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:

Acting 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 ACTING PRESIDENT

This report relates to activities undertaken during the period 1 January – 31 March 2017. Alongside my duties as Deputy President I have also been acting President since 26 January 2017. During this time I have attended several meetings on campus and online, been involved in a number of ongoing projects and initiatives which you can read about below and met with students online and face to face. You can find a full schedule of meetings attended at the end of this report.

All Party Parliamentary Group on Students

I was invited to speak at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Students focusing on the decline in the number of part time and mature students. I spoke about the diversity of OU Students and the importance of lifelong, part time and distance learning opportunities. You can read my full address online here:

Freshers Events

Earlier this year I took part in several Student Association and Open University Freshers events. These events help new and existing students to make connections with other students, get support and feel part of the OU student community. You can catch up on Student Hub Live sessions, including one all about the OU Students Association here.

Governance Committees

As acting President I attended meetings of the Senate, Council and Education Committee. Student members of these committees are a formal opportunity to share what matters to OU Students with those who make decisions at the University.

Council Minutes can be found online here. Senate Minutes can be found online here.

Grassroots Project

Work on the Grassroots Project has continued at pace. 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. The full recommendations of the project can be found in paper 4/17/8.

More Students Qualifying Induction workshop

A workshop was organised to explore the current induction provision within the Open University and how it could be improved. Participants included staff from various Open University departments. Participants identified a range of different activities across faculties which could be thought of as induction. These were categorised at being at module, qualification or university level. I emphasised that students are not
always aware of what activities are categorised as ‘induction’ and that students would value a clearly articulated package of induction activities and a welcome pack. Workshop participants agreed that Induction was important, not only so that students had access to information to succeed in their studies but also so that they felt part of an academic community.

Participants suggested that there were a number of inconsistencies across the university about how induction activities are delivered and that there was a need for this to be addressed. A paper on student induction is expected to be presented to the More Students Qualifying working group. I have asked for an update from the University about the next steps that will be taken (if any) as a result of the ideas generated at the workshop.

National Student Survey (N S S)

Over the last few months the Association led the #ListeningLearningDoing campaign on social media, highlighting how feedback students have given via the N S S has helped shape the work of the Association. We also asked students to get creative and write a 'love' or 'break up' letter to student surveys, you can read the winning entries in the Spring edition of the OU Students Magazine.

The 2017 National Students Survey will be coming to a close at the end of April. Over 11,500 Open University students have already completed the survey but the results can only be made publicly available if a 50% response rate is achieved. The Open University is close to achieving this and students will be receiving final reminders, including one from me, over the next week or so if they are eligible to take part.

Open University Students Consultative Executive

Since my last report Consultation meetings have taken place around the UK and Ireland, with an online equivalent for students in Europe. The two main discussion topics were building the student community and educational and pastoral support. You can find out more about the face to face events in my blog post.

Online consultations have been held on a variety of topics including the Social Media Policy, Transforming Student Policy, Widening Access and Success and Student Feedback. You can suggest topics for consultation, read consultation discussions and how the university responded here.

Early planning discussions are underway for the next round of face to face student consultation meetings, these are expected to take place in Autumn 2017 though details are yet to be finalised.

Senior Team and Regular OU/Student Association Meetings

As acting President I have attended a number of meetings with members of the Open University Senior Team. These have ranged from workshop style events on a wide range of strategic issues to more focused one to one meetings on a specific issue or student concern. These meetings allow the Student Association to raise concerns with members of the senior team directly and seek clarity about an issue and when necessary a timely resolution for students.
Student Engagement Project

In March I had the opportunity to meet with the new OU Student Engagement Manager to discuss the ongoing work of the Student Engagement Project, a joint project of the University and the Students Association. We discussed the membership of the Project group and ideas about how to progress the work of each of the work streams. Student Association Representatives have indicated which initiatives they would like to be involved and work will progress throughout the year.

The ongoing work of Work stream A of this Project has focused on a new Student Engagement Website highlighting student engagement opportunities, student feedback and consultation. Work is continuing on the new website and although it was hoped that the new website would be ready to launch during Student Voice Week it is now thought the website will be launched at the start of the 2017/18 academic term. The website is now being referred to as the Student Voice Website.

Student Voice Week #OUstudentvoiceweek

Student Voice Week took place in March and it was a real success. I was on campus all week and took part in a range of activities for both students and staff, highlighting how Student voice is heard at the Open University and why it matters. One of my highlights was meeting with OU students during Student Voices day, its great to meet with other students face to face and hear about their experiences as OU Students. The live Studio event was also great fun and I can now add game show host to the list of bizarre things that I have done for the first time this year!

You can find out more about student voice week, listen to a podcast of me talking to the Vice Chancellor Peter Horrocks and catch up on the live Studio finale online here.

Student Association Volunteer Steering Group

I have continued to work 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. A funding request for a training and networking event for Association volunteers was approved by the Board of Trustees, planning is now well under way and the event will be held in July.

During the January Freshers event I hosted the ‘Get Involved’ facebook event, sharing information about volunteering opportunities with interested OU Students. In February we launched #spotlightsunday recognising the student volunteers who go the extra mile in supporting the OU Student Community. To nominate a student volunteer fill in a short form online.

Work is ongoing to develop the training and support available for volunteers and developing new volunteer opportunities. The new Studio Host volunteer role has attracted a lot of interest from students, training for successful applicants will take place in May.

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

The Open University and OU Students Association are taking part in a pilot commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council to assess the effectiveness
of student voice mechanisms within quality assessment. This will take the form of a written submission which is due to be completed by the end of April 2017.

The overall aim of the project is to review the effectiveness of the current student voice mechanisms and identify whether any of these mechanisms need strengthening. Existing data, for example, data from the National Student Survey and Annual Governance Effectiveness Reviews will be considered alongside data about engagement with the Students Association. The project group are also exploring how we might build on the desk based research and existing data described above by undertaking primary research in the 2017/18 academic year to explore the theme further.

