

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

16 – 18 April 2021

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE QUARTERLY IMPACT 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:-

- President (page 2)
- Deputy Vice President (page 4)
- Vice President Administration (page 6)
- Vice President Community (page 8)
- Vice President Education (page 10)
- Vice President Engagement (page 12)
- Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (page 14)
- Vice President Student Support (page 17)
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- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Scotland (page 20)
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- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) (page 25)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Business & Law (FBL) (page 27)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) (page 30)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Open and Access (page 32)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Wellbeing, Education & Language Studies (WELS) (page 32)



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Sarah Jones
ROLE:	President
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Working on the undertaking of a Governance review of the Association</p> <p>The governance review was one of the recommendations that came out of the Culture review that was undertaken. It has been an exciting project that I am hoping will make a big difference to how we can operate as an Association and better serve the students that we represent. It has now been undertaken and completed. The full review is not yet available, although it has been shared with the working, and will be discussed with CEC, staff and the Board of Trustees when it is. I am excited about the outcomes and I am really pleased with the hard work and time that has gone into this.</p> <p>This has links across all areas of our strategy and comes directly of the Culture review.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Student Dignity and respect Task and Finish Group</p> <p>The S D and R task and finish group has come out of issues that have arisen on social media over the past year and a desire to help to build a more inclusive online community. Part of this work is to raise the profile of the Student Charter. A new video featuring me and Liz Marr (Pro-Vice Chancellor of Students) will be sent out over the next month or so to students highlighting how important it is that we respect each other. This has been a much longer piece of work than first thought due to lockdown and when to send out the video. Another part of this work is the Social Media Policy. This policy has just been through an update process to make sure that it is fit for purpose and will be included as part of the task and finish group. There is another piece of work around safe-space reporting that is also to be included.</p> <p>This links with the Influence and Transform strand of the Strategy.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Becoming Chair of a Steering group that will look into how the University looks at its responsibilities to digital poverty</p> <p>This group has not yet met but the initial discussions have taken place. It is with the aim at looking at how the University responds to its responsibilities to digital</p>	

poverty for its students. With less and less material being in book form there is a need to look at this issue and how it is handled

This links with the Inform and Support strand of the Strategy.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

Approx' 40

ISSUE 1: How the University has responded to the additional pressures of lockdown on students

Students are really feeling the pressure on exams and EMA's this year after yet another lockdown and home-schooling for many at very short notice. There are a lot of our students who have been working on the frontlines of Covid in Healthcare and in Education to name two. We have been hearing how the pressure is really starting to get to students and how this issue is very real. Some of the actions we have taken are to reassure students and point them in the direction of the updated Help pages where they can access help with Discretionary postponements, Special Circumstances and other help. As part of this work we are also working with the University to help support the students by making sure the correct messaging is going out and that decisions that need to be made are made correctly.

This links with our inform and support strand of the strategy.

ISSUE 2: AL Contract statement

The OU changed when this is being implemented and it has had a profound effect of AL's. This in turn is already having an effect on students and will continue to do so. As an Association we have released a statement showing the difference AL's make to us as students.

This links with our Inform and support strand and the influence and support strand of the strategy.

ISSUE 3: Launch of Election Manifestos

The launch of the Wales and Scotland Manifesto is bringing to the attention of those standing in the elections, the issues affecting part-time distance-learning students. We hope that the effect of these manifestos will help external engagement and awareness on the matters that affect OU Students.

This links with the Strategy strand of Influence and Transform and Engage and Involve.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Ian Cheyne
ROLE:	Deputy President
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: New Association website</p> <p>I became involved in the evaluation of tenders process quite recently and I'm delighted to see the progress being made in this respect. The potential of the new site is quite literally exciting and I'm looking forward to the proposal's acceptance and implementation. We will be able to do many more things and do existing things much more simply and successfully.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: The Student Voice within the OU Graduate School</p> <p>I have held a number of meetings with PGR students and representatives of the Graduate School over a period of several months. There are/have been difficulties in PGR students gaining specific representation in some faculties. PGR students are also lacking a true community (this is of course a problem with undergraduates and taught PG students as well), which severely restricts their ability to discuss personal difficulties with their colleagues in a relatively informal way. Following the recent approach regarding a PGR BAME group I have now established contact with other PGR students who are keen to establish their own representation, either directly with the OU Student Association, or independently but with the support of the Association. This matter is now being progressed.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Potential pitfalls of 'First Impressions'</p> <p>Following on from Issue 1 below, I raised this topic at March 2021 CEC 'Huddle'. It is a problematic issue in that we don't want to discourage peer support and there is often a fine dividing line between this and giving the false impression of speaking with the 'voice of authority'. The valid point was made during the meeting that in order to enable volunteer reps to inform students 'with clarity' it was essential that the CEC adopt a position on ALL ISSUES, clearly and quickly. This matter is currently in hand.</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	20

