

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**Central Executive Committee (CEC)**

25 – 27 January 2019

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 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:-

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- Deputy President (page 6)
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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

This report covers the period 1 October – 31 December, and is more of an overview than a complete list.

Specific Concerns raised with the OU (not covered elsewhere)

- The difficulties encountered by students wanting to obtain maintenance loans this academic year, and the potential impact of maintenance loans in future on students in receipt of benefits
- Continuing to raise issues relating to Masters loans
- Delay in delivery of alternative formats for students requiring them
- Systematic “drip-feeding” of module materials
- The continuing (and apparently random) inconsistencies regarding recording tutorials

Media

- Video on dealing with TMAs (Facebook Live)
- Student Hub Live – info on Students Association for Freshers
- Filming Christmas Question and Answer with the VC (questions sourced from students via social media) which went out in OpenNews
- Recording voice-over for “Our Achievements” project
- VCE Questiontime on PVC students – participating as panellist with VC and PVC Students

Appointments Committee

Further applications for remaining “gaps” have been assessed. There has been a one-day face to face training event, at which the committee received training in unconscious bias and discussed approaches to assessing applications.

Board of Trustees

I continue to be acting as Chair of the Board of Trustees; now the Association’s revised constitution has been approved by Council, the recruitment of a Chair can proceed. There have been two face to face Board meetings and a number of discussions on the forum, including approval of the documentation for Incorporation of the Association and a new Trustee Code of Conduct

OUSET (OU STUDENTS EDUCATIONAL TRUST)

There are relatively few cases coming through currently. There has been a meeting, which I attended remotely, in which the future make up of the OUSET Trustees and possible future amendments to funding criteria were discussed.

Specific Committees with the OU that I Co-Chair:

Student Voice Steering Group

I co-chair this with Hazel Rymer, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Students. The first face to face meeting of the group has taken place; there was a lively and constructive discussion with a great deal of interest shown. The Student Voice Mapping Project has been carried out; Rachel Garnham and I have had a meeting with the external body responsible to discuss initial findings

Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group

This has had three further face to face meetings, in which NSS results were discussed the terms of reference established, and planning commenced for a university event to promote awareness and understanding of student satisfaction amongst staff. I have also filmed a staff-facing piece on the importance of student satisfaction, with Vice Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Students

Meetings

This is not an exhaustive list, but aims to give a picture of the sorts of areas covered

Induction meetings

- Executive Deans for STEM, WELS, FASS
- Group Finance Director
- Chief Auditor
- Group HR Director
- STEM Director (Strategy, Planning & Resources)
- University Secretary
- Head of Marketing

One-off OU meetings, either about specific issues with individuals or groups

- Covering for a colleague at the Student Research Project Panel meeting
- With Strategy Office, to discuss revised strategy
- To discuss student involvement in preparation of the TEF submission
- To discuss the setting up of a student reference group for Core Systems Replacement
- With Heads of Student Success to discuss how to work together to support students
- To discuss student involvement in digital skills activities
- To discuss provision of, and nature of, Print on Demand
- Redevelopment of Student Computing Policy and the OU's social media guidelines for students
- Discussion of the portfolio for the new PVC Students role
- With HR, concerning the new AL Contract
- With Head of Student Support, to discuss potential new ways to support students
- OpenLearn
- Planning for OU's 50th celebrations
- A pilot project on a new approach to plagiarism
- Appointments Panel to appoint new VC
- Academic Conduct procedures
- To discuss Vlogging project and how Association and OU video projects could complement each other
- Appropriate criteria for university's work on increasing Student Success

One-off specific meetings with Association office staff and CEC

- Plans for future of OU Students magazine
- Discussing possible submission for Student Engagement Partnership conference
- Prospects for Individual Representation
- Ideas and planning for staff engagement events
- Planning for Students Association strategy review and refresh
- Planning for future CECs

Regular “catch up” meetings with the OU formally, and with specific OU staff; these happen at various intervals (from monthly to quarterly)

- Pro Vice Chancellor Students
- Director of Academic Services
- UCU branch president concerning matters of common interest
- Government and External Affairs team
- Academic Policy and Governance Team
- Research and Academic Strategy Team
- University Secretary’s Office
- New Director of Communications

Regular meetings with Association staff

- With Deputy President, Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive
- With Chief Executive
- With Sue McCabe

OU Committees and Groups

- Learning and Teaching Innovation Strategy and Policy Group
- Senate
- Senior Team
- Staff-facing Student Voice Hub
- Open Create Steering Group
- Technology Steering Group
- Education Committee (normal December meeting replaced by a Meeting by Correspondence; still plenty to discuss, however)
- Council
- eSTEEeM Conference Working Group
- eSTEEeM Advisory Group
- SEaM Working Group

Other events

Seminars and lectures

- Seminar on Digital Literacy skills for students
- Learning Analytics lecture
- Artificial Intelligence at the OU Lecture
- Seminar and Panel Discussion on Learning Gain
- Session on the offering of postgraduate qualifications on FutureLearn
- Employability Fair

Workshops

- Workshops on interactive computer marked questions and Implementing Single Component Assessment
- Workshop on future of OU Students Magazine
- eSTEE M Tuitions Projects workshop
- Attendance at Strategy Week session on Student Success with Vice Chancellor's Executive and other OU staff

Interviewing

- For new senior Association staff member
- For new WELS Executive Dean
- For Interim PVC Students

Miscellaneous

- AL Assembly – attending throughout as an observer, but also speaking on “Future of the Student-Tutor Relationship” and leading a discussion on online interaction
- Presenting the WELS Teaching Awards
- Attending “Women Leaders” event in support of our volunteer Sue Goodyear who was nominated
- New Scientist interview

Delivering Training

- Assisting with SRG training
- National Student Survey for Central Committee Reps

Other ongoing engagement with students

I continue to be a frequent visitor to the “Talk to Your Students Association” forum and to the main Open University group on Facebook, as well as various other forums and groups connected with the Association and the OU. I also use my own social media (Twitter and my page) to engage and promote Association events. I have also attended local meet ups where possible.

Other Association events

- Societies Facebook Chat
- Societies Committee
- Two Christmas Day drop-ins

Cath Brown
President

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

It's been a busy 3 months in my role as Deputy President (D P) of the Open University Students Association. I am now finding a balance with the official side of my role (time on campus attending meetings and events, posting on forums, answering emails and reading lots of papers) alongside having time to communicate and mix with O U students online. I have considerable support from within our C E C (Central Executive Committee) and from the Association staff team which has helped me to settle into my new role quicker than I expected.

I continue to work closely with Cath Brown (President), having catch-ups when we can, standing in for her in meetings when I am needed. We also attend regular President/Deputy President Team Meetings supported by Rob Avann (Chief Executive) and Wendy Burrell, where talk we over any issues, ideas and topical subjects that need our input.

I have regular meetings with Wendy Burrell (Deputy Chief Executive) who supports me with my D P work. We have talked over some of my ideas for this role's remit and looked at how it relates to the O U Students Association Strategy. We are both currently working on one specific strategy point to develop our organisational culture, which is an area that needs much work on. There is a separate paper on the meeting's agenda '*Development of Student Association Culture*' where you'll find more information.

Volunteering Update

I have been working with Sarah Jones our F A R (Faculty Association Representative) for WELS (Wellbeing, Education and Languages) with a pilot [student-led homelessness](#) project called 'Donate & Donuts'. This will be held in Milton Keynes on the 28th January 2019, with donated items being collected throughout the month. This pilot has been supported by the volunteering team. We hope this will give O U students an example of how a project can be put together and completed. There are still volunteer roles [Student Homelessness Project Team Members](#) available for O U students in and around the Milton Keynes.

I attended an 'Investing in Volunteers' meeting with members of the volunteer team and Cath Brown. This was led by Heather Allen who is N C V O (National Council of Volunteer Organisations) assessor who specialises in improving volunteer management. We have started the process of applying for N C V O accreditation and this initial consultation covered indicator themes which will need to be assessed. Some of those key areas are in the process of being met and there will be a further update at the April CEC.

I have fortnightly meetings with the Volunteer staff team where we talk over on-going activities and discuss future plans for volunteering. There is a separate '*Volunteering Recruitment, Recognition and Support*' paper on this meeting's agenda for more information.

Postgraduate Research Students (P G R Students)

The launch of the P G R Students' 'Common Room' has been successful, with continued use throughout the 3 months pilot. There have been concerns about accessibility to the common room and we are working with Estates and the Graduate

School to find an alternative venue so that post graduate research students have a permanent accessible area on campus. I continue to work with Amy Fergusson (Community Projects Officer) to improve the sense of community for both part-time and full-time P G R Students who are based on and off campus.

Following the P G R Student Inductions in early October 2018, I was invited to help judge a 'Bake Your Research Competition' on the 10th October. P G R Students were asked to bake a representation of their research subject and there were both online and face-to-face submissions. The entries were judged on visual decoration, how they tasted, the diversity of ingredients they used and how they verbally presented the connection between their topic and the cake they baked. It was a well-attended event and a great opportunity to network with both P G R Students and O U Staff.