Meetings attended at a Glance

7 January    Students Association Meet Up
16 January   University Students Consultative Executive Meeting
17 January   Meeting with Head of Student Support
18 January   Student Engagement Project Communications and Feedback
18 January   Planning for Student Hub Live – OUSA Community Team
18 January   Student Voice Week Meeting
18 January   Catch up with VP Community
18 January   T S E P Written Submission meeting
19 January   Grassroots Project Lead meeting
23 January   Student Voice Week Meeting
23 January   Student Hub Live Planning
23 January   Studio
23 January   Board of Trustees Meeting
24 January   Student Engagement Project Communications and Feedback
25 January   Senate reference Group and Senate
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
30 January   Student Voice Week Studio Planning
30 January   Developing Topics for Student Consultative Meetings
31 January   References Review Group
1 February   Student Hub Live
1 February   Meeting with Student Association Deputy General Manager
1 February   Regular Meeting with Director Academic Services
2 February   Senior Team Strategy Day
3 February   Student Engagement Website (unable to attend – technical difficulties)
7 February   OU/Academic Policy and Governance regular meeting
8 February   OU Director of Communication re Charter Day
9 February   Grassroots Project Lead meeting
9 February   OU Redesign Meetings online
13 February  Enhancing NSS Communications
14 February  Charter Day Planning Meeting
14 February  President/PVC Research and Academic Strategy Meeting
15 February  Outstanding Tutor Award Filming Discussion
15 February  Meeting with Director OU in Ireland regarding Group Tuition Policy
15 February  Meeting with Head of Student Voice
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>16 February</td>
<td>Grassroots Project Lead meeting</td>
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<td>16 February</td>
<td>Have Your Say Grassroots Project Facebook Event</td>
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<td>20 February</td>
<td>Board of Trustees Meeting</td>
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<td>20 February</td>
<td>Office of Independent Adjudicator Meeting</td>
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<td>20 February</td>
<td>Student Voice Week Planning Meeting</td>
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<td>21 February</td>
<td>All Party Parliamentary Group on Students</td>
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<td>22 February</td>
<td>Charter Day Planning Meeting</td>
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<td>22 February</td>
<td>Student Journey Workshop</td>
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<td>22 February</td>
<td>Student Voice Meeting</td>
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<td>23 February</td>
<td>Meeting with Vice President Communications</td>
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<td>23 February</td>
<td>Meeting with Director Knowledge Media Unit</td>
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<td>23 February</td>
<td>Meeting with Head of Digital Communications</td>
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<td>23 February</td>
<td>Meeting with Student Volunteering Officer</td>
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<td>23 February</td>
<td>Meeting with Digital Communications Officer</td>
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<td>24 February</td>
<td>T S E P Pilot Workshop</td>
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<td>25 February</td>
<td>Big Feb Meet up</td>
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<td>1 March</td>
<td>T S E P Written Submission Meetings</td>
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<td>2 March</td>
<td>Leadership in Action Workshop</td>
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<td>3 March</td>
<td>Council preparation meeting</td>
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<td>3 March</td>
<td>Curriculum Delivery Workshop</td>
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<td>4 March</td>
<td>Student Consultation (Exeter)</td>
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<td>6 March</td>
<td>Grassroots Project Lead meeting</td>
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<td>6 March</td>
<td>OU Council Dinner</td>
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<td>7 March</td>
<td>OU Council</td>
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<td>10 March</td>
<td>More Students Qualifying Induction workshop preparation</td>
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<td>10 March</td>
<td>Studio Planning Meeting</td>
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<td>13 March</td>
<td>More Students Qualifying Induction workshop</td>
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<td>13 March</td>
<td>Learning Experience Reporters Day</td>
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<td>13 March</td>
<td>Student Voice Week filming</td>
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<td>13 March</td>
<td>Disabled Students Group - Student Voice Week facebook event</td>
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<td>14 March</td>
<td>Meeting with PVC Learning and Teaching Innovation (Council buddy)</td>
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<td>14 March</td>
<td>Student Voice Week Symposium</td>
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<td>14 March</td>
<td>Student Voice Week Interview with Vice Chancellor</td>
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<td>14 March</td>
<td>Meeting with Students Association General Manager</td>
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<td>15 March</td>
<td>Meeting with PVC Research and Academic Strategy</td>
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<td>15 March</td>
<td>OU / OUSA Regular meeting with Director Academic Services</td>
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<td>15 March</td>
<td>Grassroots – Student Voice Week facebook event</td>
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<td>16 March</td>
<td>Student Voices Day</td>
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<td>16 March</td>
<td>Meeting with Education Committee Central Representative</td>
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<td>17 March</td>
<td>Studio – Live facebook event</td>
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<td>18 – 19 March</td>
<td>Officer Team Meeting</td>
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<td>20 March</td>
<td>Meeting with Head of Volunteering</td>
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<td>20 March</td>
<td>Meeting with OU Student Engagement Manager</td>
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<td>21 March</td>
<td>Education Committee preparation with Governance team</td>
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<td>21 March</td>
<td>All party parliamentary group preparation meeting</td>
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<td>22 March</td>
<td>Education Committee</td>
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<td>22 March</td>
<td>Meeting with Student Association General Manager</td>
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<td>23 March</td>
<td>Grassroots Project Lead Meeting</td>
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<td>23 March</td>
<td>Senior Team Briefing Meeting</td>
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<td>23 March</td>
<td>Grassroots Project Meeting</td>
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<td>27 March</td>
<td>Senior Team Meeting</td>
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<td>27 March</td>
<td>Meeting with Students Association General Manager</td>
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<td>28 March</td>
<td>All party parliamentary group ‘Decline of Part Time HE Sector’</td>
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<td>30 March</td>
<td>Student Voice Website implementation workshop</td>
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*Nicola Simpson*

*Acting President*
At the time of writing it has been about ten weeks since the last Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting. There has been a fair amount done by the Association in that time, not least the successful Student Voice week which, unfortunately due to a lack of uncommitted annual leave time, I was not able to play a large part in.

Behind the scenes there was more activity. The subvention negotiations began in December continued apace albeit delayed by the General Manager’s slightly early absence on paternity leave. These are still in progress and we are waiting upon final agreement for a package to be presented by Johnathan Wylie (Director of Academic Services) to the Vice Chancellor’s Executive.

In the past two months it has been my pleasure to officially confirm PLEXUS, the LGBT+ group as an official group of the Association and to ratify the affiliation of the Dr Turing Society both of which had been agreed to before the last CEC meeting. There is some more work ahead with societies as regards their insurance needs, data protection issues and, following a report commissioned from our legal advisors, a review of some legal issues. I will be discussing these in due course with Cath Brown as Chair of the Societies Standing Committee and Stephanie Stubbins, Vice President Community ahead of the Societies Annual General Meeting in June.

As a member of the Boards of Trustees for both the Association and OUSET I attended board meetings of each of these. Details, where applicable, can be found in the relevant section of the Association website.

I, together with Nicci Simpson, Acting President, met with representatives of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) in a joint meeting with the Student Casework Office. The OIA is the last port of call for complaint against the University and this was an opportunity for us to see how it functions and what is and is not within its scope. We were allowed a period of time without University staff present to raise student issues – did the OIA which is set up for England and Wales have a part to play for students outside those nations? The answer is yes as the OU is considered to be based in England. Our other main query which related to where the OIA sat as regards students (and student apprentices) working across two institutions was not fully answered as it is an area where the OIA itself is still unclear. Our part of the meeting ended with a discussion of OIA resources and how they could be used in our own forthcoming complaints and disciplinary procedure review.

