OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)
15 – 16 July 2017

WEBSITE REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The CEC is asked to:-

i) receive an update on the project to redevelop the Association website and database

1. Executive Summary

1.1 In the January CEC we presented our plans for a new membership website. This project includes a complete revamp of the website design, content and structure, whilst also including an underlying database to facilitate volunteering applications and management. This paper gives an update on progress and additional information on key areas of the project. It is hoped to launch a first version of the website this Autumn.

2. Introduction

2.1 The website redevelopment project is making good progress with our supplier (Gravit-e Centric Ltd) now beginning the website and database build project. They have shared a full Gantt chart with us allowing us to track their progress. The templates and technical plan have been signed off and a project plan has been set up to build the system to our bespoke requirements with a launch date of Autumn this year. However, as the system is not yet available to us, it is too early commit to what will be part of version 1.0 of the website.

3. Latest progress update

3.1 Design

3.2 The website design is a complete overhaul of the current look and feel. The new templates follow our updated brand guidelines/colours and digital best practice – taking advice from Gravit-e. The site will be responsive across different devices with a vibrant, modern design. Social media will be integrated with the site for those who do not use the platforms and each team will be easy to email via contact forms. A prominent search bar assists easy navigation – with a full site map at the bottom of each page. The designs can be viewed here, using the left and right keys to navigate between the templates: https://projects.invisionapp.com/share/ZDC2IF5QM#/screens
3.3 Accessibility and student testing

3.4 We recognise the importance of accessibility and we will follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and Open University guidelines to ensure the site is accessible. Gravit-e is building a special feature to change the text background colour from white to assist users with these requirements. We will take advantage of a service offered by RNIB Business which uses experienced WCAG testers to check the site against the guidelines – giving it an approval seal when it passes. We are also in the process of setting up a student testing group which will include the Disabled Students Group (see section 3.5 below). We are also arranging a staff training session in July on writing accessible content, run by experienced staff in the OU Library and LTI.

3.5 Content

3.5 The website will be reorganised into a cleaner structure with one section for each of the staff teams and a general “Your Association” section. This makes content collation easier with each team and the relevant Vice Presidents able to shape the messaging and communication of their services, activities and new forums. The Digital Communications team will manage the content collection and encourage best practice. Rachel Hughes will coordinate the collection of short biographies of all our elected student representatives. Each will have their own page and they will be encouraged to use the blogging module on the platform to keep students updated with their activities. To see the latest site map, please visit: https://writemaps.com/wmaps/shareMap/4nknwldffrfd36n

3.6 ACTION: Rachel Hughes will coordinate the collection of short biographies of all our elected student representatives. Each will have their own page and they will be encouraged to use the blogging module on the platform to keep students updated with their activities.

Deadline for action: End of July 2017

3.7 Disabled Students Group

3.8 The Disabled Students Group has a requirement to upgrade its website and we are delighted to be working with them to bring their website onto the Gravit-e platform. This will take the form of a microsite and they will retain editing rights for the microsite, whilst benefiting from several new features and support from the Digital Communications and Gravit-e teams. The Group is currently reviewing its content and the launch date is expected to be Autumn 2017.

4. Further updates

4.1 We will keep students up-to-date with the project on the dedicated thread in the Central Executive Committee’s Information forum. We will keep representatives up to date with progress and share pages as they become available.

If you have any questions on this project, please contact Paul Severn or Rachel Hughes.

Paul Severn
Digital Communications Officer