We hosted a 'P G R Student Drop-in' on the 22nd November 2018 in the 'Student Zone' at the O U Students Association office. We have 2 more 'P G R Students Drop-in sessions' planned on the 23rd January 2019; first one is at 12.00-14.00 in the 'Student Zone' and then the evening session will be 19.00-21.00 in our Community Adobe Connect Room.

I have attended monthly P G R – G S Liaison Group meetings along with Peter Cowan (Vice President Education), meeting with members of the Graduate School and P G R Students from different faculties. We discuss issues and questions they have, setting actions to improve provision for them from the Open University and ideas for engagement activities. We have been invited to have a stand at the next February P G R Student Induction day and we also have a team of PHD students going head to head with our University Challenge team.

Representation Review

The Students Association is looking to develop a new Code of Practice to support student representation and our volunteers, and I am working with Peter Cowan (Vice President Education) along with Sam Harding (Head of Student Voice) on a full review of Student Representation.

This is a large piece of work to gather evidence to understand if current practice of academic representation by C C R's (Central Committee Representatives) is fit for purpose; to identify gaps in academic representation; to consider the feedback loop and the impact our representatives have on students' learning experiences and wider Open University matters.

N C V O Trustee Conference

I attended the N C V O Trustee Conference: 'Good Governance, Great Organisations' on the 5th November 2018, with Alison Kingan (Vice President Student Support). There were key note speakers who talked about the importance of volunteer organisations, the responsibilities of Boards of Trustees, the significance of Codes of Practice and Codes of Conduct. I attended focused sessions on:-

'Whose job is it anyway? Getting the balance right between governing and managing' - which explained the differences between Governance vs Management, how the work of Trustees relates to the work of the Executives of an organisation and how to effectively manage that relationship.

'Boards behaving badly? Getting your board working better, together' – which looked at Charity Governance Code specifically organisational purpose, leadership, board effectiveness, openness and accountability. We then discussed organisational culture and there was a sharing of best practice and examples of ineffective ways of working as a Board of Trustees. We then took part in an 'improving charity boardroom behaviours workshop' which was a great opportunity to work with other organisation's trustees

There was an opportunity to look around an exhibition set up by organisations that support the work of Charity Trustees and network with other delegates during refreshment breaks. We also attended a drinks reception after the N CV O Trustee Conference had finished and observed the *'Winifred Tunim Prize'* Ceremony where recognition and prizes were giving to Charity Organisations that had achieved outstanding work during 2017/2018.

Lessons from Auschwitz Project

I represented the O U Students Association by taking part in the Holocaust Educational Trust's ground-breaking *'Lessons from Auschwitz Project'* which revolved around three events

1. Orientation – (18th November 2018) pre-visit seminar. We were briefed on what the 3 events would involve and heard testimony from a Holocaust survivor. She talked about her pre-war Jewish life and then went through her story of how she and her family ended up at Auschwitz and the circumstances that caused the devastating loss of her Mum, Dad and siblings.
2. The Auschwitz Visit – (19th November 2018) this was a chartered day trip to Poland to tour authentic sites (Oświęcim which is a town renamed Auschwitz by the Nazis, the former Nazi concentration and death camp of Auschwitz and its death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau) and museum exhibits.
3. Follow-up seminar– (28th November 2018) to reflect on the visit and the contemporary relevance of the lessons of the Holocaust.

It was a difficult visit which has changed the way I think: *'how was it possible for society to change to such dark impulses?', 'how did seeds of negative thought and behaviour grow into darker actions?'* and *'how can society prevent this from happening again?'* I believe it is about education and awareness. We need to talk about what happened making sure that the Holocaust which cost 1.3 million individual lives are never forgotten. We need to learn the lessons of the past and ensure this type of event doesn't happen again.

Attending Auschwitz has been life-changing as it opened my eyes to the darkest parts of human history. Lessons need to be learnt from this tragic series of events. We need to emphasise that discrimination of any kind is unacceptable to safeguard against this type of experience ever happening again.

Theme Leaders Event in Edinburgh!

I attended the Q A A (Quality Assurance Agency) in Scotland's Theme Leader Event on the 6th December 2018, where I met with Mark Cameron who is the A A R (Area Association Representative) for Scotland together with some staff members from O U Scotland. There was a presentation on *'student-led voice activity'* and some individual sessions on *'sharing of institutional activity and practice'* from different

universities who were sharing best practice of enhancing quality. We attended a 'Theme Evaluation Workshop', looking at ways to engage students and enhance quality throughout the student experience, followed by a sharing collaborative cluster activity which involved myself, Mark and the OU Staff working on an idea for a Student-Led Voice Activity.

I visited the O U in Scotland Edinburgh office and was introduced to various staff members throughout the building. They took time to explain their roles and it was clear there is a strong focus on enhancing quality in all areas of their work.

Miscellaneous Events

I attended a 'Student Consultation Awareness OU Staff Drop-in' with Sam Harding (Head of Student Voice) on the 1st November 2019. This was hosted by the O U Student Consultation staff team to share information about the importance of consulting students in all areas of the University's work. This was a great opportunity to talk about the importance of student voice and the work we do at the O U Students Association.

I took part in an O U Students Association Video about studying in the festive period, which was posted on the 14th December 2018. I shared some useful tips and information about events taking place over the winter break!

I co-hosted 3 sessions in our Community Adobe Connect Room with Cath Brown on the 25th December 2018, for O U students on their own on Christmas day or who needed a break from festivities. There was a 'Non-Festive' chat at lunch time and a 'Festive' chat in the evening. We also co-hosted a New Year's Quiz, along with Sarah Jones on 3rd of January 2019. The quiz was extremely popular and due to students requesting more, we are hoping to do another quiz at Easter.

OU Students Association Working Groups/Committees

I am on the following OU Students Association groups and committees:- *Inclusion Meeting, Senate Reference Group, Representation Review Meeting, Appointment Committee Training, Election Review Group, Student Led Project Panel, Fitness to Volunteer Working Group* and I am Chair of the *O S L (Open University Services Limited – OU Shop) Board of Directors*.

Open University Working Groups/Committees

I am on the following Open University Groups and Committees:- *Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group, Honorary Degree Committee, Student Voice Steering Group, Student Consultation Management Group, Prevent Steering Group* and the *Enhanced Employability & Career Progression Steering Group*

Meetings Attended

4 th October	PGR – GS Liaison Group
4 th October	Student Satisfaction Student Hub Live
5 th October	Association of Open University Graduates Event
8 th October	Peer Education Project Meeting
10 th October	Senate Reference Group
10 th October	Lucians Hudson (Director of Communications) Farewell do

10 th October	Bake Your Research Competition (judging the entries)
11 th October	Pre-Trustee Meeting with Chief Executive
11 th October	Trustee Meeting
16 th October	Enhanced Employability & Career Progression Steering Group
17 th October	Student-Led Projects Review Meeting
17 th October	Student Voice Steering Group
18 th October	Inclusion Meeting
18 th October	Prevent Induction Meeting
19 th October	Core Systems Replacement Digital Technology Workshop
19 th -21 st October	CEC Weekend
24 th October	OU Action Plan from Critical Review
25 th October	Prevent Steering Group
26 th October	Homelessness Student led Project Meeting
28 th October	Homelessness Student led Project Meeting
29 th October	Appointment Committee training
30 th October	Widening Access and Success Steering Group
31 st October	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
1 st November	Student Led Project and New Volunteer Roles Meeting
1 st November	Student Consultation Awareness – OU Staff Drop-in
5 th November	NCVO Trustee Conference
7 th November	Digital Skills (DiSC) Implementation Group
7 th November	Student Magazine Development Ideas meeting
7 th November	Representation Review Meeting
8 th November	Student Experience Committee Briefing
8 th November	Student Experience Committee Meeting
8 th November	Postgraduate Research Students catch-up
12 th November	PGR – GS Liaison Group
12 th November	Student Consultation Management Group
13 th November	Representation Review Meeting
13 th November	Enhanced Employability & Career Progression Steering Group
18 th November	Lessons from Auschwitz Project pre-Briefing
19 th November	Lessons from Auschwitz Project (day trip to Poland)
22 nd November	Postgraduate Research Student Drop-in
26 th November	Student Magazine Focus Group
26 th November	Homelessness Student led Project Meeting
28 th November	Lessons from Auschwitz Project – Post Seminar
3 rd December	Board of Trustees Meeting
3 rd December	Residential School Meeting
5 th December	Filming for Christmas Tips Video
5 th December	Homelessness Student led Project Meeting
6 th December	Theme Leader Event – Scotland
10 th December	PGR – GS Liaison Group
10 th December	Volunteer Slack Meeting
12 th December	Promotion and Media for Homelessness Project Meeting
12 th December	Representation Review Meeting
12 th December	Enhanced Employability & Career Progression Steering Group
13 th December	Student Experience Meeting with Head of Student Voice
13 th December	Postgraduate Research Students Common Room Visit
14 th December	Investing in Volunteering Briefing
14 th December	Investing in Volunteering Meeting
20 th December	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
25 th December	'Non-Festive' Community Drop-in (Online)
25 th December	'Festive' Community Drop-in (Online)