Spring sees the start of the Student Consultation process and I was fortunate to attend two of the five English ones – London and Newcastle – where we could hear the views of our members at first hand both regarding the consultation topics chosen and, through general conversation, those matters which they consider important.

It was my great pleasure to represent the Association at London Nightline’s 45th Anniversary Event. This was an opportunity to meet with the Trustees of the organisation and to also talk to some of the volunteers who operate the ‘phone lines...
through the night. From both the speeches and the conversation it was clear how much they valued the affiliation of the Association with Nightline and their understanding of the challenges of part time distance learning.

As well as these external and University based meetings there has also been a busy programme of working groups, meetings with various staff members and consultation on University papers.

Meetings

2 February  Student Journey Workshop
            OUSET Trustees Meeting
20 February Association Board of Trustees Meeting
            Meeting with Office of the Independent Adjudicator
9 March    Subvention Meeting
11 March   Student Consultation (London)
18-19 March Officer Team Meeting
22 March   Nightline 45th Anniversary Event
24-25 March London Graduation Ceremonies
28 March   Art and Humanities Board of Studies
1 April    Student Consultation (Newcastle)
8 April    Societies Meeting

Additionally there were evening OU Live meetings for the Election review and with the Head of Operations regarding forum issues.

*Peter Cowan*

*Vice President Administration*
Over the past three months I have worked with members of this committee in two working groups (Matters redevelopment and the internal OU Students Association newsletter). I have been having bi-weekly meetings with Lucian Hudson, OU Director of Communications, which has continued to strengthen 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 over 33,000 clicks in around 3 weeks! I have attended the Officer Team meeting in March in which I gave an update to what projects myself and the Communications team are working through and an indication of the information provided in this report.

I have discussed with members of the Association office about our website and virtual learning environment (VLE) forums (both have papers for this committee meeting). I have also worked closely with Pooja Sinha, Research & Information Officer, to reproduce the 2014 OU staff (internal and external) awareness survey which has run from 3rd of April to 28th April 2017; the findings of this survey will be provided to the CEC in July 2017.

I have been working with Vice President Student Support and other office staff team members to create awareness of the Students Association for Associate Lecturers (tutors) which will assist in signposting students to the Association for support and access to our services.

I remain committed to expanding our communication methods, reducing barriers for the accessibility to information. I am also focused on the internal and external communication of the Students Association and its elected representatives towards Associate Lecturers, other members of OU staff and our 170,000 OU Students; this will continue be my focus going forward.

**OU Students Magazine**

To date the current edition of the March magazine (published 9/3/17) has had 33,513 clicks! This edition we mailed out to all students, placed a news item on OU life to reach all Open University staff and we also included TutorHome. We have also scheduled a StudentHome news bulletin to remind students that the magazine is out.

The next magazine date for release is 1st of June with the content submission deadline on the 15th of May. In the December edition, we ran a short survey asking students about the magazine and what they thought of it. We’re really pleased that 85% of respondents were aware that the magazine is produced by their Students Association, and that 67% read at least every edition they can, with half of that number reading every edition without fail. The first thing we did was change the fonts used in the magazine, as some students felt that the font was difficult to read.

We also ensured that content was better spaced on a page. Both lead to a cleaner and clearer design, whilst taking care not to stray too far from our original look.
Another thing we did to make the magazine easier to navigate was add hyperlinks to the contents page. We’re also taking student content recommendations into consideration when planning the content – e.g. Students were interested in hearing more about their elected students so we’ve made sure there are more opportunities for reps to write for the magazine. Students are also interested in hearing more from their fellow students, including an advice column or study tips – this is something we’re hoping to implement as a regular feature in the future.

**OU Students Association website redevelopment**

In January 2017, the website redevelopment paper was discussed. It was agreed that the OU Students Association did need a new website, as we are expanding as an organisation and our requirements are changing for our platform use. Our new supplier will be able to provide us with a custom-built website which can give us the flexibility to expand on, as and when required.

I have been asked to be project lead throughout the development with Beth Metcalf (Head of Student Volunteering) and Paul Severn (Digital Comms Officer) as day to day on site oversight of the project management. Paul has submitted a paper to this CEC. We have no official project timelines yet for the completion of phase 1 of the website build, but we are hoping that it will be available this year.

**OU Students Association Social media**

Towards the end of January 2017, the communications team trialled using paid advertising on Facebook to highlight Freshers week. As it was successful, we used Facebook advertising again for Student Voice week (March 2017).

The analytics are as follows:

**Freshers January 2017**

- 1,551 clicks from the CAMEL welcome email
- 1,873 visits to Freshers landing page
- 1,217 visits the Freshers events page
- 771 clicks on the Facebook advert which reached 42,931 users
- 716 new Facebook likes

**Student Voice Week March 2017**

- Student Voice week landing page visits 485
- 199 clicks on the Facebook advert which reached 18.8k users
- 73 new Facebook likes

We will be using paid advertising again for each presentation of modules (October and January) to promote Freshers/Welcome Back week.

OU Students Twitter followers to date: 18,649
OU Students Association Facebook likes to date: 27,827
Vice President Communications Twitter followers to date: 175
Vice President Communications Facebook likes to date: 215
We are aware that some students do not use Social Media and we must continue not to force these students to feel isolated. Therefore, once we have the OU Student Association forums restructured, we will be mirroring all events on these platforms (if it is possible).

I would like to ask that all representatives of the Student Association continue to be mindful of the barrier’s in place to some students who do not use social media; and that once the forum has been redeveloped, we all make use of it much more than at the current juncture.

**OU Students radio (STUDIO)**

Students renaming our radio show ‘STUDIO’ gave us the opportunity to branch out into other media (ie. FB Live video). We think that ‘on the fly’ live streams are still important and effective, but having a produced media umbrella brand will help us differentiate between those endeavours and events/work we spent a lot of time and resources on.

We recently filmed a STUDIO web episode for Student Voice week (March 2017), which had 1,800 views and just over 6,000 reaches. You can catch up on demand for this very special STUDIO [here](#). In January 2017, we advertised for STUDIO hosts, and on May the 2nd, the Volunteering team are leading 12 students through the radio host training.

**OU Students Association forums (Virtual Learning Environment)**

As mentioned in the January officer report from myself, I am intending to work with members of this CEC and Association staff to restructure the OUSA community forum. This forum will reflect the areas across the Students Association (Student Voice, Community, Support, and Volunteering) to provide a space where students can participate and communicate with all members of the student community.

This project will be initially looking at the community forums structure and layout. It is a very big project with several strands leading from it. The intention is to have the main OU Students Community forum restructured and redeveloped by October 2017 with further areas being worked on throughout 2018. Please see the separate paper submitted to this committee for further details.

