – 19 March 2017</td>
<td>Officer Team Meeting</td>
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<td>21 March 2017</td>
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<td>4 April 2017</td>
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<td>5 April 2017</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group</td>
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<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 April 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 – 23 April 2017</td>
<td>C E C Meeting</td>
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Lorraine Adams

Vice President Education
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

This Report outlines my activities since starting the new role of V P Equal Opportunities on August 1 to date. My steep ‘perpendicular’ learning curve started then and continues as follows.

AUGUST 2016 – no specific dates.

- Downloading and reading vast amounts of information from V P Student Support (within whose remit this role used to fall) subsequent to the C E C Handover Weekend at the end of July.

- Handing over ‘Chair’ D S G position to an acting ‘Chair’. As ‘Chair’ of the O U Students Association D S G (Disabled Students’ Group), I had to take the hard decision to step down before the annual D S G Elections in November because of my additional workload in this new role. However, because the D S G falls within the remit of V P Equal Ops, I remain on the Committee as a non-voting ex-officio Officer with access to the forums on the V L E and am still an Admin in the large (and very active) Facebook group. I also participate in all of the Group’s regular themed Events.

SEPTEMBER 2016

Meetings – On Campus

Over 2 days prior to CEC Induction weekend, introductory meetings with the following:

- Dr. Chetz Colwell, Senior Learnng & Teaching Development Manager (Accessibility). Chair of Securing Greater Accessibility (SeGA) Co-ordination Group and co-Chair of Post Graduate Module H810 Accessible online learning: supporting disabled students

- Michala Robertson, Assistant Director Widening Access and Success Services

- Helen Maxwell, Senior Manager, Students in Secure Environments (SISE)

- Jiten Patel, Head of Equality, Diversity & Information Rights, Academic Policy & Governance

- Sas Amoah – Black and Ethnic Minority Network (B M E)

- Geraldine Huzar, Learning and Teaching Librarian – O U Library

As stated above, these were all introductory/for information meetings with some of the OU people I will be dealing with in my role over the next 2 years. Apart from the Service Review Meeting, the people I met told me about their areas of responsibility; current/on-going/future projects and how the Association is/could be involved. Future reports from me will therefore contain much more specific subject detail and not just a list of names and dates.

Meetings – Online/by ‘phone

- As a student Central Representative, participated in a Board of Studies Open Programme Committee Meeting. Barbara Tarling attended in person. This meeting lasted over 3 hours and was a totally new area for both Barbara and I. I didn’t say much but subsequent to a pre-brief conference ‘phone call with Barbara and Helen Janes a couple of days before, Barbara was able to raise some points. Report being written. Next meeting is scheduled for first week in January 2017.

Other Diary Dates:

September

- Saturday September 24 – Regular monthly West Sussex Coffee & Chat for local OU students. Event organiser
- Tuesday September 27 – travel to Milton Keynes for OU Student Radio broadcast for Freshers Week.
- Wednesday September 28 – Student Hub Live – ‘on camera’ – 2 slots for Freshers Week. (1) Talking about how the OU and the Association supports students with health issues. (2) With Nichola Simpson – Association Deputy President – talking about our roles and the work the Association does.

October

- Thursday October 13 – travel to Milton Keynes for Inclusion Meeting (issues affecting students with barriers to study) and CEC meeting weekend.
- Wednesday October 19 – Senate Reference Group meeting on Campus – Remote or ‘in person’ attendance to be arranged/confirmed.
- Saturday October 29 - Regular monthly West Sussex Coffee & Chat for local OU students. Event organiser

November

- Tuesday November 15 – On Campus or via Skype Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objective 1b Working Group
- Friday -> Sunday November 18, 19, 20 – CEC Officer Team Meeting
- Saturday November 26 - Regular monthly West Sussex Coffee & Chat for
local O U students. Event organiser

The past 8 weeks have been really ‘full on’ in terms of getting to grips with my new role and learning about the many subjects that come within the V P Equal Ops remit. Everyone I’ve met to date at the Open University have been more than welcoming and willing to engage with me personally and the Association as a whole. Therefore, although I can see some ‘challenges’ ahead, I’m hoping this good start bodes well for the future.

