OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)
14 – 16 July 2017

OFFICER AND COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS

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
This report relates to activities undertaken during the period 1 April – 30 June 2017. Alongside my duties as Deputy President I have also been acting President since 26 January 2017. Over the last few months I have been involved in a number of ongoing projects and initiatives as well as keeping up to date with developments in the OU Redesign. You can find a full schedule of meetings attended at the end of this report and a brief summary of some of the work I have been involved in.

Open University Redesign

Recently you may heard about a ‘radical reinvention’ of the OU. The Vice Chancellor has set out a new vision which involves a review of every aspect of the Open University “from the student experience to its teaching and research.” Students Association representatives will have the opportunity to bring a student perspective to the work which is sure to take up much of our time in the weeks and months ahead. You can watch a short interview with the Vice Chancellor and read a response to the initial vision set out by the Vice Chancellor or our website here.

We have created a dedicated forum space for you to share your initial thoughts about the redesign. Please join the discussion and let us know what you think.

Governance Committees

As acting President I attend meetings of the Senate, Council and Education Committee and share the student perspective on a range of issues. Students can find out more about Council and Senate, and access minutes online at:

http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/management/governance-ou/academic-structure

National Student Survey (N S S)

The 2017 National Students Survey closed at the end of April. A response rate of over 50% was achieved which means the University has achieved the required rate to publish the results publicly. The results will give our student representatives further insight into student experiences and will inform our work representing students. We can expect to see the results later this summer.

Open University Students Consultative Executive (USCE)

The USCE held a meeting in April and has taken the decision to hold 3 face to face consultative meetings in England this Autumn, there will also be further meetings later this year in Wales and Northern Ireland. The annual effectiveness review of the USCE will help to inform a sub group of the committee who will be considering approaches to face to face consultations and the possibility of holding a larger Milton
Keynes event as a pilot in 2018.

At the time of writing this report an online consultation on Student Volunteering is underway. All students can read the discussions and suggest topics for consultation online here.

My Highlights

I attended a training day for the new Studio host volunteers. This was a great opportunity to meet the volunteers, many of whom are getting involved with the Association for the first time. The hosts, will not only be presenting the live shows but will be involved in all aspects of planning, from generating ideas and content to contacting guests. I am really looking forward to listening to the next show later this month.

In May the Open University held a special Charter Day event with a focus on student success and I was invited to act as chair, introducing the speakers and sharing my own story. The audience heard from OU Graduates including a PHD student who was the first in her family to go to university, a young student who completed a law degree at the age of 18, a former refugee who fled his home in Afghanistan and OU graduate and Paralympian Darren Harris who reminded us that ‘being a student doesn’t end when you graduate.’ Members of the Central Executive Committee had the opportunity to share our work and network with members of the OU Community and we have been invited to continue our involvement in Charter Day in 2018. You can read a full report on the event in the OU Students magazine and you can watch a webcast of the event in full here.

Finally, I was invited to take part as a judge in the Postgraduate Research Poster Competition in what turned out to be one of my highlights of the year so far. It was great to meet so many research students, whose enthusiasm was infectious. Students can see the details of all of the winners and copies of their posters online here. Check out the Students Association website later this month for a news article about the ‘People’s Choice’ Award winner Sarah, who I spoke to about her experience as a research student at the Open University.

Meetings Attended 1 April – 30 June

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<td>Studio Host Training</td>
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<td>Internal Audit Engagement with OUSA</td>
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3 May  Charter Day planning
3 May  O U Government and External Affairs Meeting
3 May  Grassroots implementation planning
3 May  Graduate School meeting re Engagement with research students
3 May  O U S A Representation (staff) Officer
4 May  Charter Day
4 May  Communications team meeting
4 May  Branch executive committee member of U C U
8 May  Pre Council Meeting
9 May  O U Council Meeting
10 May  O U/ O U S A Regular Meeting
10 May  Volunteer team meeting
11 May  Meeting with Students Association General Manager
11 May  Senior Team Meeting
12 May  Volunteer team Meeting, Communication Meeting
15 May  Trustee Meeting
16 May  Charter Day Review
16 May  O U Redesign Meeting
16 May  Meeting with Head of Student Policy and Regulations
17 May  Meeting with Learning and Teaching Innovation Director of
        Strategy, Planning and Resources
18 May  Meeting with Students Association General Manager
18 May  Community Chat
22 May  O U Redesign Meeting
22 May  Social Media Meeting
23 May  Student Casework Steering Group
23 May  #Iwas social media campaign
24 May  Student Voice team meeting
25 May  Follow Up topics discussed at Student Consultative Meetings
1 June  Depute Director (Students and Access) for the OU in Scotland R
        Recruitment
6 June  Meeting with Simon Horrocks
6 June  Pre Meeting Senate 6
7 June  Senate Reference Group and Senate
7 June  O U Redesign Meeting
8 June  OU R interview
8 June  National Student Survey Meeting
9 June  Meeting with VP Community
9 June  Meeting with Faculty Association Representative (F B L)
12 June  Student Consultation in the Nations
12 June  Student Ideas Workshop Student Engagement Project
13 June  Postgraduate Research Poster Competition
14 June  University Students Consultative Executive Sub Group Meeting
14 June  O U Communications Meeting
15 June  Senior Team Strategy Day
17 June  Big June Meet Up
19 June  Depute Director (Students and Access) for the OU in Scotland
        Recruitment

Nicola Simpson
Acting President
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT ADMINISTRATION

As has been written ‘with heat all quickens and all times fly’ and the move from Spring into Summer has certainly seen time fly. It doesn’t seem that long since the last CEC meeting but it clearly has been. And in terms of the OU as a whole a lot has happened with the public unveiling of OU Redesign which the CEC as a whole have been involved with for some time commenting on information as it is released. As VP Admin, other than commenting on general papers I have been less involved than others but did take part in one of the online briefings.