3rd January New Year Quiz (Online)

Future Commitments

9 th January	PGR -GS Liaison Group
10 th January	Student Consultation Management Group
15 th January	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
22 nd January	Honorary Degree Committee
23 rd January	PGR Full-time Students Drop-in
23 rd January	PGR Part-time Students Drop-in
24 th January	Senate Reference Group
24 th January	Inclusion Meeting
24 th January	Community Drop-in
25 th January	SeGA AC Workshop – Student Voice
25 th January	Afternoon Teac with VCE!
25 - 27 January	CEC Weekend
28 th January	Homelessness Student Led Project
30 th January	Student Voice Steering Group
31 st January	Prevent Steering Group
4 th February	Initial Recruitment Meeting Event Volunteers
6 th February	Representation Review Meeting
6 th February	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
8 th February	Board of Trustees Meeting
11 th February	PGR -GS Liaison Group
13 th February	Enhanced Employability & Career Progression Steering Group
26 th February	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
5 th February	EDI Steering Group Meeting
2 nd -3 rd March	CEC Project Workshop
4 th March	PGR -GS Liaison Group
7 th March	Honorary Degree Committee
11 th March	Student Consultation Management Group
23 rd March	Student Consultation – Dublin
26 th March	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
28 th March	SPARQ Conference in Edinburgh
2 nd April	Student Voice Steering Group
3 rd April	Senate Reference Group
8 th April	PGR -GS Liaison Group
9 th April	Enhanced Employability & Career Progression Steering Group
16 th April	Prevent Steering Group
23 rd April	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
25 th April	Inclusion meeting
26 th -28 th April	CEC Weekend

Stephanie Stubbins
Deputy President

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT ADMINISTRATION

This is my first report to the Central Executive Committee and covers my activity from October 2018 to January 2019. I have attended meetings with Rob (Chief Executive), Magda (Head of Operations), Jess (Head of Student Community) and Taz (Acting Head of Resources) regarding various aspects of my role and the *ex officio* posts on OUSET and OSL.

I look forward to working with the newly appointed Deputy CEO Finance and Resources, Alison Lunn, and will have a face to face meeting with her once she has settled into her new post as we prepare for the upcoming subvention negotiations which start in February.

I am currently chairing the election rules review panel and am currently planning the next steps: In particular the timings etc. for the February bye-elections. I have contributed to the Volunteers working Group and am getting up to speed with the Student Led Projects panel. As VP Admin.

I am a member of the Board of Trustees. Full details of non-confidential Trustee activity can be found in the minutes of the Board meetings and the CEO's report to the CEC.

Diary

11 th October 2018	Board of Trustees meeting
19 th -21 st October 2018	CEC meeting
10 th November 2018	Societies, Committee meeting
19 th November 2018	OUSET meeting
3 rd December 2018	Board of Trustees Meeting
23 rd January 2019	'Meet your Student Association' event

Upcoming events (dates subject to change)

? January 2019	OSL meeting
5 th February 2019	Subvention meeting
8 th February 2019	Board of Trustees meeting
2 nd -3 rd March 2019	CEC and Board of Trustees Workshop
5 th March 2019	Subvention meeting
22 nd March 2019	Student consultation face-to-face meeting (Milton Keynes)

Caroline Cowan
Vice President Administration

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION

It has been a busy few months since the last CEC meeting as the University is starting to implement the Curriculum, Scholarship and Research Plans as well as developing new strategic goals to replace those of the Transformation Project and implementing the recommendations of the Critical Review. These have provided much of the work of the various committees and working groups attended in the last quarter.

These include:

Curriculum Forum – this oversees the implementation of the Curriculum Plan from a management perspective and meetings have discussed issues relating to maintaining the breadth of curriculum, study intensity and identifying new areas.

Research and Academic Strategy Steering Group – this has mostly been involved in the planning of the upcoming Research Excellence Framework 2020. Additionally it has been discussing the implementation of the Scholarship Plan.

Future Learn Post Graduate Qualifications Steering Group– this is overseeing the introduction of some post graduate qualifications to be hosted via Future Learn. The first module H880 (Technology Enhance Learning: foundations and futures) is scheduled to start in February 2019 with further ones planned for October subject to suitable business planning and academic governance.

Middle States Committee for Higher Education Accreditation Steering Group – the University has accreditation with this body being one of the few UK institutions whose qualifications are accredited in the United States. It is currently in the course of seeking continuation of this. As well as my involvement with the steering group, Sam Harding (Head of Student Voice) and I have had meetings with key members of the group to co-ordinate wider student input. A workshop for members of the Senate Reference Group has been arranged for January 24th and a wider student consultation is planned for March.

Quality Enhancement Advisory Group – this is responsible for the Quality Management and Enhancement Reviews which are currently in progress. We are looking to increase student involvement in this at Board of Studies level and in the reporting to Teaching Committees and mid-tier Committees for future years.

Beyond these committees, I have also been involved in other work. There have been regular meetings of the Postgraduate Research Student Liaison Group which I attend alongside the Deputy President and I also attended a workshop hosted by the Graduate School looking at ways to enhance the postgraduate research student experience. One positive outcome of this to date has been the piloting of a graduate students' common room and as a result of the pilot this is intended to become a permanent fixture.

I was part of a team (including the President and senior members of the Staff Team) feeding into the proposals for the role of the new Pro-Vice Chancellor, Students. Following up on some issues relating to Academic Conduct, the President and I spent a morning with the head of the Academic Conduct team and a senior staff member to discuss our concerns in particular relating to the time taken in some cases and apparent inconsistencies in outcomes. We have also been involved in discussions over the physical (rather than online) attendance of student representatives at meetings of the Central Disciplinary Committee and confirmed that this will still be an option.

I have also substituted for the VP Campaigns and Media at two meetings of the Change Agents Network (CAN) Conference steering group. This conference co-hosted with the Joint Information Systems Committee (Jisc) will be hosted on Campus on the 30th and 31st of May 2019.

As well as working with the University I have also been active with Association business. I was part of the team selecting the 2019 University Challenge team at one point being Jeremy Paxman for an online quiz set by the production team as part of the audition process. The team did extremely well and will hopefully progress further. The Appointments Committee has been busy after a recruitment exercise in late summer / early autumn as well as having a face-to-face training day. While there are still a few vacancies all faculty Assemblies, Teaching Committees and Boards of Studies (except Access) have at least two representatives and in many cases the full complement.

Along with the Student Voice Team and the VP Voice, I was involved in the planning and presenting of the Central Committee Rep Training Skills Day held on January 12th. This was an opportunity for newly appointed reps to develop essential skills for committee work.

I have been working as part of the team to develop the Student Engagement Standard (formerly 'Kitemark') and the results are presented in a paper at this CEC meeting. The representation review is ongoing and we are currently in the process of getting Committee members and general university staff views. We will also be surveying student representatives and the wider student body in due course. I also attended a workshop to discuss new ideas for the Association Magazine as discussed at the last CEC Meeting.

As Chair of the Controllers Advisory Panel (CAP), I have been working with Magda Hadrys (Head of Operations) to draft a plan for reviewing the Association Forums. Two CEC members of CAP have been appointed and we are in the process of recruiting two moderators to join CAP which will bring the total to six members.

By the time of the CEC meeting I will have attended a QAA workshop related to the current consultation on ensuring transparent, consistent and fair standards in degree awards and that improvements in grades are academically rigorous.

At the request of the newly elected VP Administration I was asked to continue working on the proposed Articles of Association as part of the incorporation. These are now complete, have been approved by the Board of Trustees and will go to the Vice Chancellor's Executive and then Council in the spring of 2019.

Diary

As well as the items listed I have had meetings with the Student Voice Team, other Association staff and University staff as needed.

October 2018

29 October	Appointments Committee Training Day
3 October	Curriculum Forum
6 November	Qualifications and Assessment Committee
8 November	MSCHE Accreditation Steering Group
21 November	Research and Academic Strategy Steering Group
22 November	Student Engagement Standard Steering Group

26 November	Student Magazine workshop
28 November	Future Learn PG Qualifications Steering Group
29 November	MSCHE Accreditation Steering Group, Curriculum Forum, CAN Steering Group
5 December	Meeting with Academic Conduct Team, Graduate School Workshop
18 December	MSCHE Accreditation Steering Group
20 December	Curriculum Forum
7 January	Quality Enhancement Advisory Group
12 January	Central Committee Representatives Skills Training Day
21 January	QAA Workshop (external event)
23 January	Association Promotion Event (on campus)
24 January	SRG and Senate
25 th – 27 th January	CEC

Peter Cowan
Vice President Education

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

This Report briefly outlines my activities since the date of my last Report to the C E C. Note: Unfortunately, since my last report, my husband and I have learned that my daughter-in-law has terminal cancer and only has a few months to live. Therefore, my work for and on behalf of OU students has (and is) taking a back seat for a while so this report is a brief one and only contains ongoing items and brief details of activity for October and November 2018.

The OU's Race Equality Charter Mark Application

This application was due to be submitted in February 2019 but due to a low response to both staff and student surveys, this has now been pushed back to July 2019. New surveys will be sent out in the coming months. Ongoing.

