OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)
21 – 23 January 2017

OU STUDENTS VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT RESTRUCTURAL REVIEW

The CEC is asked to:

i) discuss the proposal
ii) approve the proposal
iii) create the working groups

1. Background

1.1 The OU Students Virtual Learning Environment suite of forums currently has over 400 sub forums and is difficult to navigate through. These forums are protected by the university firewall and require logging in to Student Home, therefore they are the safest space for students to participate in discussion with other students.

2. Proposal

2.1 This paper has been written to propose an update for these forums. We wish to encourage students and members of this committee to utilise the space and feel protected whilst doing so. Currently these forums are underused and most communication and news from the Association is based on social media. Using just social media to promote regular communications is creating a barrier for students who do not wish to participate in social media spaces.

2.2 This project is part of the bigger VLE review, further projects will be ongoing throughout the rest of the current CEC’s term and possibly beyond. Therefore, we are recommending a full restructure of the OU Students Suite of forums. We will be first looking at the main forums, these are the forums that students see when they click on community from student home https://learn1.open.ac.uk/course/view.php?name=OUSA-STUDENTS

2.3 The aim for these forums is to make them more accessible, less cluttered, encourage more students to participate and to provide a space that mirrors the social media, email, and website communications.
3. **Working groups**

3.1 To ensure that all students needs are met during this proposed restructure I will be inviting representatives of this committee and forum moderators to participate. This restructuring is a huge undertaking and will require most members of this committee communicating with each other through working group forums.

**Please note that we will not be creating content initially in these working groups.**

3.2 The suggestions for these working groups and participants are as follows (mirroring the new website headers):

**Community:**
Kate Dungate Head of Student Community  
Stephanie Stubbins (VP Community)  
All the AARs.  
Optional: Current community moderators/Mentor moderators.

**Student Voice:**
Samantha Harding Head of Student Voice  
Caroline Poppenga (VP Representation and Research)  
Lorraine Adams (VP Education)  
All the FARs (Including the newly elected representatives).  
Optional: Current community moderators/Mentor moderators.

**Volunteering:**
Beth Metcalf Head of Student Volunteering  
Optional: Current community moderators/Mentor moderators/Volunteer Steering Committee

**Support:**
Verity Robinson Head of Student Support  
Alison Kingan (VP Student Support)  
Cherry Day (VP Equal Opportunities)  
Optional: Current community moderators/Mentor moderators

**Oversight:**
Peter Cowan (VP Admin and Chair of CAP)  
Rachel Hughes (VP Communications)  
Magda Hadrys (Head of Operations)  
OUSA Controller  
Mentor Moderators

3.3 This project will take up to 2 hours a week approximately running from the 28th of April until the 24th of June 2017 (allowing for a three week break for end of module components from the 19th of May) for discussion. With the hope to have answered the following questions for approval at the July 2017 CEC.

N.B if anyone not listed wishes to participate as an advisor for these working
To assist in the creation of these forums, please visit the guidelines document which will be provided to all working groups, this document will aid in defining the forums.

The intention is to have the main set of forums restructured by October 2017 in time for launching in Fresher's/Welcome back week.

1. What are these forums for? (outcomes, rather than content e.g. a space to host community events)
2. What information do we want in these forums?
3. How will these forums be kept relevant and timely?
4. Who will use these forums?
5. How would we want to structure these forums?

Rachel Hughes
Vice President Communications