Charter Day was an inspiring event and it was deeply moving to hear the invited students talk about what OU study had meant for them and, on a personal level, to hear the Acting President use my wife as an example in her address about what OU study can achieve.

Later that day I was able to continue this theme in a meeting of the Higher Education Achievement Record Steering Group substituting for Lorraine (VP Ed) where I pushed for student volunteering with the Association to be considered as one of the items to be recorded and to have that confirmed.

Societies continue to play a large part in my role ad I was delighted to confirm the affiliation of the Dr Turing society and also advise on some aspects relating to the relaunch of the Post Graduate Students Society. There are also some applications pending. On the Societies front the main feature was the networking day and the AGM. The latter included a discussion of Societies’ Constitutions and the general guidelines after a review by the Association’s legal advisors. The recommendations were accepted and will be adopted in due course.

At this time of year it is also necessary to look forward and with the General Manager and Head of Resources I have been involved in the first stages of setting the budget for 2017/18 working on the assumption that the subvention amount agreed by the Vice Chancellor’s Executive will be approved by the Finance Committee and Council.

Equally looking forward, I am minded that whereas in Game of Thrones, ‘Winter is coming’ for VP Admin the corresponding words would be ‘Conference is coming.’ Conference 2018 is about a year away but some elements of the planning must needs start much earlier. 2018 is a significant conference as it is one where the Constitution needs to be reviewed as part of our obligations under the Education Act 1994. I will be presenting a paper to this meeting detailing the outline programme for this and timing of the consultation with the student body both via an online forum discussion due to start in September and the Rules Revision Convention scheduled for late November.

In addition to my Central Executive Committee role I have also been active in my role as Chair of the Controller’s Advisory Panel, as a director of OSL and as a trustee of both the Association and OUSET.
Meetings

21 April 2017  Interviewing for Project Manager to oversee planning for incorporation
23 April 2017  CAP (Controller Advisory Panel) meeting (face to face)
4 May 2017    Charter Day
4 May 2017    HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Report) Steering Group (as substitute for VP Education)
9 May 2017    Employability Workshop – attended as Student Representative on the Arts and Humanities Board of Study.
15 May 2017   Board of Trustees
23 May 2017   Student Casework Office meeting
24 May 2017   Elections Review Working Group (evening, online)
10 June 2017  Societies Networking Day / AGM
13 June 2017  OU Redesign online presentation
22 June 2017  Budget planning meeting

Upcoming Meetings

1-2 July 2017  Central Reps Seminar
11 July 2017   Pre Audit meeting
11 July 2017   OSL Directors’ Meeting
14 July 2107   OUSET Trustees’ meeting

In addition I have had various *ad hoc* meetings with the office staff during my days on campus as well as continuing dialogue with my colleagues on the CEC

*Peter Cowan*
*Vice President Administration*
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Summary

Over the last quarter I have been busy with my end of module requirements, my GCSE study and examinations as well as completing a house move. During these three months, I have continued to work on areas of the strategy which relate to awareness of the OU Students Association. I have completed the Virtual Learning Experience (VLE) redevelopment of OUSA Students; this redevelopment has now provided a clear, clean, vibrant and accessible area for all OU Students to engage in. I have also worked closely with the website development project team to ensure that we are as open and accessible as possible with this new platform. The communications team also have recruited our new Head of Digital Communications and look forward to working with her on the various streams of work that we have currently ongoing. I have also managed to run a successful pilot of the round robin (internal communications) and have made suggestions for other ways to be inclusive of our internal communication areas.

OU Students Magazine

We are continuing the development of the OU Students magazine, we have taken on board some of the suggestions which we received in our December 2016 survey. These suggestions were based around layout, text and ease of reading. We are ensuring that our magazine is accessible for all students and will be providing a copy of the Summer 2017 in word format for screen readers.

We have been able to access several OU spaces to share our magazine, we have OU life (staff intranet), TutorHome, StudentHome and the SRSC intranet spaces. We are looking at opportunities to use the OU’s social media (Twitter and Facebook) to also share our magazine (due to the reach possibilities). We have our platforms Social Media (Twitter and Facebook) and the OU Students Website. We have also shared our magazine in the main unofficial OU student group, the news forum on the VLE and our rep spaces.

For Summer 2017, we have to date (22/6) 21,049 readings of the magazine! Compared to this time last year (around 3,000), we feel that releasing the magazine before exams is the best approach for OU Students! This edition was focused on success, we feel that themed magazines which relate to the current point of an OU students journey encourages readers to feel that we are tailoring the magazine for them.