Mental Health Awareness

The OU and the Students Association are very keen to promote the importance of students' mental health wellbeing and the support that's available. A first meeting took place in July and another is scheduled for later this month to further discuss the ways in which we can work together on this important issue. Ongoing.

Students in Secure Environments (SiSE)

Currently working with the SiSE team on a 'study buddy' project and reinstating the issuance of a redacted copy of the OU Students Magazine which can be sent to OU students in secure environments. Ongoing.

Objective 1c – Improve equality declaration data for students

The rationale for this OU-led 'Objective' is to improve the monitoring data to allow the OU to measure participation and outcomes for students across a wider range of characteristics and circumstances. The OU says: 'This will help ensure that all individuals, especially those who have not declared their status on their student profile, feel able to access and participate in their learning experience with the OU. Ongoing.

BaME – Black and Minority Ethnic students

Because of the degree-award-attainment gap in respect of BaME students, I'm involved with a number of activities on subject. I attended an all-day workshop in July which focussed on ACCESS students and this issue was promoted during Black History Month last October by the Association's Student Support Team. Ongoing.

Assessment Exceptions Group – Disability/Reasonable Adjustments

Was invited to join this group by Peter Taylor - Professor of Organic Chemistry

STEM, Life Health & Chem Science – after working with him on the Open Board of Studies committee. Prof. Taylor heads the team who work with students across all Faculties who submit special circumstances forms after an exam or EMA (End of Module Assessment). First meeting last month (September). Next scheduled for January 2019. Ongoing.

Diary

Trip to Belfast to attend Belfast Degree Ceremony. Invite extended by the OU in Northern Ireland (October 4 -> 8)

CEC weekend and other meetings on Campus and at Kents Hill (October 17 -> 22)

OU Disabled Veterans Scholarship Fund Reception & Dinner, London. (December 5)

Monthly Meet-Ups

West Sussex OU Students Coffee 'n Chat at Haskins Roundstone Garden Centre, Angmering – Monthly when possible:

October 27

November 24

Cherry Day

Vice President Equal Opportunity

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT MEDIA & CAMPAIGNS

Unlike in the first few months, where I was trying to understand many different aspects of the work, the last few months I have been focusing on specific projects/ meetings as some of those works got busy and needed me to stay up to date on the work regularly.

Magazine

After the discussions in October CEC, the team and I started making plans for a workshop with 8 CEC members, to discuss a potential new layout to our Magazine. The workshop run successfully at the end of November and we used the feedback to start shaping the WordPress web-platform. We are expecting more consultations to happen with CEC, students and LTI in the upcoming months to help shape the magazine-site. A discussion paper can be found in the January CEC papers.

Blogs

After some discussion with the office and CEC members, we have decided to develop a way for volunteers/ representatives to share their experiences about meetings or events they have attended.

The trial for the site began in December with CEC members and if successful we will enable others to contribute to it as well. Using this site rather than the news section means that written pieces from the Student leadership Team will be easier to find and navigate around as opposed to the pieces being distributed around the website and the Magazine.

Instagram And Takeover During October CEC

As it is clear from my previous report, I would like the Association to grow its followers on Instagram as the additional features of the platform now allow us to share more engaging content. I have been having regular meetings with staff on the type of content and scheduling of posts.

During October CEC I took over the Instagram account to share moments of our CEC meeting. I made some polls and did live videos and short interviews with various CEC members. Every post has been viewed by at least 250 followers, so it has been decided that making this a regular thing would help keeping students in the loop about the CEC's work. We are currently planning the January CEC takeover.

Website Testing And Changes

The findings of the website testing have now been prioritised and shared with the CEC. The staff team has met with Gravit-e to see the timescale of the changes, that can't be made within the office's capacity. The next step is now to make the proposed changes in a timely manner.

OU Working Groups

I have been a regular attendee of the JISC Conference working group and the Digital Skills Implementation working group since the start of my term. Since my last report I have also been

invited to take part in the NSS Campaign Communications working group and the Core System Replacement reference group.

Staff changes

Paul has unfortunately left the Digital Communications team at the end of December, so recruitment is currently ongoing for the 3rd member of the team. We expect the new person to start sometime in February, but in the meantime, I would like to take the

chance to thank Paul for his support towards me since I have been in my role and I hope he will be successful in his new job.

Meetings Attended Since October CEC - Please be aware that due to personal events, I had to ask other members of the CEC to take my place in a few meetings during November and December, while others are yet to be rescheduled for January and February.

24th October	Magazine workshop planning meeting
24th October	JISC meeting
24th October	Adobe Connect session on Critical Review
26th November	Magazine Redevelopment workshop
11th December	Magazine next steps (skype)
12th December	Instagram planning meeting (skype)

Meetings I have had cover for

NSS Campaign Communications meeting 2x
Digital Skills Implementation Working Group
JISC meeting

Upcoming Meetings Until January CEC

10th January	Update on Magazine
15th January	NSS Campaign Communications meeting
21st January	Digital Skills Implementation Working Group
23rd January	Meet Your Students Association for staff
25th January	Student Voice Day with Faculty Accessibility Coordinators
25th- 27th January	CEC Weekend

Fanni Zombor
Vice President Media & Campaigns

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT SUPPORT

This report covers my role as V P Student Support since October 2018. The Student Support remit generally includes anything that can have an impact on students. I oversee the Peer Support Service and I am a Trustee of OUSET (OU Students Educational Trust).

O U S E T (OUSET - OU Students Educational Trust)

The OU Students Educational Trust is the Association's Charity for students experiencing financial hardship. Details can be found [here](#). We are still reviewing our Declaration of Trust which amongst other things specifies the make up of the OUSET Board of Trustees. Legal advice stated there could be a conflict of interest if a majority of Trustees are members of the C E C and as we cannot ignore legal advice we decided to reduce the number of these Trustees. Therefore, it was with a heavy heart, we decided that the President would no longer be a Trustee of OUSET. The I P P (Immediate Past President) will be invited to be a Trustee but with an alternative option if they decline. During this review we have guaranteed there are sufficient Trustees to ensure there has been no negative impact on the purpose of OUSET, which is helping students experiencing financial hardship. Lorraine Adams, will continue to be the Temporary Chair until at least our next Face to Face Meeting. Caroline Cowan has joined the Trustees following her election as V P Admin and I would like to thank Peter Cowan who assisted OUSET while there was no V P Admin.

The Write Club Society is creating a collection of stories and poems to commemorate the OU's 50th Anniversary, with 'The Gift' as the theme. OUSET will benefit from sales of the finished item. The closing date for submissions is February 10th, so if you would like to join the Write Club Society, or any of our Societies, more information can be found [here](#). The Write Club Society's Facebook Group is [here](#) and you can also contact them on WriteClub@gmx.co.uk

Peer Support (P S)

Peer Supporters continue to help students who contact them and they covered the Christmas and New Year period. Just before Christmas the Supporters had already helped 40 students. We recently had our first meeting where Supporters were very complimentary of their Training and Application process. The P S Admin Team of Verity, Anna and Sammi in the Office put in a great deal of time and thought to ensure this was a robust process but also that it was interesting and engaging.

If you want to ask one off questions or, in some instances, receive longer one to one support, the Service is available for all OU students. Please check what Supporters offer on the Association website [here](#).

Verity and I are still at the planning stage for restarting the Through the Gate Service aimed at OU students who have recently been released from a secure environment

Service Review Meetings

Service Review meetings discuss matters relating to Academic Services and IT. The most recent meeting was held in November. Matters under discussion included;

- Reporting that items on the Help Centre which are presented in Table formats can be difficult for Screen reader users
- Old OU gmail addresses (OUCU@my.open.ac.uk eg ab123@my.open.ac.uk) are being turned off in March. Anyone who acquired their free Microsoft Office 365 via that email address will lose access to that version of Office 365 at the same time. Emails / files / documents you want to keep must be forwarded before then. Students will not be able to set up automatic forwarding from the old OU gmail addresses. New OU emails addresses are your OUCU@ou.ac.uk eg abc123@ou.ac.uk. More information is [here](#)
- The OU's Dignity and Respect Policy (relating to Bullying / Harassment) cannot be found using the Help Centre search. I am hopeful this will be resolved shortly. Other student facing policies do not have this problem
- Raising whether policies could also be provided as webpages so students are sure they are reading the most up to date version
- Students should now be able to see their extension deadline dates
- Should be fewer ambiguous week titles on Module websites. A week's heading for a TMA / EMA deadline should show the actual due date rather than the week it is due. This avoids confusion if the week tab heading had a deadline of between January 7th and 13th but the actual deadline was 10th January. If you have any current examples of the ambiguous weekly headings please let me know via the email at the end of my report.

Student Support

Cherry (V P Equality and Diversity) and I continue to have regular meetings with the OU about the support offered to students. Under discussion recently has been what the OU offers in relation to study buddies / mentors; what is available to students who have postponed exams or EMAs, or deferred or failed a module; and the numbers of students waiting for alternative formats.