**Raising awareness and reporting back**

I have been working closely with members of the CEC to improve awareness across the OU of what the Students Association does and the services we provide. We are looking at re-coining freshers week (October 2017) to include all returning students (students continuing their studies), to do this we have discussed with the OU about adjusting the current data agreement to include these students. We believe that reminding students that they are a member of the Students Association will improve the awareness of the Association which will also help with the National Student Survey questions moving forward.

To also improve awareness, we are redeveloping the Students Association website (see above) and the Students Association forums (see above). We will be continuing to utilise the OU’s communication platforms to target OU staff to improve awareness of what the Association do and can provide for students. We are also considering a
mechanism to promote this through Associate Lecturers (tutors), to students at a grassroots level; as we feel that as tutors are only able to provide academic support, students are often being referred to SSTs for non-academic advice which SST cannot provide. Therefore, to reduce the risk of lost students we will be looking at ways in which students can be referred to the Students Association for services such as Peer Support, Nightline, OUSET or wide net community support.

This project is being scoped with the New Head of Student Support (Verity Robinson), Vice President Student Support (Alison Kingan), and myself. It stems from several strategy points in the OU Students Association current strategy document. We are hoping to have some further news for the July CEC, as at the moment we are in phase 1 (meetings are being arranged and the project is being scoped further to look at the stakeholders and the services which we (the Students Association) can provide.

OU Staff awareness survey (Internal and External staff)

The OU staff awareness survey has now gone live. It is scheduled to run from 3rd April until 28th April 2017. We have reused questions from the last survey and will be able to measure the improvement for awareness between the two surveys (2014 and 2017). We have also included a faculty question to be able to target these areas clearer with defined information. We would like to thank the Open University Internal Communications manager Lisa Booth and Director of Communications Lucian Hudson for their support in the promotion of this survey.

The results from this survey will be available for the July 2017 CEC; which will allow us to tailor the Association awareness strategy further using this information.

Redevelopment of OUSA Matters

Following the last CEC (January 2017), I formed a working group and we were tasked with redeveloping OUSA Matters. I created the working group timeline (from 13/02/17 to 20/03/2017) and started working through 5 discussion points which allowed us to scope and define the direction of this new forum. We focused on what the space was intended to be used for, how elected representatives of the OU Students Association could participate and engage with the members of the Association as well as looking at ways to ensure that this new forum did not turn back into OUSA Matters.

I would like to thank Cath Brown, Alison Kingan, Stephanie Stubbins, Peter Cowan, Sarah Roe, Anna Jenkins, Ruth Parry, Ruth C, Sarah Blake, Victoria Crawford, and Cinnomen McGuigan for taking time out of their busy schedules and participating in this working group.

I have submitted the redevelopment paper to this CEC (April 2017) and if passed by the committee ‘Talk to Your Students Association’ will be launched around the 2nd of May 2017.

Round Robin internal CEC newsletter

In February 2017, we did a test run of the internal communications newsletter (the round robin). The initial feedback suggested that further scoping was required to define what the robin was about and the function that it will play within the committee.
It was decided that a working group would be formed which would allow for members of the CEC to shape how the robin would be created. In this working group, it was suggested that a pilot should run from May 2017 until July 2017 to test the usefulness of the communication internally.

At this stage, the robin will not be made available to students or other stakeholders within the university. Although reps could make any content provided in the robin into other forms of communication, such as video’s, podcasts, blog posts, news articles, and magazine contributions if they saw the relevance to do so.

I would like to thank Barbara Tarling, Cath Brown, Alison Kingan, Peter Cowan, Stephanie Stubins, Victoria Crawford, Cinnomen McGuigan and Amelia Gackowska for participating in the working group and giving up some of your time to shape this project.

Looking ahead

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

1. Virtual Learning Environment (forums) restructuring with the operations team (intended completion October 2017).
2. Website redevelopment and migration (ongoing project with hopeful completion of phase 1 this year).
3. OU Students Association awareness survey (3rd April onwards, presenting to July CEC).
4. Developing the communications aspects for the Association’s strategy (once the new Head of Digital Communications has been appointed and completed induction period).
5. Improving and increasing OU Students Association awareness and exposure of our services, areas of work and achievements (not limited to this committee).
6. Updating the OU Students Association Wikipedia page.
7. Inclusion of more ‘hot topics’ in the OU Students magazine and on our website/forums/social media pages.
8. Continued redesign of the OU Students Mag.
9. Re-working of the Fresher’s mailing to include a welcome back email for returning students (data agreement changed April 2017).
10. Continuation of the work with the OU Students Association 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 27/01/2017
02/02/2017  Website development initial discussions following CEC January
09/02/2017 – VP Communications and VP Community Catch up
13/02/2017 – OU Students Magazine planning session
14/02/2017 – Communications team bi weekly
14/02/2017 – VLE Restructure initial meeting with OUSA Controller and Head of Operations
14/02/2017 – Charter Day initial discussions with Director of Communications OU
16/02/2017 – Website development update prior to workshop
17/02/2017 – VP Communications and VP Community Catch up
23/02/2017 – Acting President and VP Communications Catch up
23/02/2017 – Communications team meeting
23/02/2017 - Meeting with Director of Communications OU
27/02/2017 – Meeting with Internal Communications Manager OU
27/02/2017 – Follow up with Acting President
28/02/2017 – Communications team meeting
1/03/2017 – Website workshop debrief and next steps
7/03/2017 – StudentHome discussion meeting with Rachel Hawkins OU
14/03/2017 – Communications team meeting
15/03/2017 - Bi weekly meeting with Director of Communications OU
16/03/2017 – Website development Communications team meeting
17/03/2017 – Association Awareness meeting with VP Student Support
17/03/2017 – Officer team meeting
20/03/2017 – OU/Students Association Service Review meeting
24/03/2017 - Meeting with Director of Communications OU
27/03/2017 – Meeting with OUSA Controller and Head of Operations
28/03/2017 – Communications team meeting
29/03/2017 – Website development update meeting
4/04/2017 – OU Students Magazine strategy planning
05/04/2017 – Meeting with Deborah Peat
05/04/2017 – VP Communications and VP Community Catch up
7/04/2017 - Meeting with Director of Communications OU
11/04/2017 – Final meeting with current Head of Digital Communications
21/04/2017 – Central Executive Committee meeting

Rachel Hughes
Vice President Communications
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNITY

OU Students Association Community Facebook Group

During January’s CEC weekend, a new OU Students Association Community Facebook group was approved. This was launched at the beginning of February. It is a friendly environment for students to find out more about the Association and for volunteers to share their experiences and get to know each other.

Freshers Week

I attended a radio show presenters briefing meeting and then helped on the Student’s Association Fresher’s Radio Show (my first time!) which has been newly named ‘Studio’. There were Welcome Week events held throughout Freshers on Facebook in the evenings which I helped with/ helped host: ‘Welcome to the OU Students Association’, ‘Societies Fair’, ‘Meet OU Students in Your Area’, ‘Get Involved in your Students Association’, ‘Disabled Students Group at Freshers ‘and ‘What is the OU Young Students Group?