The next edition of the magazine will be released in September and will focus on new beginnings/ongoing journeys. The deadline for content is the 10th of August. Any content for the magazine must be submitted to the OUSTudents-Magazine@open.ac.uk inbox, and not sent directly to anyone in the communications team.
OU Students Association website redevelopment

A separate paper with an update has been submitted to this CEC.

Since the last CEC, the current OU Students website has had:

- 40,746 sessions
- 29,665 users
- 79,482 page views

This traffic has been elevated due to two by-elections.

OU Students Association Social media

Since April 2017, we reached 27,867 likes of our OU Students Association Facebook page. We have also successfully reduced the sheer amount of posts by taking a holistic approach to media scheduling. This has placed a sense of value on our posts, we are not posting for the sake of posting. This has meant that most of our posts are receiving a much more increased level of reach and engagement. We’ve also been really pleased by the response to our paid promotions (Facebook Boost), and continue to carefully consider its use. We don’t want to spam students, but the boosted posts get lots of attention, so it’s finding that balance.

On Twitter (@OUStudents), we now have 18,984 followers. We have had some great engagement levels from the OU student Twitter community and having been continuing to grow our reach by sharing student news from the Open University. We will be discussing the social media opportunities and barriers in the review of the Communications strategy in the final quarter of 2017.

OU Students radio (STUDIO)

The next radio show is on 14 July, in the evening. It’s the first show for our new hosts, so we’re really excited to see the next stage of a much more student-led STUDIO.

OU Students Association forums (Virtual Learning Environment)

We have completed the redevelopment working group for the OUSA Students VLE. I have submitted a separate paper to this committee which includes a site map. The implementation of this project will take around 2 months to complete and we hope to launch the forum in line with the 17J (October) presentation.

The first phase of this redevelopment has been focused on creating a clear, streamlined, easy to use space which focuses on the key areas of the Association.

Raising awareness and reporting back

This continues to be a huge focus for me, we have various streams of work ongoing to improve the awareness of the Association. We will be providing a space on the new website which will allow members of the committee to regularly update members about their work. We will also be improving the information which we share on OU platforms (TutorHome, OU life and the SRSC platforms) which will be completed throughout the next 6 months.
We are continuing to include summaries of the reports submitted to the CEC in the magazine but will also be looking at ways to share these on the website. In the 2017 strategy review we have discussed ideas on how to improve the awareness of the Association and when we have developed the website we will have clear areas to share our resources which can improve the awareness and reporting back.

**OU Staff awareness survey (Internal and External staff)**

The awareness survey for OU Staff was completed at the end of April 2017. A separate paper has been submitted to this CEC. A discussion in the forums and at CEC will help to assist in the review of the 2017 Association strategy. Thank you to Lucian Hudson (Director of Communications, OU), Toby Scott Hughes and the various teams for their help in facilitating this survey.

**Launch of Talk to Your Students Association forum**

First off, thank you to all of the CEC members which have given this new forum a chance and engaging with members of the electorate. I’m pleased to say that we have in the first two weeks (as of 23/6) of its official launch, we have had a huge influx of new users to this forum. After a bumpy start which involved the spirit of the forum (which is in for mod consultation) around the membership to this forum and it now being classed as a business forum; we have had a range of discussions in the new forum such as consultation, module issues, and of course OU Redesign (OU R). As OUR is a pointy subject we have created a separate sub forum to allow the discussion to take place in one area which is easier to manage for representatives to feedback to the university. We will continue to monitor all the forums under the T T Y S A suite, and if we feel that there is a need for additional sub forums for ‘hot topics’ we will create these forums. If anyone wishes to request a ‘hot topic’ sub forum, please contact OUSA Controller.

**Round Robin internal CEC newsletter**

We completed the pilot of the round robin. As this is an internal newsletter (of sorts), discussion about its success is taking place on our business forums to see if it has made a difference in communicating between official business.

I have suggested to the communications team that the managers (heads of department) in the OU Students Association office run a pilot for a version of the round robin to improve the information sharing between the staff and committee between business.

**Looking ahead**

The Digital Communications team and myself have several projects planned for the third quarter 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 for October 2017).
3. Restructuring and updating of the Communications strategy for the Association (once the new Head of Digital Communications has been appointed and completed induction period).
4. Improving and increasing OU Students Association awareness and exposure of our services, areas of work and achievements (not limited to this committee).
5. Updating the OU Students Association Wikipedia page (once we have the website updated).
6. OU Live (Staff intranet) and TutorHome information update about the Association (once we have the website updated).
7. Inclusion of more ‘hot topics’ in the OU Students magazine and on our website/forums/social media pages.
8. Re-working of the Fresher’s mailing to include a welcome back email for returning students with the Community and Comms teams.
9. 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.
10. Creating best practice guidelines for all communications for the Association to relieve some of the pressure on the communications team.