Adobe Connect, especially re Impact on User Experience of Module Wide Tutorials

Some students have been reporting difficulties attending online Adobe Connect tutorials when a large number of students attend, particularly when the tutor has a video pod / webcam on. It is rarely, if ever, a problem for groups of fewer than 25 students. The OU is working on how to rectify this problem which tends to have an impact on the module wide Adobe Connect tutorials. The OU continues to work on making Adobe Connect as accessible as possible.

Office 365 Meeting

I had a meeting discussing Office 365 and some other issues. Do not be surprised if you receive an email asking you to change your OU login password, this is because the OU is changing its systems. Emails recently received about changing passwords was about gaining access to Microsoft Office 365 for free. Changing OU login passwords this time will not force you to use or download Office 365. The OU will continue to ensure students who do not use Office 365 are not disadvantaged and TMAs / EMAs can be still be sent. The OU aims to introduce a self-service system for students who forget their OU login password, avoiding the need to contact IT Helpdesk.

Facebook

I continue to be active on Facebook and joined in the Adobe Connect Session on Christmas Day.

S S T / S R S C Roadshow (Student Support Teams; Student Recruitment and Support Centres)

Verity from the Association Office and I continue to give presentations to OU staff. WELS Faculty Association Rep (F A R) Sarah, FASS F A R Billy and Area Association Rep (A A R) England Danielle joined us for the relevant talks in Nottingham and Milton Keynes. We share aspects the Association provides which complement what the OU offers with the hope that they might share this information with students who contact them. This includes mentioning Peer Support, O U S E T, Clubs, Societies, Meet-ups, the D S G and P L E X U S. More information can be found on all of these on our website [here](#). Coming up are our talks to staff in Ireland, Scotland and Wales where we hope to be joined by the A A R for those Nations.

Magazine Consultation

I attended a consultation about the Students Association's Magazine where we discussed possible new formats which could involve it being more of an online version of a magazine but without us completely losing the P D F version. Benefits include it being more up to date than the current P D F version can be.

Corporate Parenting Steering Group

This initiative is led by the OU in Scotland which means I can only attend via Skype. The next meeting will be in January. Since my last report OU in Scotland have added student volunteers who can share their experiences. This Steering Group will consider additional requirements and support needed by OU students who have experience of being in care. More information, including their Corporate Parenting plan can be found here, <http://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/study/care-experienced>. If you would like me to take anything to the group please contact me on the email address below.

Please forward any parts of this report elsewhere. If you would like to contact me please email oustudents-support@open.ac.uk

Future Commitments

January 16 th	Corporate Parenting Steering Group Meeting
January 22 nd	Wales S S T Roadshow in Cardiff
January 23 rd	Service Review Meeting
January 23 rd	Meeting OU Staff to share Association purpose
January 24 th	Senate Reference Group and Senate
February	S S T Roadshows in Scotland and Ireland
February/March TBC	O U S E T Trustees Meeting
March 2 nd / 3 rd	C E C Project Weekend
March 9 th	A L Training
March 30 th	OU Consultation event in London

Alison Kingan
Vice President Student Support

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT VOICE

Due to work commitments I have been largely out of office during November and December, and so my activities have consisted of attending regular committees and working groups as well as communicating with other volunteers through forums, email and social media. The largest other project which I have worked on together with the Student Voice team has been considering how to improve the mechanisms for students to feedback both positive and negative issues from all aspects of their study to the Students Association; it is proposed to re-design the V L E student voice forums and introduce a user-friendly online form to serve this purpose, with the aim of introducing these by the end of the academic year. I also enjoyed making a promotional video together with some of the Faculty Association Representatives. Over the coming week I shall be preparing for the Committee Skills Training Day for student volunteers, and am looking forward to a more active start to 2019.

Meetings attended

9/10/2018	Senate Reference Group Induction
10/10/2018	Senate Reference Group
11/10/2018	Kitemark Project Advisory Group
17/10/2018	Student Voice Steering Group
18/10/2018	Meeting with Jiten Patel, Head of Equality, Diversity and Information Rights
18/10/2018	Student Voice Communications Strategy
19-21/10/2018	C E C Meeting

Upcoming meetings

10/1/2019	Student Consultation Management Group
12/1/2019	Committee Skills Training Day
24/1/2019	Senate Reference Group
25-7/1/2019	C E C Meeting
25/1/2019	Presentations by University V C E
30/1/2019	Student Voice Steering Group
5/2/2019	Staff-Facing Student Voice Hub
27/2/2019	Student Consultation Briefing
7/3/2019	Research Symposium
9/3/2019	Face to Face Student Consultation
11/3/2019	Student Consultation Management Group
2/4/2019	Student Voice Steering Group
3/4/2019	Senate Reference Group
TBC	Meeting with Ruth McFarlane, Senior Manager, Students in Secure Environments

Amelia Gackowska
Vice President Student Voice

REPORT OF STUDENT OU COUNCIL MEMBER

Council Meeting 27 November 2018

The November meeting of Council was largely concerned with a review of the University's strategic objectives following the publication of the Critical Review Action Plan and the discussions at strategy week. We also had a large number of annual reports to consider, including the University's Consolidated Financial Statements, and the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Students Association. Much of the business remains confidential but points to note included the following:

- The decision to focus on 3 key strategic objectives: Student Success, Growth and Sustainability, and Core System Replacement.
- The consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2018 (showing a strong balance sheet and an adjusted operating deficit for the year of £5.2m) were approved and have now been submitted to OfS. To accommodate the continuing cost of strategic change a slightly larger operating deficit is forecast for 2018/19 but (other things being equal) the University expects to return to surplus in 2019/20.
- The positive outturn for October undergraduate registrations (9% above target for new students and 1% above target for continuing students). There was a particularly strong performance in the nations (where fees are still heavily subsidised). Postgraduate registrations continue to be below target but the decline in demand appears to be slowing down.
- The positive reception accorded to the Association's Annual Report – although there continues to be pressure from some Council members for us to affiliate to the NUS
- The continuing negotiations for external investment in FutureLearn.
- The major progress made with the negotiation of the new Associate Lecturer contract: a proposal agreed by all parties will be put to a ballot of members in January.
- Details of plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Open University are being finalised and should be announced soon. All I know so far is that 'there will be something for everybody'.

Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC) - 24 October 2018

SPRC is a joint committee of Senate and Council that meets annually to make recommendations to Council about fees and to reflect on the university's strategic performance. At the time of writing, SPRC's discussion of fee levels remains confidential but I can report that our recommendations were subsequently approved by Council and that new fee rates will come into force in October 2019.

Following the findings of the Critical Review, the university's updated strategic plan will focus more directly on Student Success. The enabling mechanisms supporting this primary objective will include the delivery of excellent teaching and research, substantial investment in technology, the creation of a more inclusive and dynamic work environment, and income diversification through a range of enterprise activities such as the development of executive education programmes and/or greater penetration of international markets. Income from student fees will be directed towards improving the

student experience whilst additional revenue generated through income diversification will be used to fund innovation and growth.

The 2018 Strategic Performance Report shows that many of the key performance indicators are falling well below the targets set by Council (on VCE's recommendation) in 2016 and there is growing agreement that some of those measures are not appropriate for our students, particularly the 7 year completion requirement. It seems that our persistent criticisms are finally being taken on board. The Director of Strategy has agreed that this objective and its supporting measures need to be re-examined and revised to reflect the fact that not all OU students are studying for a degree, that many students take longer than 7 years to complete their studies and that for a substantial minority personal development and the love of learning are more important than a qualification. Other performance indicators will also be reviewed.

Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC) - 24 October 2018

GNC is responsible for recommending the appointment of external members of Council and the membership of Council Committees; it also assures the Council of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements.

Appointments

The Committee recommended that Rachel Lock, an external member who was reaching the end of her first term on Council, should be reappointed as a Council member and as Chair of the Remuneration Committee. Arrangements for the recruitment of a new Pro-Chancellor were discussed and confirmed and on completion of the process an offer of appointment was made and accepted (see below).

Annual Review of Council Governance

One of the main obstacles to good governance continues to be the number and complexity of the papers being presented to each meeting for consideration. This is a significant issue throughout the University and an internal review led by John D'Arcy is being established to look at the management of governance and to find ways of streamlining processes.

Sharepoint

I drew attention (not for the first time) to the fact that the decision to publish committee papers on SharePoint restricts student access and makes it difficult for us to be effective members of our respective committees. The Head of Governance noted that the issue has already been raised with IT and that the move is being staggered so that any problems can be identified and resolved. However, I'm not confident that the governance team understand the need for student reps to be able to access papers from committees other than their own and I think we may need to seek a detailed commitment from the University Secretary in order to ensure that adequate access is maintained.

Recruitment of senior members of University staff

Since the last CEC meeting I have played a part in shortlisting and interviewing candidates for senior posts within the University

Pro-Chancellor

As Chair of Council the Pro-Chancellor carries immense responsibility for the future direction and success of the University and a joint panel of Senate and Council

members considered a number of excellent candidates before appointing Malcolm Sweeting retiring Senior Partner at Clifford Chance, to succeed Richard Gillingwater in this key role.

Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC)

An Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor is to be appointed for a period of one year to support the leadership of the University until a new Vice-Chancellor is appointed. The DVC will have overall responsibility for academic strategy and endeavour, which will allow the Vice Chancellor to devote more time to external engagements during our 50th Anniversary year. A joint panel of Senate and Council members interviewed a number of internal candidates and Josie Fraser (Executive Dean of STEM) was appointed. Her term of office runs from 1 January 2019.

Executive Dean of WELS (appointment process shared with Cath)

As the student member of the panel that had unsuccessfully interviewed internal candidates for the post I was asked to take part in the second stage when external candidates were invited to apply. Due to a prior family commitment I was scheduled to be in Los Angeles when the interviews took place but luckily Cath was able to step into the breach. We both took part in the shortlisting process and then Cath took over for the final interview stage. Professor Fary Cachlin, currently PVC for Community and Civic Engagement at the University of East London, has been appointed to the post and will be joining the OU as Professor of Psychology and Wellbeing on 1 March.

Meetings and activities since last report

10 Oct	SRG and Senate
10 Oct	Education in Prisons event (as Council Member)
15 Oct	WELS ED recruitment: Shortlisting meeting
19-21 Oct	CEC meeting
24 Oct	Governance and Nominations Committee Strategic Planning and Resources Committee
31 Oct	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
26 Nov	Magazine redevelopment workshop
26 Nov	Pro-Chancellor recruitment: shortlisting
27 Nov	Council meeting
28 Nov	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
7 Dec	Pro-Chancellor recruitment: interviews
11-18 Dec	Council meeting by correspondence
19 Dec	DVC interviews
10 Jan	Strategy Development Steering Group
15 Jan	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group (attending remotely)
22 Jan	WELS Teaching Committee (as CCR)
24 Jan	SRG and Senate

Future Meetings

6 Feb	Governance and Nominations Committee
6 Feb	Student Satisfaction Event
26 Feb	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
4 Mar	Council dinner
5 Mar	Council meeting (Nottingham)
26 Mar	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
2 Apr	WELS Teaching Committee (as CCR)

3 Apr SRG (?) and Joint Meeting of Council and Senate
4 Apr AL Staff Development Event
10 Apr Governance and Nominations Committee
23 Apr Charter Day

Barbara Tarling
Student Member of OU Council

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR ENGLAND

Please see below the quarterly update from the England Area Association Representative (A A R).

Committees and meetings

Towards the end of 2018 I was pleased to be appointed as the Central Executive Committee (C E C) member of the Controller Advisory Panel (C A P) which ensures that the Students Association's suite of forums on the VLE run smoothly and abide with existing policies and guidelines on computing and online communications. As this is a relatively new appointment, I have not yet participated in any training or meetings but look forward to completing this very soon.

During 2019 work will be ongoing to develop a new Students Association strategy. As part of the work on this, I have been invited by the Students Association President to become a member of the Strategy Steering Group. The first meeting of this group will be held on January 10th on campus.

In November 2018, I joined the L A T I S (Learning and Teaching Innovation and Scholarship) group as a student representative. Though I was unable to attend the first meeting in November due to work commitments, I was able to provide comments ahead of time and look forward to attending the next meeting. L A T I S receives proposals and bids for funding for many different types of ideas, many of which aim to enhance the student experience. As a student representative in this group, I have the opportunity to review these proposals and make recommendations as to whether funding should be approved or not. This is not strictly within my remit as A A R however as the proposals are taken forward and developed, I hope that students across the O U will benefit from them.

In my previous report I advised I had been reported to the Student Consultation Management Group. I attended the meeting held on 10th November, remotely, and was pleased to participate in the discussions around proposed topics for consultation in the online forums and at face to face events to be held in Spring 2019 across the UK and Ireland. I have been reading with interest some of the discussions held by students in the forums on the VLE around suggested topics. I am pleased to confirm I will attend two of the face to face events as a representative of the Students Association and am looking forward to meeting more students and listening to their views.

The Approval Panel for the Student Led Projects of which I am a member has had some interesting submissions, and we recently approved the project for the creation of an OU Students Book, which is currently in production. We have some other proposals under consideration at this time and hopefully, if approved, will be excellent examples of the different ideas that students have, to help their fellow students.

Following the last meeting of the Central Executive Committee in October 2018, I stayed on an extra day to participate in a series of presentations given to staff from the Student Support Teams for the Faculties of Business and Law (F B L) and the Faculty of Social Sciences (F A S S) in Milton Keynes. These presentations were organised by Vice President Student Support Alison Kingan and I was invited to talk to staff about my role as an A A R and also to talk about clubs and societies alongside Billy Docherty (Faculty Area Representative for F A S S). These presentations were an excellent

opportunity for OU staff to learn more about what sort of support and activities are available to students from the Association and how we represent the student body; and we hope they will now be better informed when speaking to students who may be looking for some of the services or opportunities on offer.

Community

In November 2018, I was extremely privileged to attend the Gateshead degree ceremony as a member of the Academic Procession (4 weeks after my own graduation at Harrogate!). I had the opportunity to meet and chat to some of the students graduating that day, as well as a bit of networking at my own ceremony! I've also managed to meet fellow OU students whilst out and about in my own daily activities and have endeavoured to foster that sense of community.

Due to personal circumstances and the run up to Christmas I haven't been able to organise a further meet up in my region or attend any that have been happening. I am looking to organise a meet up in Darlington in the coming weeks as part of the February Freshers events (date dependant on other commitments) and will continue to support and encourage any student who would like to organise one of their own in their area.

I am pleased to confirm that we are also revamping the Community Champions role and hoping to recruit more volunteers who want to get involved in activities in their areas. Currently for England, we have two Community Champions and I will be working with them over the course of my term to build the student community. I look forward to welcoming more to the team.

Sadly, our Vice President Community, Kat, resigned her role at the end of last year. Despite this, I will continue to work directly with the staff members on the Community Team in the Students Association office, as well as the other C E C members, to organise and deliver both the February Freshers events and other opportunities for students. I look forward to hopefully welcoming a new V P Community following February's by election.

I continue to maintain a presence on social media, via my A A R page on Facebook and responding to posts in the various groups of which I am a member. I have ensured that I am also present on our forums, welcoming students and answering queries where necessary.

Future commitments

10 th January 2019	Strategy Steering Group meeting Student Consultation Management Group meeting OU Campus, Milton Keynes
23 rd January 2019	Meet the Students Association (OU Staff awareness event) L A T I S Group meeting OU Campus, Milton Keynes
24 th January 2019	Senate Reference Group (S R G) meeting Senate meeting OU Campus, Milton Keynes
25 th – 27 th January 2019	C E C Meeting Kents Hill Conference Centre, Milton Keynes.
27 th February 2019	Student Consultation Briefing Online.

9 th March 2019	Face to Face Student Consultation Event Manchester
11 th March 2019	Student Consultation Management Group meeting TBC
20 th March 2019	Education Committee OU Campus, Milton Keynes
23 rd March 2019	Face to Face Student Consultation Event York

Danielle Smith
Area Association Representative England

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR WALES

Student voice in Wales

I am in contact with the Wales office in Cardiff.

Socials

I am trying to mentor a number of students and will be relaunching the Cardiff meet-up in February at a new venue and time due to lack of attendance and the venue being too busy.

Volunteers in Wales

I continue to work on more opportunities for volunteers in Wales

Magazine Redesign

I have attended a workshop and provided feedback on the magazine redesign

Working Groups

I have been serving on two working groups - Fitness to Volunteer and the Election Review Group.

Lucy Richardson
Area Association Representative Wales

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR SCOTLAND

This report covers my activities since I last reported to the C E C in October.

Social Activities and Meetings

Since my last report, there has been some expression from students in some areas of Scotland that wish to get involved in meetups but as yet have not come to fruition, and others continuing to look to come along to meetups already set up. As mentioned in my previous report, my predecessor's regular coffee mornings in Dunfermline continue. I also continue to drop into the Adobe Connect Community Drop in sessions held on a fortnightly basis and am grateful to the Deputy President for stepping into help out in the absence of a V P Community in hosting these sessions.

OU In Scotland and External Meetings

As I mentioned in my previous report, in November I was due to meet with Susan Stewart, Director (Scotland) and I did meet with her and Shona Littlejohn, Depute Director, (Student Experience and Widening Access) at the O U in Scotland, prior to the inaugural meeting of the new S & S E G (Staff and Student Engagement Group Scotland) committee in mid-November. I discussed with them my priorities in my A A R role, and also was assured of the 2019 degree ceremonies once again being held in Glasgow after the date having not initially appeared on the O U website, sparking some concerns from Scottish students on the O U social media pages.