Cherry Day
Vice President Equal Opportunity
Elections review working group
I chaired two OU Live meetings for the elections review working group on Wednesday 14th December 2016 and Wednesday 4th January 2017 respectively. It was decided that items to be reviewed should include nominations, manifestos, hustings and a focus on strengthening student engagement with the elections. A survey is to be emailed to students in order to get feedback on the above points and to identify barriers to engaging with elections in particular. The survey questions were reviewed and refined as part of the second meeting. Further meetings are due to take place in March 2017 once an analysis and evaluation of the survey findings has been carried out. Additional details about the review progress can be found in the paper submitted to the CEC.

Part-time maintenance loan discussion
I attended a meeting in London on Monday 19th December with staff from the Open University and representatives from the Department of Education. The objective of the meeting was to hear student views in order to complement a consultation on part-time maintenance loans previously carried out by the government. I attended this meeting alongside the Deputy President and VP Student Support.

TSEP Workshop meeting
On Monday 9th November 2016 I attended a meeting in Milton Keynes with staff from the office and Open University staff. Two representatives from NUS lead a discussion about student engagement mechanisms which would aid the preparation of a written submission for the Annual Provider Review. I attended this meeting alongside the Deputy President and will share further updates as the project progresses.

LERs (Learning Experience Reporters)
I attended the first ever LER training session hosted by staff from the office on OU Live on Monday 1st November. It was a good opportunity to introduce myself to the LERs present in the session and to answer any questions. I have been looking after the LENZ forum for the Open and FASS faculty in the absence of the respective FARs and have been feeding back any issues/comments to the appropriate channels.

Research meeting
I had a meeting with Pooja Sinha on Wednesday 9th October to discuss a new research project which is anticipated to commence in the second half of this year. The research will predominantly focus on engagement and the identification of barriers to student engagement for which a survey will be prepared.

Survey Management Group Update meeting
I attended a meeting with Sarah Young and Sarah Bridgman from the Open a
University on Wednesday 9th October, this replaced the original cancelled meeting on Monday 17th October. As their newly appointed student representative, they gave me a progress update on the Survey Management Working Group and outlined particularly their desire to work with the Association on the aspects of student engagement and involving students in the process. Further working group meetings are scheduled throughout the year.

**Other meetings attended**
- CEC meeting Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th October 2016
- OT meeting Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th November 2016

*Caroline Poppenga*  
*Vice President Representation & Research*
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT SUPPORT

Please copy and paste any part of this Report if you feel it could be of interest elsewhere. Any feedback about this report can be emailed to ousa@open.ac.uk

This is a report of my activities since the last CEC Meeting. I am an ex-officio member of the Disabled Students Group (DSG) Committee although with much less involvement because of the newly created Vice President Equal Opps role. I am an OUSET Trustee (the Students Association Charity, Open University Students Educational Trust) and oversee the Peer Support Service. I have my radar tuned to issues which can affect all students. As part of this role I have been more active on Facebook, replying to students who posted concerns or queries in there.

Jess Smith

In mid-February, I will be very sorry to wave a, hopefully temporary, farewell to Jess Smith who is my main Association Staff contact and someone I’ve come to rely on heavily. Nobody meeting Jess once, ever forgets her. Nothing is ever too much trouble for Jess and her enthusiasm always shines through. She has been a great help to me, steering me away from digging holes for myself and giving me advice and support, including phone calls when I’ve needed to talk something through. I’m delighted about the reason Jess is temporarily leaving us. In taking Maternity leave she is taking time away to create new OU students, so we might have to wait a couple of decades for this plan to come to fruition. I wish Jess and the new arrival the very best. Thank you so much for being my main contact for the past couple of years and I will be thinking of you feeding the baby, while I am writing my Blog or Reports for CEC Meetings at 3 am.

