OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)
27 – 29 January 2017

STUDENT CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

The C E C is asked to:-

i) note the update.

1. **Background**

1.2 This paper is a regular update to the Central Executive Committee for information purposes.

2. **Online consultations since last meeting (October 2016)**

2.1 There have been two consultations on the University Students Consultative Forum (USCF) since the last meeting. A consultation about Student Support Policy Principles took place from 17 – 31 October. There were 252 posts with 65 students making at least one contribution.

2.2 The consultation in the run up to Christmas was about Widening Access and Success and took place from 7 – 21 December attracting 104 posts contributed by 24 individuals.

2.3 There has been a significant drop in participation over the first three consultations of this academic year. The low participation in December was almost certainly related to the timing and possibly the subject matter. The forum currently has 268 student members including 25 new students who were invited to join the forum to replace others who had formally withdrawn from the process.

2.4 Responses have been published to a number of consultations that took place over the summer, in particular those about online/onscreen learning and Student Recruitment and Support Centres which have generated additional student comment.
3. **Special Student Consultation Forums**

3.1 Three bespoke consultation forums were organised in the autumn of 2016. Firstly a consultation on ‘Shaping the OU’s Support for Students with Accessibility Needs’ took place from 14 – 27 November. All students were invited to register via StudentHome. All students on the Student Consultation mailing list also received this invitation. 182 posts were made with 48 individuals taking part.

3.2 A consultation on ‘Obtaining References from the OU' took place from 24 Nov – 5 December. All students were invited to register via StudentHome. All students on the Student Consultation mailing list also received this invitation. 275 posts were made with 59 individuals taking part.

3.3 Finally, a consultation on ‘Helping you to Achieve Study Goals’ organised by the Faculty of Wellbeing and Languages (WELS), took place between 7 - 21 December. An invitation to take part was sent by direct email to all students currently studying a module linked to WELS Student Support teams. 164 posts were made with 22 individuals taking part.

4. **Board of Studies Student Consultative Forum.**

4.1 The first Board of Studies Student Consultative Forum took place 24 November – 7 December for the Open Board of Studies and was advertised to all students studying towards an Open Degree on transitional arrangements as it was specifically about supporting them in the run up to the end of transitional arrangements. 147 posts were made with 31 students taking part.

4.2 Other Boards of Studies are starting to discuss potential consultations with the next one booked for 3 – 13 February for Arts level three students about the transition from level 2 to level 3.

5. **Student Moderator Pilot Update**

5.1 Twelve applications were received from students wanting to be part of a six month pilot to consider the use of student moderators in the student consultative online process. The Executive sub-group selected six suitable applicants to take part. These students have now been contacted and their training is scheduled for the last week in January. The unsuccessful candidates were also contacted and thanked for their interest. Student Moderators will be involved in future consultations after successful training has been completed.

6. **Consultative Meetings 2017**

6.1 The schedule of consultative meetings for the spring is as follows:

- Saturday 4 March 2017: Jury’s Inn Hotel, Exeter
- Saturday 11 March: Student Central, London
- Friday 17 March: The Open University, Milton Keynes
- Saturday 25 March: MacDonald Hotel, Manchester
- Saturday 1 April: Jury’s Inn Hotel, Newcastle
- Saturday 1 April: The OU in Wales Cardiff
• Saturday 8 April: Dublin
• Saturday 22 April the OU in Scotland Edinburgh

• 13 – 27 March: Online International Students Consultative Meeting

6.2 Invitations are currently being sent to all students. 60 volunteers will be offered places at English meetings with an expectation that 50% will attend. The Students Association will be seeking to keep the volunteer students engaged in the process, by means of a series of emails, between being allocated a place and the meeting dates, in order to ensure a better attendance rate than in 2016.

6.3 Numbers of places offered at meetings in Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be agreed with the Nation Offices on a similar basis, subject to space available. All international student who volunteer to take part in the online consultation will be given a place. The issue has been raised regarding a clash of dates between Scotland’s meeting and the April CEC with a note to meeting organizers to consult the Students Association before any future dates are arranged.

6.4 The decision was made to limit the meeting agenda to two topics allowing more student discussion time around each consultation. This year’s topics are:

• Educational and Pastoral Support for Students (including a consultation on having a personal tutor for the duration of a qualification.)
• Building a Student Community

6.5 The Students Association contribution will take place after lunch and on the agenda will be expressed as an integral part of the day – rather than a separate meeting in the hope of encouraging a majority of students to remain and take part. Arrangements for an agenda together with CEC and staff members’ attendance is currently being discussed.

6.6 Student Voice Week, noted elsewhere on the agenda, falls between the London meeting on Saturday 11th March and the MK meeting on Friday 17th March. Special activities will be take place at these meetings as part of the event.

6.7 A second set of meetings will take place in autumn 2017 and a schedule alongside venues will be arranged in due course.

Wendy Burrell
Deputy General Manager