The new committee mentioned above is a continuation of the predecessor (Scottish Working Committee (S W C) meeting and along with myself in my role, it affords a further five student places, giving us a total of six, as S W C did so. Amongst the items discussed were initial plans for the University's 50th birthday celebrations, what events and involvement Scotland will have, and ideas were invited to be put forward. Any suggestions are welcome for what we can do as students in Scotland as part of this and I am sure that the C E C will be thinking about this too! Also, the O U i S Outcome Agreement 2017 -20 Self Evaluation Report was discussed and issues raised around the now historical focus that the Scottish Government previously had concentrating on the 18-24 age group in terms of student success, retention and progression. There are also complexities around managing the needs and expectations of young students and what actions could be taken to do this. Issues were raised by both staff and students at the meeting also around tutorials and accessibility issues at some venues - it was felt such issues could be a failure of the venue rather than the tutorial system we have at present but an example of accessibility issues at a Glasgow venue were highlighted during the meeting in terms of accessing the venue itself'. The annual student consultation meeting is confirmed to take place in Glasgow on Saturday March 9, with myself and the F A R F A S S from the C E C to be in attendance, with the next meeting of the S & S E G S committee taking place a few days later across in Edinburgh.

I also attended the A L Staff Development weekend in Glasgow later in November alongside my predecessor, Patricia Gray. We chatted with a number of A L s and staff tutors present at the weekend and let them know more about us as an Association and what we do. We were received very positively indeed by all (Patricia and I were even fortunate to be able to chat with some of our tutors from current and previous modules!)

and hopefully we can attend these events again in the future to keep raising awareness of the Association and what it does.

Alongside the Deputy President, I attended the Q A A Enhancement Themes Leaders Group event in Edinburgh at the beginning of December. The current theme is Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience, and included a number of presentations and workshops, including one from the O U in Scotland which I attended on data for student attainment, with the afternoon workshop session on theme evaluation and the impact that it has on institutions. A fascinating day and I look forward to attending more T L G events in my role.

Activities and meetings attended since last C E C

20 November	O U i S Staff and Student Engagement Group (Scotland) meeting, Edinburgh
20 November	Meeting with Susan Stewart, Director, Scotland, and Shona Littlejohn, Depute Director Student Experience and Widening Access), O U in Scotland, Edinburgh
25 November	A L Staff Development Weekend, Glasgow
6 December	Q A A Theme Leaders Group meeting, Edinburgh
Regularly	Online Community Drop in sessions via Adobe Connect

Future Commitments

25 – 27 January	C E C meeting ,Milton Keynes
9 March	O U in Scotland student consultative meeting, Glasgow
13 March	O U i S Student and Staff Engagement Group Scotland meeting, Edinburgh
22 March	O U in Northern Ireland student consultative meeting, Belfast
26 – 28 April	C E C meeting, Milton Keynes

Mark Cameron
Area Association Representative for Scotland

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

This is my second CEC report as Area Association Representative for Northern Ireland. In the short time I have spent in this role I have identified several issues that need my immediate attention over the coming months and one long term project that is progressing.

Meet-Ups

Regular meet-ups have become a feature of the student diary in Northern Ireland. Meet-ups are arranged on twice-monthly basis where we have meeting space available in head office in Belfast. These generally attract up to six to eight students each time, they are held during the lunch hour break, and they are always productive and well-received. Students have indicated they want them to continue. Meet-ups have now been moved to Mondays as I was having problems getting meeting space in the Belfast offices during the week. I have submitted feedback regarding this as I feel these student events are vital and important in maintaining a community within the OU. I feel that this should be respected.

Student Finance NI

Issues regarding SFNI have dominated my term to date as AAR. I am have been working on a significant issue where a women's centre (Kilcooley, Bangor) hosting an OU health and social care module (K101) had been forced to defer the start of the module to February 2019. This is due to difficulties experienced in completing the forms and confusion as to who and where to submit them. The issue with forms has been resolved.

The latest development is that the module tutor is experiencing a period of ill health and the module will not be proceeding in February as a community-based course of study. This is deeply disappointing for me as I have worked hard to facilitate this with the staff at the women's centre. Those students who enrolled in October will be offered the module but as distance-learning students. The OU in Belfast are hoping to provide some one-to-one tutorials for these students should they wish to proceed with the Feb start. Alternatively, the module will be launched in full in October 2019 with a tutor in place and the students will attend their tutorials at the centre as originally planned. I will be offering full support to those who wish to proceed in February as I am concerned this latest delay will deter a number of them from continuing with their enrolment. I will update the CEC on this at the next meeting.

Further to the Student Finance NI forms issue – I would like to be trained to complete these forms for those prospective students who find the forms confusing/daunting. This has been the case since October. Such an issue can lose the OU students.

YASS (Young Applicants in Schools)

Work is on-going to facilitate the re-establishment of the YASS scheme in Northern Ireland. I am currently in contact with Kitty Chilcott (Learning Partnerships Officer, Open University, Scotland) who is providing guidance and information for the initial stages. I have forwarded all the information I have received from Kitty Chilcott to former Education Minister, Peter Weir, who is fully supportive of the scheme and has made

suggestions as to how to proceed. At this stage, without a functioning Executive in Northern Ireland, putting this proposal to consultation is on hold however the future looks promising for this and I will continue to work on this project.

Community Event

I have proposed to Peter Turner a student social event to tie in with the OU's 50th anniversary celebration. This event will be a taste-and-talk event designed to bring OU students from all backgrounds together for a supper and chat. This is to recognise diversity and inclusion in the Open University. I would like to propose this to the CEC for approval as an OUSA event and to gauge ideas and suggestions.

Wendy Reid

Area Association Representative for Northern Ireland

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR EUROPE

This is a report about my activities as the Area Association Representative (A A R) for Continental Europe. In this role, I am responsible for representing and reporting upon the views of students living in Continental Europe to the C E C and informing the C E C about Association Activities within Continental Europe.

Social Activities

There has been some interest for face to face meetings from students at the O U S A V L E forum 'Meet Students'(Northern Europe, Berlin). In all occasions the link to the O U S A website about meet ups was provided (<https://www.oustudents.com/about-meet-ups>) so students can advertise their meet-ups there and be supported by the Community team. Moreover, I suggested to contact me if they needed any further assistance.

Social Media

As administrator for the Facebook groups for Southern and Northern Europe I have added the following three questions to answer as a prerequisite for new members (1. Are you currently studying with the Open University? If so what are you studying? 2. Have you studied with the O U in the past? If so when and what? 3. Do you live in Northern/Southern Europe area? How did you discover our group?). I am also member, and in some cases administrator, to some Southern Europe national groups (France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Switzerland). Only the Greek national group had some new posts about degree recognition and professional rights. I have also requested membership to some local national Northern Europe groups without any response as of yet. I continue to use my personal Facebook and Twitter accounts for the role, but most news are shared through posting at the Southern and Northern Europe Facebook groups. The current number of group members are as follows: Northern Europe, 341 and Southern Europe, 259. V L E forums were silent as usual and I have updated/posted my contact information so as to show that they are alive.

Other Activities

I participate at the Student Led Projects Approval Panel and I have been appointed as a C E C member of C A P. I have signed up to take part in the LinkedIn Learning pilot at the OU and I have participated at the online U S C F consultation on the topic of 'Student Satisfaction'. I have also given feedback in relation to the re-design of webpages by the Community Team.

Activities since last report

18 – 20 October '18	Central Executive Committee meeting at Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes
30 Oct – 23 Nov '18	Open University Students Association Complaint Panel
10 – 24 Dec '18	Online USCF consultation on the topic of 'Student Satisfaction'

Future Commitments

Participate in the redesigning of the V L E forums.
Host an adobe connect event for C. Europe (probably in March)

Michael Kasoutas
Area Association Representative for Europe

REPORT OF THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (FAR) FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS (STEM)

Since the last CEC weekend in October, I have attended a WAS seminar (supporting students with mental health issues). I also attended my first faculty assembly meeting as the STEM FAR, where I met with a new student who had applied to attend as an observer (I got two students, but one is somebody I already know rather well, and I was grateful for his knowledge and experience).

I think it was a positive experience for this student, and hopefully we may see him at future events.

I attended my first meeting on the Physical Sciences Board of Studies since being transferred from Open Board of Studies (there may also be an opportunity for me to join the Maths and Stats Board of Studies in the near future).

I also attended my first eSTEEeM conference working group meeting (I managed to do it on my phone while on a train), as well as the Open University's Moon Night - I am currently working on an article (hopefully in time for Freshers), I took lots of photos as a way of calming my nerves, which I then shared on my FAR page on Facebook for other students to see (I hope they'll also be a helpful prompt for my writing).

I am hoping to meet up with Josie Fraser (Faculty Dean) at some point in the near future, and there was also the mention of the possibility of "shadowing" her for a day.

Claire Davey

Faculty Association Representative for Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)

REPORT OF THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (FAR) FOR WELLBEING, EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES (WELS)

The last couple of months has been full of “getting to know” you meetings. I have spent a lot of time trying to meet people within the faculty and get my face known. I have responded to lots of e-mails from students and staff alike. Extremely varied emails! It has been good trying to find my feet and trying to find out where my role fits in with everything else. I have also had the challenge of studying full time. Time management has been a bit of an issue and learning to say no has been in the mix as well. I am loving my role and getting to help a few students has been lovely. I am very much looking forward to how the Student Led Homelessness project goes.