Meetings attended since 21/04/2017

- 21 April: Central Executive Committee meeting
- 24 April: Service Review
- 25 April: Website development monthly
- 28 April: Website development homepage meeting
- 10 May: Meeting with VP Administration
- 11 May: VP Comms/Community catch up
- 12 May: Meeting with Director of Communications OU
- 17 May: OU Students Magazine Editorial meeting
- 18 May: Communications team meeting
- 19 May: Meeting with Director of Communications OU
- 22 May: Awareness survey findings meeting
- 22 May: Website development monthly
- 26 May: VP Comms/Community catch up
- 02 June: Meeting with Director of Communications OU
- 02 June: Comms catch up
- 05 June: Communications team strategy meeting
- 06 June: Service Review
- 08 June: Talk to Your Students Association review meeting
- 14 June: Communications team meeting
- 16 June: VLE Community Working Group meeting
- 16 June: Comms catch up
- 19 June: Meeting with VLE redevelopment staff team
- 19 June: Meeting with Cherry to discuss the EDI area of the VLE.
- 23 June: VP Comms/Community catch up
- 27 June: VLE Volunteering Working Group meeting
- 30 June: Comms catch up

*Please note, as I now have started a new job, I will not be able to have traditional working hours meetings.

Rachel Hughes
Vice President Communications
Community Drop-in Session – OU live

Over the last 2 months we have been trialling a ‘Community Drop-in Session’ whereby OU students can join myself or other students and volunteers in an OU live room. The purpose is for a space to be able to talk with other people who may be going through similar situations. Topics of conversation can vary from general chat, OU studies or concerns they may have. The next session is imminent, due on 29th June 2017 and these are held every 2 weeks on a Thursday at this time. Following planned sessions are 13th July, 27th July, 10th August, 24th August and 7th September. If anyone would like to join in please pop in to this OU live room on any of those dates between 6pm and 8pm.

Meet-up News

Face to face meet-ups continue to be hosted by students over the UK and republic of Ireland. The Continental Europe AAR (Area Association Representative) Amelia Gackowska is facilitating online meet-ups through OU live for students in Europe. After a successful ‘BIG Feb Meetup’ we decided to facilitate another linked event of gatherings in June, to coincide with ‘The Great Get Together’ by Jo Cox, this was really successful. You can read more information on this BIG meetup and future plans in the separate CEC paper ‘The BIG June Meetup’

Societies News

At the societies committee meeting on 8th April 2017 an agreement was made concerning new grant fund applications for societies. A discussion was initiated to discuss a possible Society networking and training event to be held 10th June 2017. Society representatives were asked to put forward ideas on what they wanted from and within the event. Topics covered: - getting new members, promotion/advertising, how to get members and/or committees active, teambuilding, hearing from a brick university about societies, website and online tools, sharing constructive ideas and good practice, how to grow a society, what is next for societies (and much more).

Societies Networking and Training event was held on the 10th June 2017. It began with the Societies AGM (Annual General Meeting) where Cath Brown was elected back in to role as Societies Chair. There was a presentation from Stephen Smallman who is Student Opportunities Coordinator at Salford University, who explained his roles and where societies fit in within their ‘brick university’ student union. Society committee attendees then had a chance to mix with faculty staff over lunch and/or network with other society committee attendees. After lunch we discussed ideas on how to attract new members and keep current members engaged in a brainstorming workshop. This was followed up by the Psychology Society talk by DR Graham Edgar about the ‘Science and magic of
mindreading’. This was amazing to listen to and watch, showing simple redirection techniques and limits of thought processes that can create mind-blowing tricks and illusions. OU Students Association staff talked about the up and coming new Association website and other useful online tools that societies may be interested in using. There was an opportunity to discuss ‘what is next for societies’, including opportunities for future workshops. We had very good feedback from this event from Society attendees and I enjoyed the whole process of organising this project, and helping to host it over the weekend.

**Engineering Residential School Planning**

Planning for the association presence at this year’s Engineering Residential Schools in Bath has been ongoing since earlier in the year. This year our Association presence is over 7 weeks, starting on 1st - 2nd July 2017 and finishing 12th – 13th August 2017. We have promoted the roles on the website and through social media; existing and new representatives were chosen through a residential school approval panel. Residential school representative forums have been set up to keep volunteers in touch with each other. This will be a good area to keep in touch, share handy tips and good practice.

Face to Face training was facilitated on Saturday 20th May 2017 on campus for those representatives that could attend. This included information about the Bath campus, the OU residential school timetable, the OU students’ association activity and presence. Association staff did specific training on merchandise, finance recording and EPOS (card machine) use and attendees were supplied with a volunteer handbook. An online training session was also offered on 12th June 2017 on OU live and this was recorded for those who couldn’t participate.

I will attend the 2nd weekend as lead representative and the last weekend as VP Community. Each weekend our volunteers will set up stalls, sell OU shop merchandise, hand out leaflets about various aspects of the associations (e.g. societies) and talk to engineering students. Finishing up on Sunday evening, hosting a quiz and competition for the residential students.

**Grassroots - Meet and greets meeting/Community Volunteers/ External Volunteers meeting**

After the Grassroots project recommendations were approved at last CEC, we have now moved into implementation stage for some new volunteering roles. ‘Community Champions’ will be rolled out in September; I will be working with association staff in the training and recruitment stages. There are still discussions taking place around the ‘External Engagement Volunteers’, ensuring the roles are fully supported and implemented well . Further discussion is needed within the CEC concerning the organising and facilitating of ‘Meet and Greets’ style association consultations. Please refer to the Grassroots CEC paper for further information on this subject.

