The CEC is asked to:-

i) receive an update on the Grassroots implementation of the approved recommendations

ii) discuss format for ‘Meet and Greets’

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The Grassroots Working Group made the following recommendations to the last CEC which were approved:

- A new Student Community volunteer position – ‘Community Champions’
- ‘Meet and Greets’ (name subject to change) – gatherings across the UK and Ireland where students have the opportunity to meet and talk with members of the CEC and other students
- Review of External Engagement opportunities in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the introduction of a role to assist with external engagement in the Nations.

1.2. For the background, evidence gathered and findings from the Grassroots Working Group, please see paper 4.18.8 from the last CEC.

2. Community Champions

2.1. We are pleased to report that the Community Champions will be open for applications over the summer and recruitment will start in September. The Volunteering Team are ensuring that there is a full induction process for these volunteers to help empower them in their new roles.

2.2. These volunteers will be supported by their respective AAR, VP Community and the Volunteer Team.
3. ‘Meet and Greets’

3.1. There continues to be discussions around whether the ‘Meet and Greet’ events will be purely social events or whether these will perform a more Student Voice function.

3.2. The CEC members were previously asked whether they were happy to host these events, and many replied positively. We would like to propose that the hosts (ideally two at each event) decide on their own format for the event and report back to the office with what aspects were most successful from their respective event. We will then be able to create a format based on the reports from each event for the next year’s events.

3.3. The online events will still take place on OU Live (or Adobe Connect) at the beginning of October, January, April and July and we would encourage as many of the CEC members as possible to attend.

4. External Engagement

4.1. During the April CEC it was agreed that there would be a review of External Engagement opportunities in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the introduction of a role to assist with external engagement in the Nations.

4.2. Area Association Representatives and other volunteers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales currently represent OU students to devolved governments and other external agencies in line with one of our key strategic aims. However, there is agreement that more dedicated central expertise is urgently required to undertake the proposed review, provide support to existing representatives and establish the new team of volunteers. It was on this basis, that the Association made a recent bid for funds to secure this expertise as part of the 2017/18 subvention negotiations with the University. Although a good case was made by VP Administration and the wider team, funds were not granted and this leaves the Association without this dedicated support for a further term but with a resolve to build a very strong case as to why the funding of this expert support is essential for the future.

4.3. In order to build a strong case to secure this necessary resource, and to carry out a review of what opportunities there are for further external engagement opportunities in the Nations, as recommended by the Grassroots Working Group, we propose a request is made for funding to the OU Student Association Board of Trustees’ discretionary fund early in the new financial year to secure a consultant to do this necessary work. This work will help us understand the scope of the work involved, particularly around opportunities that we are not part of at present, what the complexities of the work are, what expertise we need to support future engagement and what impact the Association could make on the improved representation of OU students in the Nations.

4.4. This would temporarily put on hold the recruitment of the External Engagement volunteers until the review is complete and the necessary support secured, it being ill-advised to recruit a new team of student volunteers without the clear understanding of what the requirements of the
role will be, what skills and experience they might need and how their input could positively impact on local student representation.

4.5. In the medium term, we would recommend that the status quo is maintained in the Celtic nations and that where Nation Assembly Executives exist that they continue to be supported as previously.

4.6. In order to discuss further the issues outlined in section 4, and provide some clarification of how we will proceed in the short term and plan some next steps, a meeting is currently being arranged of the Nation AARs, Deputy President, Vice President Student Community and relevant Association staff.

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