ACQ (Assessment, Credit And Qualifications)

I met with staff from Assessment, Credit and Qualifications in late 2016 and wrote a blog about that which can be found here - http://www.open.ac.uk/ousa/news-and-events/news/blogs/what-earth-does-acq-stand.

There were discussions about pending results and the time it takes to get actual results through. The tight timescales around Special Circumstances reporting won’t be lifted. If you need more information about Special Circumstances reporting, please look for that in your Assessment Handbooks. EMAs will continue to have the option to be submitted a multiple of times up to the deadline. The additional day’s grace will continue with a 10% grade reduction if used. TMAs will still only have the single submission. Students who are due to submit electronically but wish to submit their TMAs in paper format need to check to see if that is possible.

SST / SRSC (Student Support Teams / Student Recruitment and Support Centres)

I had a meeting to learn a little more about the operation of Student Support Teams and Student Recruitment and Support Centres. I have written about this in a Blog too - [here](#). The Blog states that Student Support Teams are going to be housed in three
centres in England and that Nations will support their students. Please continue to contact your SST as you have previously, via the contact details on your StudentHome page. The three England Centres will be Manchester with SSTs for STEM and Access students, Nottingham with SSTs supporting students in WELS, and Milton Keynes with SSTs supporting FBL and FASS students.

There was also information about students taking resits and resubmissions who have no tutor but can have additional support if they contact their SST. There was advice to students to book tutorials / contact the tutor leading the tutorial in advance if they had additional needs and wanted that tutor to read the information on their Student Profile. Tutors can read the profile of students in their tutor groups but can only see profiles of those who book on a tutorial they are running. The OU want to hear about any future problems with accessibility of venues. Students should not share their PI numbers with other students. When the OU were informed of a module asking for students to share PI numbers with each other they raised this with that module’s staff. In late January I will have the opportunity to observe an SST in action which I am looking forward to.

Peer Support

Our Supporters continue to support students either long term or responding to one off queries. Currently the only way students can initially engage with our Supporters is through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) forum system. The Supporters have been discussing ways of reducing any barriers to accessing their service. One exciting move is that we have been given permission for Supporters to offer an email service which will be available in the near future. More information about the Peer Support Service and how to contact them is here. Once the email contact system is up and running we will include that address too.

Nightline

I’m really pleased to reveal that there are four OU student Nightline hotline volunteers. The co-ordinator, is delighted to have them on the team. Nightline also now offers an instant messenger service. Nightline is for all students not just OU students but it is not open as often as our own Peer Support Service. Nightline’s opening hours and further details can be found on our Students Association website here.

DSG (Disabled Students Group)

I attended the Disabled Students Group’s AGM and welcome the new members to the Committee. It was also a time to say goodbye to some who had been on the Committee, particularly Diana Isserlis who had been responsible for the DSG website for a number of years. I contributed to discussions about how the DSG will operate in future including whether to increase the length of time Committee members and officers held office from 1 to 2 years and how to better engage with students.

Assessment Banking

During my travels I made some discoveries about Deferral with Assessment Banking. Students considering this option are advised to talk to their tutor and Student Support Team to explore all options. If a student is unable to complete the module, but wishes to return to it later, they might be able to bank their assessment scores up to the time they defer. This is a deferral with Assessment Banking but only about 50% of
modules enable this to happen. Students can only restart that module, not a different one, if they wish to transfer their banked TMA scores. Students can restart the module at the same stage during any presentation, but must restart it within 13 months. Once a student restarts the module they will have access to their module website, tutorials, material and their tutor. Only one deferral with Assessment Banking is permitted per module. Banked TMA grades cannot be changed. Students can submit assignments to cover already frozen/banked TMAs for the new tutor to comment on but they will not be graded. If a module does not allow Assessment Banking there are other options which Student Support Teams will explain and discuss.

Service Review

This is the new name for the post Tripartite meetings which used to meet to discuss anything that had an online connection. The most recent meeting was in November 2016 and there will be another on January 27th 2017. The VLE is subject to quarterly updates/releases of developments. Subscribing to forums via email should result in emails appearing more quickly than they have done in the past.