**Senate**

I have been a member of the SRG (Senate Reference Group) as an Assembly Executive for nearly 2 years. I was giving the opportunity to stand in for a fellow CEC member (Claire Smith) and was lucky enough to attend Senate on 7th June 2017.
I attended SRG on the 7th June 2017, where SRG members star papers to raise issues and talk through the discussion papers. There was then a briefing meeting between the 6 Senate Members

and some senior Association staff, to assess and plan the contributions they would make within Senate. I had a preconceived idea that the Senate meeting may be overwhelming, but I found it to be very insightful; with a lively and robust conversation throughout. I enjoyed the experience and recommend it to other CEC members if they get a chance to do attend Senate!

**OU Student Association working groups**

I am currently participating in the ‘VLE restructure’ working group.

**OU working groups**

I am currently participating in the ‘Online Rooms Steering Group’ where discussions are taking place about the replacement for OU live. I am also involved in the ‘follow up topic for student consultative process’ working group. I have just started participating in the following 3 working groups; ‘Student Shadowing Working Group’, ‘Student Partnerships Working Group’ and ‘Student Ideas Working Group’.

**Where next?**

There are some major changes happening with the Community staff team, but recruitment has started. Planning will start soon for the next ‘Freshers’ and ‘Welcome’ Week. Further in the future I hope to be working with the community team to launch new adventures such as ‘clubs’ and ‘day schools’ and of course we will have new community roles coming in September. The ‘next BIG meetup’ will be coming too, so watch this space!

**Meetings attended**

18th April Workshop Assessment Design (designing assessment to promote student success)
18th April Residential School Planning
18th April Community Team catch
20th April Update with new Head of Student Support
20th April Inclusion Meeting
21st April Widening Access and Success Strategy, tour and presentation
21st April Societies Training and Networking event planning
21st April Induction session with new community officer Julian
21-23 April C E C weekend
23rd April C A P (controller advisory panel) meeting
26th April Online Rooms Steering Group Meeting
27th April Grassroots catch up meeting
3rd May Engineering Summer Schools ‘OU and association’ planning meeting
3rd May External Engagement and ‘Meet and greets meeting’
3rd May Community Volunteers/ External Volunteers meeting
3rd May Graduate School meeting – concerning postgraduate community
4th May Student Charter day
11th May Catch up with VP Communications
17th May  Residential School Planning
18th May  Community Drop-in Session – (OU live)
20th May  Residential School Coordinator Training
25th May  Following up Topics discussed at Student Consultations Meeting
25th May  Societies Event Planning Meeting
25th May  Volunteer case study meeting
26th May  Catch up with VP Communications (skype)
1st June  Community Drop-in Session – (OU live)
6th June  Follow up meeting For Group tuition with David Knight
6th June  Societies Event – Room Check
6th June  Senate 6 chat
7th June  Senate Reference Group Meeting
7th June  Senate 6 briefing and Senate Meeting
8th June  Catch up with Head of Community
8th June  Society event planning meeting
9th June  Catch up with Acting President (phone)
9th–11th June Societies Event and meeting with Committee members
12th June  Idealscale workshop and lunch – about student ideas
12th June  Residential school meeting
13th June  OU Redesign Open Forum
13th June  Societies Event debrief
14th June  Catch-up with Head of Community
14th June  More Students Qualifying meeting (improving registration & choosing modules)
15th June  Big June Meetup Final planning
15th June  Community Drop-in Session – OU live
16th June  VLE restructure meeting (skype)
17th June  Big June Meetup – OU Live
19th June  Online Rooms Steering Group Meeting
22nd June  Residential School Representative Training (OU Live)
23rd June  Catch up with VP Communications
26th June  Online Rooms Steering Group Meeting

Meetings planned

29th June  Community Drop-in Session – (OU live)
30th June  Community catch-up meeting Meeting
3rd July  Volunteer meeting
3rd July  Listening Group – OU Redesign
6th July  Student Engagement Project Team Meeting
7 – 10th July Bath Residential School – as Lead Representative
11th July  Open University Services Limited Directors Meeting
13th July  Inclusion Meeting
13th July  Community Drop-in Session – (OU live)
14 – 16th July CEC Weekend and Volunteer Event
17th July  Universities Students Consultative Executive Meeting
20th July  Sustainable Academic Communities Project
25th July  Online Rooms Steering Group Meeting
27th July  Community Drop-in Session – (OU live)
10th August  Community Drop-in Session – (OU live)
11 - 14 August Bath Residential School – as VP Community
14 - 16 August Membership Services – in Liverpool
24th August  Community Drop-in Session – (OU live)
15 – 17th September Officer Meeting
25th September Online Rooms Steering Group
28th September – 1st October Scottish Festival

Stephanie Stubbins
Vice President Community
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION

At the time of writing, I am gearing up for the Central Representatives Seminar. The Student Voice team are looking at a number of ways to improve representation and I look forward to hearing the opinions of Central Reps. We are also looking to improve the effectiveness of the Senate Reference Group and there are ongoing discussions with members.