I also did a set of interviews using Facebook Live Video Feed: the Chair of PLEXUS that represents LGBT+ community; a Post Graduate student and a Library Representative using Facebook ‘live’ video. I recorded an audio Podcast for the Faculty of Art and Social Sciences, about how students can get more involved with their community. I attended Student Hub Live with the Disabled Students Group Secretary Natalie Pope talking about what it is like to be a disabled OU student. The following day I appeared again on Student Hub live with Deputy President Nicola Simpson, we talked about the OU Students Association and how to get more involved.

Big Feb Meet-up

On 25th February, there were 20 face to face meet-ups around the UK. I hosted one in Canterbury Kent and was pleasantly surprised with the amount of people who attended. There was an online version of the Big Feb Meet-up in an OU live meeting room, we provided 3 sessions throughout the day/evening where students came in and chatted with each other. We received good feedback from students who took part or hosted their meet-ups, with requests to have some more Linked up meet-up events in the future. So look out for one in the summer.

Student Voice Week

I helped to organise and host an accessibility exhibition with the Disabled Student’s Group Committee, in the OU Library in Milton Keynes. We talked with OU staff and students about what it’s like to study with health issues and what support is on offer or can be in place to support disabled students. I attended a meeting with David Knight Director, Access, Careers and Teaching Support, Student Services with Alison
Kegan and Cherry Day. We talked about how disabled students are affected by issues with online and face to face tutorials.

**Residential School**

In February, I had a Skype meeting with the Continental Europe AAR (Area Association representative) Amelia Gackowska, where we discussed European Residential School attendance and future face to face Meet-up planning.

**Degree ceremonies**

I attended a meeting with Magda (Head of Operations) in February concerning degree ceremonies and merchandising. I learnt more about the planning and organisation that is done to ensure we have Association representation during Degree ceremonies. I enjoyed participating in the degree ceremony coordinator training, which was well-planned and delivered beautifully by the Operations team!

**Grassroots Project**

The working group has been progressing through the last few months, discussing what structures and roles are needed at a grassroots level. I have had regular skype meetings with co-chair Nicola Simpson and the Verity (Staff Project lead).

We created a discussion group on Facebook to allow current Assembly Executives to discuss what is needed, what has worked and what hasn’t worked before. We received some informative responses to our Grassroots survey and we had a couple of Facebook events to allow further discussions with students. The results and recommendations from the working group will be included in a paper at the CEC meeting in April 2017.

**OU Student Association Working Groups & Workshops**


In January, I attended an ‘OU Student Voice Workshop’; where I had the opportunity to speak to OU staff as a disabled student. We covered communication, support and study. I attended a ‘Strategy Roadshow’ in February where we discussed OU redesign. Conversations and activities were around how to improve the OU so they provide a better service for students, how to improve retention, how to make them more competitive. Highlights were made about what is missing within the organisation and the products they provide and ‘what do students want?’

**OU Working Groups & Workshops**

I have recently finished contributing in the ‘Student Registration Reference Group’. Discussions took place on how to improve student registration and its capabilities. I am currently participating in the ‘Online Rooms Steering Group’ where conversations are taking place about the replacement for OU live. I was involved in the Developing topics for Student Consultative meetings’ which covers the topics
‘Building the Student Community’ and ‘Educational and Pastoral Support’. These were discussed at the student consultations held in the last month or so. In February, I attended a ‘Website Workshop’, where we discussed usability of a new website for the Association. We discussed possible layouts and did a practical task to put in place a template interface, which can be used as the website working group moves forward. I was a member of a ‘Group Tuition Policy Focus Group’ on Campus, where we supported students who were attending to have their say on how they were affected by the Group Tuition Policy and the issues that followed during implementation. I enjoyed being part of an ‘Assessment Programme Workshop’, I felt myself and the other student representatives who attended were listened to concerning assessment and exam planning.

Looking to the future

There will be a ‘Societies Training and Networking Event’ on Saturday 10th June 2017, where two members from each Society are invited to come to Milton Keynes to participate. This will include workshops and talks from within and outside Societies and we also hope to get the OU faculties involved in the event (we’re still working on this one). The AGM for the Societies Committee Meeting will also be held at this event.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 January 2017</td>
<td>Fresher’s Radio Show ‘Studio’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Welcome to the OU Students Association’ Fresher’s event (Online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 January 2017</td>
<td>Find out about Societies’ Fresher’s event. (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 January 2017</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewed the Chair of PLEXUS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘Find out how to meet local students’ Fresher’s event. (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 January 2017</td>
<td>Interviewed Post Graduate student (Facebook ‘live’)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 January 2017</td>
<td>Residential School Planning meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 – 29 January 2017</td>
<td>CEC weekend</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 January 2017</td>
<td>Disabled Student Voice workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Podcast recording for Faculty of Art &amp; Social Sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student consultation planning meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘Young Students’ Fresher’s event. (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 January 2017</td>
<td>Interviewed a Library Representative (Facebook ‘live’)</td>
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<td>Student Hub Live briefing &amp; appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 February 2017</td>
<td>Community Team catch up and hand over</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Hub Live briefing &amp; appearance live</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 February 2017</td>
<td>European Residential School Planning (Skype meeting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 February 2017</td>
<td>Grassroots Project catch up</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 February 2017</td>
<td>Degree ceremonies and merchandising meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 February 2017</td>
<td>Degree ceremony coordinator training</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 February 2017</td>
<td>Student Community catch up (Skype meeting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 February 2017</td>
<td>‘OU student community – have your say!’ event (online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 February 2017</td>
<td>Trustees meeting</td>
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<td>21 February 2017</td>
<td>Website Working Group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student Community catch up</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 February 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plexus Facebook Chat (online)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volunteer Facebook Chat (online)
23 February 2017 Residential School catch up
25 February 2017 Big Feb Meet-up (online)
Hosted meet-up in Canterbury Kent
27 February 2017 Online Rooms Steering Group
Strategy Roadshow
11 March 2017 Student Consultation in London
13 March 2017 Student Community Catch up
14 March 2017 Grassroots Facebook Chat
16 March 2017 Residential School Catch up
17 March 2017 ‘Disabled’ Student Voice Week Meeting
‘Studio’ show as part of Student Voice Week
Student Community catch up
Officer Weekend
20 March 2017 Assessment Programme Workshop

Future Commitments

3 April 2017 Online Rooms Steering Group
5 April 2017 Catch up with VP Communications (online)
8 April 2017 Societies Meeting
21 April 2017 Induction Session with Julian
21-23 April 2017 CEC Weekend
26 April 2017 Online rooms steering group
4 May 2017 Student Charter Day
20 May 2017 Residential School Coordinator Training
23 May 2017 Online Rooms Steering Group
10 June 2017 Societies Training and Networking Event
1–2 July 2017 Residential School Weekend
8 July 2017 Attending Pride in London (with PLEXUS)
14-16 July 2017 CEC weekend

Stephanie Stubbins
Vice President Community
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION

There have been changes in the Association office, with more staff and new roles recently. V P Education and V P Representation are now part of the Student Voice team and we are taking a fresh look at the roles of Central Representatives and Learning Experience Reporters.