We were told that Eduroam’s release to all students is being held up by documentation. We were told that we would receive an update in the week beginning November 21st but despite contacting the OU, unfortunately that is yet to happen. Since the Service Review meeting I became aware that student reps on campus for meetings either cannot, or find great difficulty in, accessing the Cloud (internet provided to guests and visitors to the OU campus) so there will be a concerted effort between now and the next Service Review meeting to try to get some answers and action on this.

Some students trying to access online tutorials cannot see the whiteboard on their smartphones or tablets. We were told that the OU does not support use of the mobile app. This can be investigated further if students report which devices they are using when unable to access the whiteboard. Please write to ousa@open.ac.uk if you are experiencing this problem.

PoD (Print on Demand)

I have heard rumours that PoD, Print on Demand was being stopped completely. I can categorically scotch those rumours and I am on a working group looking into whether there will be an increase of modules where this will be available, rather than a decrease. I am also meeting with Print on Demand staff in late January. Print on Demand is for students who choose to read their materials in a printed format and not for students who need this due to a disability. Students are encouraged to contact their Student Support Team to discuss any alternative formats, which might include printed versions.

Student Feedback and Communication Workstream

The OU needs to provide better means of enabling students to know what is happening with their feedback. This includes structured feedback such as that gained from the National Student Surveys. However, there are other means of gathering students’ views, including the Consultation forum. Staff need to be able to access this information to see if there is an issue they can resolve or read feedback about a particular subject or department. There is the exciting potential for staff to engage with students if it can be included in the website. I am a member of the Workstream
looking into what such a website should be able to provide and how best to provide it so that students and staff will be able to find it and are interested enough to visit it regularly. There were two meetings to discuss the kinds of students and staff who would be using the website, and why, in order to help the usability testing for this student engagement website. That testing will take place in mid-January.

**Maintenance Loans Meeting**

I attended an event in London along with Nicci (Deputy President), Caroline (Vice President Representation & Research) and a number of other students to talk to staff from the Department for Education. We were there to discuss Part Time Higher Education, mainly focussing on augmenting the OU and Students Association’s written submissions to the Government's consultation on maintenance loans for part time students.

**OU Policies Availability**

The OU is exploring ways to make their policies more easily available to students and I have been asked to participate on this working group. The first one will take place just before the next CEC Meeting on January 23rd 2017 and about every 3 months after that.

**Future Commitments:**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Tuesday of every month</td>
<td>Print on Demand workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 January</td>
<td>Print on Demand workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 January</td>
<td>Policies Workshop</td>
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<td>23 January</td>
<td>Freshers Facebook Chat Welcoming Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 January</td>
<td>Service Review (Tripartite replacement)</td>
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<td>27-29 January</td>
<td>C E C Meeting</td>
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<td>30 January</td>
<td>Observing an SST in operation</td>
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<td>30 January</td>
<td>Print on Demand meeting</td>
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<td>2 February</td>
<td>OUSET Meeting</td>
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<td>Feedback / Communications Work Stream</td>
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*Alison Kingan*

*Vice President Student Support*
Central Executive Committee (CEC)
27 – 29 January 2017

REPORT OF STUDENT OU COUNCIL MEMBER

Council Induction and Development Day

The annual induction and development day for council members took place on 27 September 2016. After a welcome from Mr Richard Gillingwater (Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council) there were presentations on the University Strategy, the Student Journey, the role of the OU Academic and the OU's Finances. The afternoon session took the form of a workshop on the role and responsibilities of Council. It was generally agreed that the sessions had been informative and productive, bringing Council members up to date with current developments within the OU and the wider HE sector and provoking interesting discussions on the role of Council and its members.

Council Meetings

Council Meeting 27 September 2016

In a departure from previous practice the first Council meeting of 2016/17 was scheduled at the end of the Induction and Development day in order to consider the comments on the Council Governance Review (CGR) that were submitted following the July meeting.