Meetings about the implementation of group tuition, especially for the October start are ongoing also.

I was pleased to be invited (along with V P Student Support and Association staff) to a meeting with the O U person who is trying to make O U policy more student-friendly and easily accessible. Policies are not the most exciting documents to read (to most people) but are extremely important and students need to be aware of what they contain.

Since I wrote my last report there have been two Senate meetings and as many students are aware, the Academic Strategy has become part of the controversial O U Redesign project. I will be one of the Association voices fighting on a number of committees to retain (as much as possible) what we hear that students want from their university.

Another out-of-the-usual day on campus was meeting students from Derby Students Union who were interested in finding out how our Association engages with students, as they have a large online community.

Following that we were on a stand at the Module Team Chairs’ Development Event and spoke to several Chairs, two at least who wanted students on their module right from the beginning at the planning and development stage. In the evening I attended their dinner and spoke about what students want, along with an AL and Peter Horrocks who spoke about O U Redesign, although it was only just starting to be discussed and there was very little being revealed.

As usual, emails to and from students and other C E C members and Association staff are part of my weekly activities as well as reading numerous papers for Senate and the other O U meetings I attend.

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
27 April 2017 Quality Enhancement Advisory Group
27 April 2017 Meeting with Director, Strategy Planning & Resources,
Learning & Teaching Innovation (LTI) — Cancelled
4 May 2017  Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Steering Group Meeting I was unable to attend but Peter Cowan deputized.

5 May 2017  Student Voice Planning meeting
8 May 2017  Group Tuition Policy Programme Board
17 May 2017 Meeting with Director, Strategy Planning & Resources, Learning & Teaching Innovation (LTI)
24 May 2017 Meeting to discuss S R G membership
24 May 2017 Qualifications and Assessment Committee
5 June 2017  S R G briefing
6 June 2017  Advising on Policy meeting
6 June 2017  Informal Senate 6 meeting
7 June 2017  Senate Reference Group
7 June 2017  Senate
8 June 2017  Meeting with Sam Harding, Head of Student Voice
13 June 2017 Group Tuition Policy Programme Board
22 June 2017 Meeting with LTI Director of Strategy, Planning and Resources Cancelled

28 June 2017 Curriculum Forum meeting
28 June 2017 Central Representatives seminar briefing
30 June-2 July 2017 Central Representatives seminar
3 July 2017 Appointments Committee
13 July 2017 Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) Steering Group Meeting
14 – 16 July 2017 C E C Meeting

Future Meetings

20 July 2017 Group Tuition Policy Programme Board
26 July 2017 Curriculum Forum meeting
26 July 2017 Meeting with Director, Strategy Planning & Resources, Learning & Teaching Innovation (LTI)
22 August 2017 Group Tuition Policy Programme Board
15 – 17 September 2017 Officers Meeting
19 September 2017 Group Tuition Policy Programme Board
27 September 2017 Quality Enhancement Advisory Group
13 – 15 October 2017 C E C Meeting

Lorraine Adams
Vice President Education
REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

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 and require 'special needs' transport, all my meetings with O U people and attendance at any events are scheduled around C E C and O T (Officer Team) meetings wherever possible. Therefore, 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 my visits. All other ‘meetings’ and tasks are done from home online or via telephone conference calls.

Since April 5, I've been on Campus three times (details below). These visits for meetings with folks in the O U, were timed around: (a) C E C (Central Executive Committee) meeting in April, (b) Attending the Charter Day celebrations (May 4) and (c) An invitation from SeGA (Securing Greater Accessibility) to be a ‘guest speaker’ at their Global Accessibility Awareness Event which was held in the O U Library Atrium on May 18. I should have been on Campus on June 6 and 7 for a follow-up G T P (Group Tuition Policy) meeting on the 6th and on the 7th for the S R G (Senate Reference Group) meeting, but ill health prevented me attending.

April 2017

Wednesday April 19 to Monday April 24.
- Catch-up Meeting with O U staff and Chair D S G. (20th)
- Pre-Inclusion Meeting briefing with Magda Hadrys (20th)
- Inclusion Meeting – Chair (20th)
- Meeting with Jiten Patel (O U Head of Equality, Diversity & Information Rights) and Graham Rimmer (PLEXUS Chair) Regular on-going discussions re all ‘protected characteristic’ issues especially B M E and L G B T +. (20th)
- Visit to WASS (Widening Access and Success Services). Group visit arranged by self for Association staff and C E C members to meet WASS staff and learn what WASS does in its day-to-day work assisting O U students. Another visit is planned for some time in September. (21st)
- Meeting with Verity Robinson and Magda Hadrys re Heads of Department portfolio handover. (21st)
- C E C Weekend (evening 21st -> afternoon 23rd)
- Meeting with Association staff. Initial exploratory discussions re proposed new group to cover all E D I (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) issues (24th)
- Service Review meeting. (24th)

Saturday April 29
- Monthly local Coffee and Chat with O U students
May

- On Campus for OU Charter Day celebrations (4th)
- Open Board of Studies (interim) Committee meeting. (16th)
- Informal meetings with Association Office staff and made promotional video for PLEXUS. (16th)
- Association Office. Meeting with staff re Association website accessibility issues. (17th)
- Meeting with Maxine Squirrell – Acting Senior Manager DSS (Disabled Student Services). Catch-up and update on current issues. (17th)
- Meeting with Becki Payne - EDI Objective 1b (Degree Awarding Gap) (18th)
- Global Accessibility Awareness Day event in the atrium of the OU Library. One of 6 invited guests to sit at labelled tables to answer any visitors' questions about accessibility issues and EDI.