Faculty

- 19.10.18 I spent the day sitting in the W E L S offices. I now have an open offer to go and sit there anytime I am on Campus. This gives me the opportunity to talk to people in passing.
- 5.11.18 Sat in W E L S office
- 5.11.18 Meeting with Uwe and Elodie
- 5.11.18 Meeting with Jo Dyer
- 5.11.18 Meeting with Sam Murphy
- 5.11.18 Meeting with Lucia Derbertol
- 6.11.18 Meeting with Tyrell Golding
- 6.11.18 Meeting with Chris Kubiak
- 6.11.18 Meeting with Fiona Henry
- 6.11.18 Filming for W E L S
- 6.11.18 Meeting with Joan Simmons
- 6.11.18 W E L S Faculty Assembly. I spoke for 5 minutes just introducing myself to everyone and letting them know some of my plans. I had some positive feedback which was encouraging. It was exciting to see what else was going on faculty wide.
- 7.11.18 Meeting with Kian Qian regarding the ending of one of the Chinese modules. I have since had lots of e-mails backing this. It has been discontinued and will not be coming back so there is little I can do. I have e-mailed Elodie and Uwe with a summary of the comments with the hope that the concerns will be taken on board moving forward. I have suggested that it could be part of Open Learn+ so that there could be recognition for the short course taken.
- 21.11.18 Nottingham S S T Open Day. Meeting faculty members who had gone to learn about how the S S T works. I had a working lunch talking to lots of people who I hadn't yet met.
- 26.11.18 Meeting with Christina Wood, Nicky Thomas, Chrissy Senior managers, teaching for W E L S
- 26.11.18 Filming a Christmas video for W E L S
- 27.11.18 Skype Call with Kim Walker
- 7.1.19 Skype Call Dasha Ivkina-Macdonald planning videos for AY18/19
- 24.1.19 Meeting with Regine Hampel
- 24.1.19 Meeting with Klaus-Dieter Rossade
- 25.1.19 Meeting with Lee Woodham to have an introduction to P R A X I S

Staff and C E C

19 – 21.10.18 C E C weekend.

25-27.1.19 C E C weekend

26.10.18, 28.10.18, 5.11.18, 26.11.18, 12.12.18, 28.1.19 Student Led Homeless project meeting

26.11.18 Magazine Workshop – discussing the future of the magazine

10.1.19 Strategy Development Project steering group

23.1.19 Meet the Students Association Event

Other Meetings

18.10.18 I attended Cardiff Graduation as the co-ordinator. This was a fantastic day and inspirational to talk to so many students who have been where I am and have gone on and got their degrees. I had great assistance from other volunteers.

23.1.19 Library visit with W E L S

23.1.19 Senate Reference Group

8.3.19 O U Consultation Day in Cardiff

Future Plans

28.1.19 Donate Drink and Donuts – Student Led Homelessness project

30.1.19 W E L S Fresher Adobe Connect chat

All meetings in red were just introductory meetings and a chance to get to know people. Personally, I have been getting on with my studies of E209 and E214. I have also been doing Lego Therapy in two schools with the possibility of this increasing in 2019, I may even be getting paid for it! I challenged myself with learning to swim better this time last year and I have just achieved my 400m badge and swam in my first gala, I came 3rd twice (out of 3!).

Sarah Jones

Faculty Association Representative for Wellbeing, Education & Language Studies (WELS)

REPORT OF THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (FAR) FOR ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES (FASS)

List of Meetings Attended (# indicates further information in main report)

Meeting		Discussion
<i>F A S S Assessment Conference and Launch of Scholarship school 8th October 2018</i>	FASS	Attended with Peter Cowan, which included a presentation in relation to alternative forms of assessments (Patchwork). The F A S S scholarship school was launched and the Executive Dean did a short presentation to staff about the future of the faculty.
<i>S R G Training 9th October 2018</i>	SRG	Attended as a new member of the S R G training at the Association office.
<i>F A S S Video recording 9th October 2018</i>	Media	Recorded a short presentation about myself and my role for the F A S S media team. This will be shown at the next Faculty Assembly.
<i>Student Voice Steering Group. 17th October 2018</i>	O U S A	Attended my first S R G meeting.
<i>Library Services Presentation And Core System Replacement Presentation 19th October 2018</i>	Library Service Core System Replacement	As part of the C E C weekend attended both these sessions.
<i>C E C weekend 19th – 21st October 2019</i>	C E C	Attended the CEC weekend
<i>V P Student Support presentation</i>	O U S A	Attend a presentation day with Alison, Verity and Danielle to staff members in F B L and F A S S.
<i>James Phillips 1st November 2018</i>	O U S A	Training for using Canva and Association Branding training
<i>Meeting with Kate Signorini and Amy Mcdevott. 12th November 2011</i>	O U Scotland	Meeting in the O U Edinburgh office. The aim was for me to discuss upcoming plans I had within F A S S as well as discuss my role as faculty rep. We discussed the possibility of more collaborative working in terms of F A S S events in Scotland.
<i>Meeting observers meet up for faculty assembly 19th November 2018</i>	Faculty Assembly	We had 4 student observers arrive prior to attending the Faculty Assembly. Had a meeting with them to go over papers and discuss the pan for the next day.
<i>Meeting with Roger Knowles and Sam Harding 19th November 2018</i>	Speakeasy	Had a meeting with Roger and Sam (Via Skype) about the planning for the Speakeasy events, which has been approved by the senior managers in F A S S. I will follow up this meeting with a meeting with the F A S S media team and the Student Consultation Office.

<i>Meeting with observers and executive Dean Faculty Assembly 20th November 2018</i>	Faculty Assembly	Attended with the 4 volunteers a brief meeting with the Executive Dean prior the Faculty Assembly. The observers participated in the assembly and spent time working with F A S S staff during table discussions. Beth Metcalf met the observers for lunch and a tour of the campus.
<i>Meeting with S S T regarding special exam arrangements 20th November 2018</i>	S S T	It was agreed to hold a one-day adobe chat session for F A S S students who will require additional support for exams. This session will allow them to gather the appropriate information to allow them to register appropriately.
<i>Enhancement These at OUjS 4th December 2018</i>	OU Scotland	Attended my first meeting of this group.
<i>Meeting with F A S S team Scotland 4th December 2018</i>	O U Scotland	Met to discuss upcoming F A S S events Discussed how best to get information to F A S S student's in Scotland Discussed FAR attendance at future F A S S events in Scotland.
<i>Telephone meeting with Ian Fribance Executive Dean F A S S 5th December 2018</i>	Telephone	Telephone catch up to discuss up coming F A S S events including Disabled Students Support for exams. Discussed the planning for the F A S S speakeasy. Agreed that the faculty would pay for me to visit the campus over a few days in February or March 2019, to meeting with F A S S staff including Heads of Schools.
<i>Meeting with Damon Millar, F A S S media team 12th December 2018</i>	F A S S media team	To arrange the distribution of information in regards to up coming F A S S chats and the Speakeasy.
<i>Meeting with Rachel Garnham (Student consultation office) 12th December 2018</i>	Speakeasy	Met with Rachel to get advice on how to take forward the planning for the speakeasy. It was agree I would ask Roger Knowles to make contact to discuss operational planning for student consultations.
<i>Meeting with Julia Proser (S S T) 12th December 2018</i>	F A S S S S T	Met to discuss the Disabled Students Exam Support adobe chat session. We also discussed other planned chat with Careers and the Library team.
<i>Online Disabled student's information adobe chat. 19th December 2018.</i>	Adobe	This session was open for students in both F A S S and F B L to attended. This was run with staff from Student Support Teams. I also requested support from the D S G. I was hoping some of the committee would be on hand for students wanting more information. Unfortunately, none of the D S G committee made an appearance during the session.

Student issues

The lateness of the printed materials for students who require them has continued to cause much upset and stress among students. This has left many students up to 9

weeks behind in studies. I know members of the C E C have been working hard on this issue and I have reported this back to students.

The issue around recorded tutorials and empty room tutorials has been raised a lot over the last few months by students. I have spoke to the faculty about making the pathway to these clearer for students.

Faculty Assembly Observers

I received positive feedback from the students who attended the Faculty Assembly meeting. Students really seemed to enjoy the opportunity to attend, meet staff and hear about what was happening in the Faculty. I will start advertising after Christmas for the next group of students to attend.

Adobe Chat for Disabled Students for exams.

Overall the numbers were disappointing with only 7 attending the session and 4 sending emails for help. Discussing with students the timing of the day was not the best as it clashed with lots of activities in relation to Christmas. We will possibly run another one in February 2019. I had suggested a Facebook chat rather than an adobe due to the hours involved, but the Student Support Teams could not get approval for using Facebook from their management.

Other activities

- Reading/posting in C E C, S R G and Central Reps forums
- Reading and responding to emails from colleagues, OU Student Association Staff and OU staff
- Reading and posting in student forums

List of future meetings/commitments

Meet the Students Association
CEC Weekend
Open University Psychological Society event Glasgow
Senate Reference Group
Student Voice Steering Group
F A S S freshers chat
F A S S freshers library chat
Visit to campus to for meetings with F A S S staff

Billy Docherty

Faculty Association Representative for Arts and Social Sciences (FASS)