Central Representatives and Learning Experience Reporters (LERs)

So apart from reading the reports from the Central Reps and reading posts in the Central Reps and LERs forums and getting an overview of what is happening in the university’s academic governance, I have also been thinking about how we can improve the way we get the student voice heard throughout the O U. The review is still under discussion but will be brought to a future C E C meeting for consideration. There are still problems with meetings within the Faculty structure, some Faculties coping with the changes better than others and I can only hope this will improve.

Grassroots Working Group

A lot of discussion is ongoing about the best way to engage students at a regional level and other C E C members will report more on that.

Group Tuition Policy Programme Board

This group is overseeing the implementation of the Group Tuition Policy and especially for the large intake of students in October so as not to have a repeat of last October’s problems.

Academic Strategy

Another project I’ve been involved with is the O U’s Academic Strategy which goes to Senate for final approval, after several drafts to previous Senate meetings. The Association has had the chance to have quite a lot of input and I’m pleased that the final Strategy is a great improvement on the original draft. Many of the points we made have been taken into account and influenced the wording of the Strategy, however it is not ideal. Once again implementation is key to any strategy or policy.

Other

Emails to and from students and other C E C members and Association staff are part of my weekly activities, but for a change I was part of the audience of Studio Live – the Association’s first videoed radio show.

Meetings under the line ¬¬¬¬¬ are before the C E C meeting but after this report was written and will be mentioned in my next report.

Meetings Attended

6 February 2017

Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Steering Group Meeting CANCELLED
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 February 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 February 2017</td>
<td>Qualifications and Assessment Committee I was unable to attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 February 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 March 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with Interim Director, Academic Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 March 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with LTI Director of Strategy, Planning and Resources Cancelled</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 March 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 March 2017</td>
<td>Curriculum Forum meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 March 2017</td>
<td>Studio Live during Student Voice Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 – 19 March 2017</td>
<td>Officer Team Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 March 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board Rescheduled</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 March 2017</td>
<td>Grassroots online meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 April 2017</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group Briefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 April 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board Unable to attend as flying to the UK to attend Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 April 2017</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 April 2017</td>
<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 April 2017</td>
<td>Curriculum Forum meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 April 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with Head of Student Voice, Students Association</td>
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<td>11 April 2017</td>
<td>Meeting visitors from Derby Union to discuss representation with Head of Student Voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 April 2017</td>
<td>Attending Module Team Chairs' Development Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 – 23 April 2017</td>
<td>C E C Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Future Meetings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>27 April 2017</td>
<td>Quality Enhancement Advisory Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 April 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with Director, Strategy Planning &amp; Resources, Learning &amp; Teaching Innovation (LTI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 May 2017</td>
<td>Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Steering Group Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 May 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<td>24 May 2017</td>
<td>Qualifications and Assessment Committee</td>
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<td>7 June 2017</td>
<td>Senate Reference Group</td>
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<td>Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 June 2017</td>
<td>Group Tuition Policy Programme Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 June 2017</td>
<td>Meeting with LTI Director of Strategy, Planning and Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 June 2017</td>
<td>Curriculum Forum meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 June-2 July 2017</td>
<td>Central Representatives seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 July 2017</td>
<td>Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Steering Group Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 – 16 July 2017</td>
<td>C E C Meeting</td>
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Lorraine Adams  
Vice President Education
This Report briefly outlines my activities since the date of my last Report to the C E C. Note: Because I live over a 100 miles away. wherever possible, all my meetings with O U people and attendance at any events are scheduled around C E C and O T (Officer Team) meetings. Because of my special needs travel requirements (and to make best use of my time) I usually stay in Milton Keynes for several days to fit in as many face to face meetings during that time as possible. All other ‘meetings’ and tasks are done from home online or via telephone conference calls.

Since January 1, I’ve been on Campus twice (January & March). These two visits for meetings with folks in the O U, were timed around a C E C (Central Executive Committee) meeting in January and an O T (Officer Team) meeting in March.

**January 2017**

Saturday January 21
- Monthly local Coffee and Chat with O U students

Tuesday January 24 to Monday January 30.
- Senate Reference Group Meeting (25th)
- SeGA (Securing Greater Accessibility) Assist Focus Group (26th)
- Inclusion Meeting – Chair (26th)
- Media Training (27th)
- Service Review Meeting (27th)
- Office 365 Update Meeting (27th)
- C E C Weekend – (27th -> 29th)
- Freshers Week – every evening from hotel room online attendance. (24th to 27th)
- SeGA Research Project Meeting (30th)

**February 2017**

Tuesday February 21st
- Via conference call. L T I Innovation Group

Saturday February 25
- Monthly local Coffee and Chat with O U students

**March 2017**

Friday March 10
- ‘Day trip’ to London. Speaker with Power Point preso at O U’s Legacy & Supporter Event. C B I (Confederation of British Industry) Headquarters, Cannon Street. Although the invite to do this preso stipulated that I should talk about ‘my journey’ with the O U, I did use the D S G as an example of how
Association affiliated groups work with the O U and how student-issue flow happens.

Thursday March 16 to Monday March 20.

- Meeting with Jiten Patel (Head of Equality, Diversity & Information Rights); Sas Amoah (Open Project Producer, Open Media Unit & O U B M E Network); Graham Rimmer (Chair, PLEXUS) 17th
  Discussion regarding all ‘protected characteristic’ issues especially B M E and L G B T +.
- Meeting with David Knight (Director, Access, Careers & Teaching Support – Academic Services); Alison Kingan (V P Student Support); Tamsin Lister (Asst Director, A L Projects – Academic Services) 17th
  Discussion led by David Knight on the subject of G T P (Group Tuition Policy). Included update on current and future status of waiting lists and venues.
- Student Consultative Meeting (afternoon only) 17th
- Association STUDIO Event – ‘live’ on panel 17th
- Officer Team Meeting 18th and 19th
- Service Review Meeting 20th