Vice-Chancellor's Report

In his report to Council the VC focused on student numbers, the extension of the final enrolment date by one week and the improvements to the student experience that would follow the roll out of SRSCs (Student Recruitment & Support Centres) and Group Tuition. Looking back, it seems remarkable that there was absolutely no warning of the problems in implementing the GTP (Group Tuition Policy) that were to emerge three days later.

Council Governance Review

In order to increase the visibility of Council and to promote more active engagement with the wider OU community, Council Members are being encouraged to attend significant university events (such as Charter Day, degree ceremonies, and development days). There is a clear need for a more effective communications strategy, including an updated website and Council is open to ideas for increasing engagement with students. In the future there will be a regular rotation of Council meetings away from Milton Keynes. Detailed discussion of the size and composition of Council is to be referred to a newly constituted sub-committee of the Council (to be known as the Governance and Nominations Committee). In view of other pressures on the President's time I was appointed to serve as the student representative on this committee.
Increasing engagement between Council and students

As part of its engagement remit the Governance and Nominations Committee would welcome proposals from the Students’ Association to increase opportunities for Council to engage with students.

Council Meeting 23 November 2016

I can’t report on the most significant areas of discussion at this meeting because many of the papers, including the updates on Group Tuition, the Teaching Excellence Framework and Building Better Communications, were, and are still, confidential. Further discussion of the Council Governance Review (CGR) was deferred until after the report is considered by Senate in January (it was omitted from the agenda of the October meeting in order to make more time for GTP). Other discussion items included the Strategic Performance Report (notable for its high levels of stretch and low/medium levels of confidence in achieving the 2019/20 targets) and the Risk Management Delivery Plan. Annual reports presented to the meeting included the Audit Committee Annual Report, the Annual Accountability Report and the OU Students Association Annual Report. Reports were also received from the Council sub-committees (Estates Committee, Finance Committee, Staff Strategy Committee, Governance and Nominations Committee) as well as from Senate.

The next meeting will take place in Cardiff on 7 March.

Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC) 2 November 2016

The first meeting of this newly-formed Council sub-committee discussed its membership and terms of reference and began to consider options for reducing the size of Council while maintaining appropriate representation from different sectors within and outside the university.

The next meeting will be on 15 February 2017

University Appointments

I very much welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the recruitment process for the new Executive Dean of FASS which resulted in the acting Executive Dean, Mr Ian Fribbance, being confirmed in the role. Cinnamon (Northern Ireland AAR) and I also took part in the recruitment process for the OU’s new Student Engagement Manager. In both cases I felt that student involvement made a really positive contribution to the process.

Meetings attended since my last report

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 September</td>
<td>OU Research Directions presentation and workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 September</td>
<td>Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>14/16 October</td>
<td>CEC</td>
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<td>19 October</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group (SRG) and Senate</td>
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<td>20 October</td>
<td>Assessment Banking Workshop</td>
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<td>2 November</td>
<td>Governance and Nominations Committee</td>
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<td>10 November</td>
<td>VCE presentation on Strategic Performance Indicators</td>
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<td>15 November</td>
<td>Shortlisting candidates for FASS Executive Dean</td>
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<td>18/19</td>
<td>November Officer Team Meeting</td>
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21 November  Meeting with University Secretary
23 November  Council
29 November  Hefce TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) event for HE Providers
1 December   FASS Executive Dean interviews
6 December   Interviews for Student Engagement Manager

**Future Meetings**

18 January   WELS Teaching Committee
25 January   SRG/Senate
27 January   CEC Media Training
27/29 January CEC
1 February   'Closing the Chasm' event
15 February  Governance and Nominations Committee
6/7 March    Council Meeting in Cardiff
18/19 March  Officer Team Meeting
27-31 March  Absent from OU duties (TEF Panel Meeting)
5 April      SRG and Joint meeting of Council and Senate

*Barbara Tarling*
*Student Member of OU Council*