

## OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

### Central Executive Committee (CEC)

25 - 27 January 2019

### STUDENT SATISFACTION AT THE OU

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The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **note** the update on the Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
- ii) **discuss** the points raised

#### 1. The Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group (SSIWG)

- 1.1 The Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group was set up in 2018 following the NSS results. It meets approximately every 4 weeks. It is jointly chaired by the President and Liz Marr.
- 1.2 The SSIWG works in conjunction with, and supports, university wide Units and Faculties and reports to the Student Experience Committee. SSIWG has representation from across the University. Three CEC members and the Head of Student Voice are members.
- 1.3 Terms of Reference / objectives for the group include
  - Create and own the institutional action plan for improving student satisfaction.
  - Commission specific analyses / studies to inform the action plan.
  - Monitor progress against the plan, resolving issues and escalating to university management where necessary.
  - Receive reports and monitor progress against sub-plans owned by individual business areas.
  - Own the institutional engagement and communication plan for improving student satisfaction.
- 1.3 SSIWG has a working definition of student satisfaction as ‘the level of happiness our students experience resulting from their interaction with our materials, staff, services and facilities, whilst recognising that satisfaction can have a different meaning, to different students’.

- 1.4 SSIWG aims to take a holistic approach to student satisfaction. It considers quantitative data such as the National Student Survey and SEaM, but acknowledges their limitations as well as their strengths. The group has recently commissioned a consultation on the Students Consultative Forum to obtain more qualitative insights.  
<https://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/forumng/view.php?id=21455>

Although there is a desire to improve NSS results, the focus of SSIWG is to improve actual satisfaction, not just “game” the figures.

- 1.5 SSIWG has planned a “Staff Engagement” event on 6 February, featuring a variety of talks, panellists and stands. The Students Association will be fully involved (an update will be provided at the CEC meeting). This is to promote a greater understanding of, and the importance of, student satisfaction to OU staff.

## 2. Points for discussion

- 2.1 There has been suggestions that there is significant overlap of the business of SSIWG and the Student Voice Steering Group (there is certainly significant overlap of membership). **Do the CEC feel there is an overlap? If so, can we define where the commonalities and differences are?**
- 2.2 Whilst we are feeding into this group, student satisfaction should surely be a “big issue” for us at the Association. We should consider our own position on this, and use that to inform our contribution to this group and our work more generally.
- 2.2.1 How do we, as an Association, define “student satisfaction”, and how should we decide on this?
- 2.2.2 What actions should we take to promote and celebrate good practice in improving student satisfaction?
- 2.2.3 What actions should we take if we believe student satisfaction is being ignored by the OU generally, or by specific teams within it? How can we advocate change most effectively?
- 2.2.4 How should we as an Association be responding to students who are “unsatisfied”?
- 2.3 These are obviously “big” topics that will not be resolved instantly, but this paper is intended to kick off discussions

**Sam Harding**  
Head of Student Voice

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President