Saturday March 25
- Monthly local Coffee and Chat with O U students

Ongoing Meetings and Activities

- As V P Equal Ops I have regular telephone ‘meetings’ with Magda Hadrys, the Association’s Head of Operations, who looks after my V P diary and makes appointments for me with O U and Association staff personnel.
- Via telephone conference call and face to face, I’m involved with the Attainment Gap Project that the O U is doing. This Project is primarily looking at the differences in achievement between black and white students; but health issues have also been mentioned as a contributory factor.
- SeGA (Securing Greater Accessibility) As V P Equal Ops, I’m closely involved with the work SeGA do. As an example: 2 D S G Committee members and I participated in a Workshop in January where the 3 of us were split up at tables of O U people to answer and advise on ‘disability’ issues students encounter.
- On a day to day basis – working at home - I subscribe to a lot of forums on the V L E (Virtual Learning Environment) including the very busy suite of C E C (Central Executive Committee) forums.
- I also keep an eye on the D S G Facebook group which is a wonderful resource for me to pick up any potential problems that might come within my remit.
- There are also the ‘behind the scenes’ confidential student issues to deal with. Most of these are dealt with via my V P mailbox when (and if) I need to get an O U member of staff, other Officer colleagues and / or the Association involved.
Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday April 19 to Monday April 24
- On Campus and at Kents Hill for meetings and CEC weekend

Saturday April 29
- Monthly local Coffee and Chat with OU students

Wednesday & Thursday May 3 & 4
- On Campus for OU Charter Day

Wednesday & Thursday May 17 & 18
- I’ve been invited by SeGA to attend their Global Accessibility Awareness Day event in the atrium of the OU Library. Will be doing an informal preso with Q & A’s

Cherry Day
Vice President Equal Opportunity
Elections Review update

Since my last update a survey was sent to students in January asking for feedback on nominations, manifestos, and hustings; and also included open questions to allow for insights into how student engagement with Association’s elections could be strengthened. Two working group meetings took place since the survey was sent during which the evaluation of quantifiable data and the evaluation of open comments carried out by the Research and Information Officer were discussed. One recommendation applied to the up-coming by-elections is a more condensed voting process. Other key recommendations made by the working group related to raising awareness of the elections with the wider student body and therefore aiming to increase engagement, election documents, election rules, manifestos, nominations, eligibility, campaigning, preparing for election and the voting process. These recommendations will require CEC approval. Further details can be found in the paper submitted to the CEC, which also includes an appendix with the survey findings.

Research project update

I have been in conversation with the Association’s Research and Information Officer, Pooja Sinha, regarding a new research project. The research is to focus on two topics is to be launched later this year, following approval of the proposal by the CEC. The two areas will be “Getting involved with the Students Association” and “Understanding volunteering with the Students Association”. Both topics will contribute to the strategic objectives of raising awareness of the Association and increasing the number of students involved with the Association. The primary focus of the first topic is to identify factors which may prevent students from becoming involved, understand student satisfaction with current support and opportunities and make recommendations with regards to how barriers to involvement could be overcome through what the Association can or could offer. The second topic will explore what students expect from their Association and where potential gaps between expectation and offering may be present; leading to recommendations on how these gaps could be filled. Recommendations for both topics will thereby aid with raising awareness of the Association and increasing the number of volunteers, as well as ensuring that volunteers wish to remain involved by being given the necessary support and training they may wish to have. Further information can be found in the paper submitted to the CEC.

Survey Management Group update

The Survey Management Group of which I am a student member currently works on the redevelopment of the SEaM (Student Experience on a Module) survey. A student consultation was carried out to gather views on what is asked in the survey, how it is asked, how the OU responds to the answers students give, the current student feedback mechanisms and current student feedback priorities. There was also a
“SEaM Survey Focus Group” workshop held on 16th March as part of Student Voice week, which students visiting campus could attend.

Meetings attended
27 January Office 365 meeting
28 – 29 January CEC meeting
2 March Samantha Harding, Head of Student Voice
18-19 March Officer Team Meeting
23 March Grassroots Working Group meeting
27 March Samantha Harding, Head of Student Voice
29 March Elections Review Working Group Meeting

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

Student Support Role and Staff Support

Here’s my report of recent activities. I oversee the Peer Support Service, am an OUSET Trustee (Open University Students Educational Trust, Students Association Charity) and take a lead role in Service Review Meetings. I look into issues potentially affecting all students and reply on Facebook to students posting there. I am an ex-officio member of the Disabled Students Group but the main responsibility falls to Vice President Equal Opportunities. Although not related to my activities, here’s an update to my last report where I mentioned my main Students Association staff support, Jess Smith, was going on Maternity Leave. She recently gave birth to a lovely baby girl. I look forward to working with Verity Robinson, currently working on the Grassroots project, who will soon take over the Student Support aspects of Jess’ role. Congratulations Jess and Verity.

Peer Support

Our Peer Support Service supports students by answering one off queries or offering longer one to one support. It’s great to welcome two new Supporters to the wonderful team, and I hope you’ll have a fulfilling and enjoyable time. Keep your eyes posted on the Help and Support area of our website here where shortly we’ll be announcing a new way to contact Peer Supporters.

OUSET Meeting

OUSET Trustees decided to increase awareness of OUSET and to promote the Charity via a pilot scheme of creating OUSET Ambassadors. For details about this role please email ouset@open.ac.uk. We discussed providing funds for Students in Secure Environments’ first module, there’s an article about that here.

Service Review Meetings

We met staff from the OU Academic Services and IT Departments and discussed -

1. Eduroam - students might be able to access this shortly.
2. Contact preferences - The OU will review how to respond to student emails and contact forms because a phone call is not always welcome. They will look at including a feature on contact forms that will enable students to select how they want to receive the response to that query.
3. Tutorial Waiting Lists Concerns – including no means of communication between those on Waiting lists and tutors taking tutorials.
4. Student Profile information for tutorials. Tutors taking tutorials can only see Profiles of students who book on their tutorials. Student Profiles have information about students with additional needs, some of that is irrelevant for tutorials. The OU might produce two Student Profiles. Your main tutor would
have access to all the information, as they do now, whereas the tutor taking the tutorial would just see information on the Profile relevant to tutorials.

5. **Student Home News items** – we asked if these could be posted on the Dashboard and archived where relevant so we can revisit older messages.

6. **Accessibility issues for Adobe Connect** - The OU is continuing to look into this for the replacement for OU Live.

**Transforming Student Policies**

As a member of the Steering Group looking into transforming student policies it was great to read the Consultation about this, which can be found [here](#). If you want to find if, and how, a policy has altered since you last read it I recently discovered the Change Log which details the changes, it can be found [here](#).

**GTP (Group Tuition Policy/Project)**

I attended 2 meetings about GTP with other student reps. Fewer problems were noticed in February than the previous October. The OU is keen to improve on the situation from 2016 which includes having information available before modules start. The OU is committed to geographic links between students and tutors. We raised a few issues students have brought to us including concerns about cancelling tutorials without warning if nobody books.