June

As I said in my opening paragraph, I had a few weeks illness which took me away from my computer for a while. I did, however, still arrange and hold the regular West Sussex Coffee ‘n Chat on June 17th to join in with the Association’s Big June Meet Up event.

Ongoing Meetings

- Participating in working group led by VP Communications. VLE re-structure.
- As VP Equal Ops I’m in regular contact with Verity Robinson – the Association’s Head of Student Support - both by e-mail and telephone (if necessary). Verity looks after my VP diary and makes appointments for me with OU and Association staff personnel so I can make best use of my time when in Milton Keynes.
- Via telephone conference call and face to face, I’m involved with the Attainment Gap Project (now called the ‘Degree Awarding Gap’) that the OU 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 VP Equal Ops, I’m closely involved with the work SeGA do. An example of this is the invite to attend the Global Accessibility Awareness Day event.
  - On a day to day basis – working at home - I subscribe to and participate in a lot of forums on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) including the very busy suite of CEC (Central Executive Committee) forums.
  - I also read and participate in the DSG suite of forums on the VLE and the DSG Facebook group which are wonderful resources for me to pick up any potential problems that might arise. Both the DSG and PLEXUS fall within my Equal Ops remit.
  - There are also the ‘behind the scenes’ confidential student issues to deal with. Most of these are dealt with via my VP mailbox when (and if) I need to get an OU member of staff, other Officer colleagues and / or the Association involved.

Upcoming

Thursday June 29 to Sunday July 2

- On Campus and at Kents Hill for meetings and Central Rep Seminar.
Tuesday July 4


Cherry Day
Vice President Equal Opportunity
Central Executive Committee (CEC)  
14 – 16 July 2017

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT REPRESENTATION & RESEARCH

Elections review update

Following the presentation of the last elections review paper to the CEC in April 2017, the CEC asked for further clarification on the proposed live hustings process and the exploration of additional channels to promote podcasts and transcripts of live hustings. The working group met twice since then and a new paper was produced to be presented to the CEC in July 2017. It clarifies the live hustings process through means of recommendations and a process map and outlines the proposed channels for distribution and promotion of podcasts and transcripts of live hustings. Further details can be found in the paper itself.

Current research projects

The research project proposal on “Getting involved with the Students Association” and “Understanding volunteering with the Students Association” was presented to the CEC in April 2017. Following feedback from the CEC and the Association’s Volunteering team and conversations with the Association’s Research and Information Officer, Pooja Sinha, the focus on volunteering is intended to shift to a more broad approach, rather than Association specific. A separate paper on this is to be finalised and submitted to the CEC.

Survey Management Group update

The redevelopment of the SEaM (Student Experience on a Module) survey is still in progress. I responded to the requests for further comments and feedback but am unable to share any further details due to confidentiality reasons.

Learning Experience Networking Zone (LENZ) forum restructuring

Following feedback received on the effectiveness of the LENZ forum and meetings with the Association’s Head of Student Voice, Samantha Harding, a restructuring of the LENZ forum is to take place mid-July. The restructuring will see the LENZ to move to faculty based forums, rather than department based forums, in order to allow more seamless interactions between LERs (Learning Experience Representatives), FARs (Faculty Association Representatives) and CRs (Central Committee Representatives).

Meetings attended

19 April 2017  Meeting with Samantha Harding, Head of Student Voice  
26 April 2017  Meeting with Faculty Association Representatives  
5 May 2017  Meeting with Philippa Costello, Representation Officer  
12 May 2017  Meeting with Samantha Harding, Head of Student Voice  
24 May 2017  Elections Review Working Group meeting  
12 June 2017  Meeting with Pooja Sinha, Research and Information Officer
21 June 2017  Elections Review Working Group meeting
26 June 2017  Meeting with Faculty Association Representatives

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

Student Support Role

This is a report of my 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.

Student Support Team

The new Student Support staff team will soon be up to full strength and in July Verity Robinson, Head of Student Support, will be joined by two new members of staff, Sammi Wright and Anna Mahon. Welcome on board. This team’s main focus will be on areas covered by Vice Presidents Student Support and Equal Opportunities and it is an exciting time because more staff means an increase in what we can achieve. However, the creation of this new Student Support staff team is also tinged with sadness because Sandra Carter, whose work includes providing the Admin behind the Peer Support Service, will be working in another section. I wish you all the best in your new role, Sandra, and thank you for making sure our Supporters have their own listening ear. I hope you will instruct the new staff on the most vital matter, which is of course, when to offer me chocolate.

Peer Support

Our Peer Support Service supports students by answering one off queries or offering longer one to one support. Supporters are current or past OU students and we’ve recently added a new means for students to contact them, and that is by email. More details about Peer Support and the email address can be found on the Students Association’s website, here.