**SRSC (Student Recruitment and Support Centre) Visit**

SRSCs are three large centres in England (Nottingham, Manchester and Milton Keynes) replacing Regional Centres. SRSCs have various departments, including SSTs (Student Support Teams). Your SST contact details are on your Student Home Page. I visited Milton Keynes’ SRSC on January 30th which will house the FASS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) and FBL (Faculty of Business and Law) Faculties. I am keen to inform the OU about positive and negative experiences students have of SSTs. I can’t raise issues on behalf of individual students but this kind of feedback will help improve the service.

**Carers Trust In Scotland Conference**

The Conference focused on students who had been young carers and difficulties faced when transitioning into adult student carers. Their definition of being a carer is – “anyone who cares, unpaid, for a family member or friend who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.” Young carers can experience bullying and some acquire poor or no qualifications. Two speakers had an OU connection, including a staff member from the OU in Scotland and a past OU student. Your Student Support Team will discuss possible adjustments for students who are carers, including special home exam arrangements. Please send suggestions of additional services the Students Association could provide for students who are carers to ousa@open.ac.uk

**Student Feedback and Engagement Website**

The OU alongside the Students Association is working towards providing a website with information about, and ways to involve students in, feedback. This will help show where students’ comments have resulted in change.
Various Meetings and Workshops

These included an Assessment and Revision workshop looking at exam formats and how meaningful revision can be included as part of the study calendar. The examinable component must be rigorous but avoid unnecessary stress. Another meeting discussed ways student prisoners on release could be helped. There was a meeting with the OU, initiated by VP Communication, to discuss increasing AL awareness of the Students Association.

Future Commitments

18 April (TBC)          Assessment Workshop
21 April                Student Policies Training
21-23 April             CEC Meeting
24 April                Service Review
25 May                  Transforming Student Policies
14 - 16 July            CEC Meeting

Please copy and paste any part of my Report elsewhere. Comments can be emailed to ousa@open.ac.uk

Alison Kingan
Vice President Student Support
This report focuses on key issues and gives a brief account of my work as Student Member of Council. If anyone would like more detail then I would be happy to provide it.

Council Meeting

The March meeting of Council took place in the offices of the OU in Wales (OUIW) in Cardiff where we received a very warm welcome and enjoyed some excellent Welsh hospitality.

Before the meeting began there was a presentation from the Director on the trends in Welsh higher education and the achievements of, and challenges for, OUIW.

Key points

The agenda included a number of policy and strategy papers. A key area for discussion was a paper on Adaptive Organisation and Culture (AOC). This includes OU Redesign (OUR) and is one of the six strategic objectives that have been identified as essential for the delivery of the Students First Strategy. AOC is designed to support staff to develop the skills needed to deliver a high performance culture, and to build leadership and change capacity, whilst the purpose of OUR is to ensure that the OU has the right structures, processes and systems in place to deliver Students First. There are no concrete proposals as yet but the intention is to work towards a more sustainable operating model and it seems likely that this will require structural change and substantial cost reductions.

Approaches to Risk Management and risk appetite are still under development and will return to the agenda later in the year. There was a brief update on Group Tuition but the Chair indicated that more substantial debate should wait until the next meeting, when KPMG’s final report will be available. Council was informed that the 2017B presentation had been launched successfully but there are considerable doubts that the processes put in place so far are robust enough to deliver the 2017J presentation.

A report on the implementation of the Students First Strategy detailed the progress to date of each of the six strategic objectives that underpin the delivery of the strategy. It is clear from these reports that the University does not yet have the capacity and capability to deliver the Students First Strategy in the timescales that have been set. Work is underway to try and remedy these issue and a further report will be provided for the Council meeting in May.
The Apprenticeships Strategy is commercially sensitive and the paper and discussion on this topic remain confidential.
Changes to the size and membership of Council suggested by GNC were approved (see below).

Amongst the items for formal report was the annual review of the OU-OU Students Association Relationship Agreement which was introduced by the Acting President.

**Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC) 15 February 2017**

**Size and membership of Council**

At its previous meeting GNC had discussed a reduction in the size of Council from 25 to 18-20 members. However, after taking into account the views expressed by the Academic Quality and Governance Committee, the Senate and the ALs, the committee agreed to recommend a reduction in size to 21 members, comprising 11 external co-opted members, 2 students and 8 staff (including 2 ALs) with effect from 1 August 2017. It was also agreed to disestablish the Development Committee, the Estates Committee and the Health and Safety Committee subcommittees with immediate effect. SPRC is to be retained, meeting annually to consider strategic performance and the membership will be extended to include a student.

**Charter and Statutes Review**

This will be an important (and rare) opportunity for the University to consider its objectives; the substance is unlikely to change but the language will be updated, some of the processes may be streamlined and redundant posts will be eliminated.

The work will be undertaken by a Review Group whose membership will be:
- The University Secretary
- The Director, the OU in Northern Ireland
- The Student Member of Council
- Dr Greg Walker (an external member of Council)

The first meeting will take place on 10 May.

**Student Engagement with Council**

Some of the measures agreed at the last CEC are now bearing fruit. The AAR for Wales joined Council members and other guests at the pre-Council dinner in Cardiff and a number of Council members will be joining students for a buffet lunch and networking session after the SRG meeting on 5 April.

**Student Consultation**

As part of my role I read all the consultations that are taking place in the main Student Consultation Forum and contribute to some of them. It is very encouraging to see such a wide range of student voices in the forums this year. The consultation on End-of-Module surveys which took place during Student Voice Week was particularly lively.
University Appointments

I was very pleased to be asked to take part in the recruitment process for a Head of School for the school of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care. Student involvement in the appointment of senior OU staff is a positive step forward for the Association.

Meetings attended since my last report

18 January  WELS Teaching Committee (as a Central Rep)
25 January  SRG/Senate
27 January  CEC Media Training
27-29 January  CEC
1 February  Closing the Chasm event
9 February  Open Forum to launch OU Redesign
14 February  Recruitment Panel for HWSC Head of School
15 February  Governance and Nominations Committee
            Briefings on OU Redesign
20 February  SEC (substituting for Mark Cameron)
22 February  OU Strategy Roadshow (OUR and Personalized Learning)
6/7 March   Council Meeting in Cardiff
17 March    Student Consultation in Milton Keynes followed by Studio Live
18/19 March Association Officer Team Meeting
20 March    OU Exams and Revision Workshop
            Student Engagement project meeting with Natalie Read
5 April     SRG and Joint meeting of Council and Senate

Future meetings

21-23 April  CEC Meeting
4 May        Charter Day
9 May        Council
10 May       OU Charter and Statutes Review Group
16 May       Open Board of Studies (as Central Rep)
7 June       SRG/ Senate
14 June      WELS Teaching Committee (as Central Rep)
28 June      Governance and Nominations Committee
30 June - 2 July  Central Reps Seminar

Barbara Tarling
Student Member of OU Council