Nightline A G M

I attended Nightline’s A G M in June. A growing number of OU students are Nightline volunteers and our students are able to contact Nightline. Nightline complements our Peer Support Service and, similar to our Peer Supporters, their volunteers endeavour to listen and explore options rather than give answers. Nightline is available to all students, not just OU students, so is unlikely to be as well versed in the ways of the OU as our own Supporters. Nightline does not offer the longer one to one support our Supporters do, but I think of it as offering something more akin to the Samaritans.

Adobe Connect (Online Rooms Advisory Group)

I attended a meeting in June, on behalf of STEM FAR, Cath Brown. In the new online system there will be the ability to test whether your equipment works before your
online tutorial starts. The advice is still to book if you can for online tutorials even though there should be the option to attend if you have not previously booked.

Service Review Meetings

Service Review meetings are held regularly where VP Communications, VP Equal Opportunities and I meet staff from the OU Academic Services and IT Departments. Various items were discussed during our recent meeting including making the Students Association more visible to new students but also -

**Eduroam** – we were told that students will be able to access Eduroam shortly. After many false starts I’m reasonably positive that this might actually happen - finally.

**Websites crashing** – the OU responded to criticisms that websites seem to be unavailable to students too often by saying this was due to work behind the scenes that has now been completed. They expect fewer warnings to students that websites might be unavailable and also fewer downtimes / crashes.

Transforming Student Policies (T S P)

As a member of the Steering Group looking into transforming OU student policies I attended a workshop regarding creating effective policies; a meeting to discuss progress of transforming student policies; and had a less formal meeting when the leader of the group met with VP Education and some of our staff. T S P’s long term aims include ensuring OU policies are accessible to students and that there’s more consistency in policies’ content and structure.

G T P (Group Tuition Policy/Project)

I attended a follow up meeting with VP Community regarding whether G T P has an adverse effect on students with disabilities. If you have additional needs for tutorials, the advice is to book tutorials so that the AL leading that tutorial will have access to your Profile. The OU is working on making sure that information about students’ additional needs for tutorials are easy for tutors leading tutorials to access.

AI / Tutor Awareness About Our Services

Increasing awareness of our services amongst Tutors is an ongoing project. Along with V P Communications, I regularly meet with some S S T (Student Support Team) staff to discuss this. We aim to let more Tutors know about our services in the hope that they will signpost students to us who might benefit from what we have on offer. We are looking at introducing a pilot scheme whereby we advertise our Peer Support Service to a small number of Tutors.

**Future Commitments**

- 12 July: Student First Transformation Listening Event
- 14 July: Service Review
- 14 July: OUSET Trustee Meeting
- 14 – 16 July: CEC Meeting
- 16 – 17 September: CEC Meeting (informal)
21 September  Transforming Student Policies

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
Joint meeting of Council and Senate 5 April 2017

The first joint meeting of Council and Senate took place in April and was generally agreed to have been a success. Before the meeting, Council members joined Senate Reference Group members and Association staff for a buffet lunch. This was an opportunity for students to share with Council members some of the delights and difficulties of OU study and students were not shy about making their views known. The Council members and students all felt that this was a valuable and enjoyable experience and have agreed that it will become an annual event.

After lunch Council members took part in a Senate workshop on the ‘big shifts’ that will needed if the objectives of the Students First Strategy are to be achieved and then were present as observers at the meeting of Senate (minutes available on the intranet).

Council Meeting 9 May 2017

Another heavy agenda including discussion of Group Tuition, OU Redesign, Adaptive Organization and Culture and the implementation of the Students First Strategy. The minutes of the meeting are now available on the intranet, as are the KPMG and BPI reports on Group Tuition.

The next meeting will be held in Manchester on 18 July and it is hoped that several ‘ordinary’ students will join Council members for lunch.

Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC) meetings

There was a face to face meeting in Milton Keynes on 26 April which coincided with TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) Panel week, so I was unable to attend. Subsequently I attended two additional meetings that were held by correspondence to discuss and decide on the appointment of new Council members, including replacements for the Vice Chair and Treasurer who are both coming to the end of their appointed terms.

Charter and Statutes Review

This is now underway and a first meeting was held by correspondence over a two week period at the end of May/beginning of June.

Student Engagement with Council

I will be presenting a paper to update CEC members on developments since the last meeting
Meetings attended since my last report

3 May       OU Redesign meeting
8 May       meeting with John Darcy
9 May       Council Meeting
16 May      Open Board of Studies (as Central Rep)
19 May – 5 June Shortlisting candidates for vacant positions on Council
24 May – 7 June Correspondence meeting of the Charter and Statutes WG
6-7 June    SRG (Senate Reference Group) and Senate
13 June     OU Redesign Forum in Milton Keynes
17 June     Attended the Big Meetup in Norwich (as part of my remit to keep touch with student opinion)
21 June     WELS Teaching Committee (as Central Rep)

Upcoming Meetings

27 June     Group Tuition discussions on OU Live
28 June     Governance and Nominations Committee
29 June – 12 July     Holiday
14 July     OU Redesign meeting in Milton Keynes
14-16 July   CEC and Volunteer Celebration weekend
17-18 July   Council meeting in Manchester

Barbara Tarling
Student Member of OU Council