ISSUE 1: Alleged or implied failure on the part of the CEC to keep students advised on all critical matters

A student informed me that comments on a particular issue had been posted by a former Association volunteer and this gave them and other students the impression that the CEC had failed to keep students informed in this respect. This particular allegation wasn't true, however, it does raise the question of individual students, by posting information (on social media platforms) were, or could be, giving a false impression that theirs was the official position (see action to date in Area 3 above).

ISSUE 2: Representation for PGR students

I have been approached by a PGR student who is asking about the possibility of setting up a BAME student group within the Graduate School. Further action on this is referred to in Area 2 of the Key Progress areas.

ISSUE 3: The AL contract and similar problems

One of the major factors to be identified as to reasons for the OU's failure to deliver the new AL Contract on schedule is the apparent inadequacies of the evaluation/planning of some areas, such as the requirement for AL's to teach a range of modules and its inherent problems. This is one of several areas within the ALC context, but these kinds of inadequacy would also seem to be present in other OU business applications, for example the academic non-compatible elements of CSR. Consequently, the Association's statement on the ALC issue also reflects our concerns about the OU's abilities in many of its business applications.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Matt Porterfield
ROLE:	VP Admin
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Make financial and management information more understandable and useful:</p> <p>The state of societies report that goes to CEC often contains inaccuracies/is not up to date at the point of publication. The Community and Finance and Resources Team are now liaising on the report to overcome this. We are also proposing to take actions on societies which are not in compliance with our byelaws, either supporting and encouraging compliance or ultimately by suspending them. For example we have been actively working with 2 societies to overcome incomplete records and providing an agreed position for them to take forward. This will protect students who are members of societies and assure them that any fees they pay are properly accounted for.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Positively contribute as a Trustee of the Association, Director of the OUSET charity and a member of the Association leadership:</p> <p>The Association has engaged external consultants to recommend improvements to all aspects of governance and now, together with the President, CEO and an external Trustee, we are preparing to share the findings with the leadership team and staff prior to seeking final approval from Trustees. This should result in improved efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, thus enabling strategic goals and furthering engagement with the wider student membership.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Continually review the Articles and Byelaws of the Association, ensuring compliance and recommending changes if appropriate:</p> <p>The Elections Review Working Group are considering suggestions from representatives, staff and our external elections platform provider aimed at making our elections more accessible, friendly and safe in order to encourage a wider participation in both nominations and students casting votes. Perceived barriers, such as the mandatory requirement for a video, are being challenged and the findings from the governance review are also under consideration. This should encourage new blood into the leadership team and bring fresh thinking to our actions.</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

N/A in this role

ISSUE 1:

The Rules Revision Review which takes place every 4 years is due in 2022 however there may be a case for accelerating this timetable to ensure any changes approved by the Board of Trustees are in place for the next round of full elections. As some alteration to the Articles will inevitably be required, this has to follow company law rules and timetables.

ISSUE 2:

There are times when volunteers need temporary help with equipment like laptops in order to access meetings, papers etc. Longer term or permanent assistance is not possible due to tax and volunteer contract issues. Assistance has been given on an exceptional basis in the past and now we want to manage this on a more formal basis. A policy is being developed and anyone experiencing difficulties should raise it with the Volunteering and Representation team in the first instance.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Anca Seaton
ROLE:	VP Community
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Freshers Fortnight The January/February Freshers Fortnight was another success. We've seen lots of new and existing students engaging with us, attending sessions, being interested in what the Association does and how we could support them. I would like to thank all my colleagues on the Student Leadership Team, our student volunteers and the Community Staff Team for a really engaging, interesting, useful and entertaining set of events.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Societies I've been working with VP Admin, the Chair of Societies Committee, our societies and the Community and Resources Teams to help bring the non-compliant societies up to date. Work is still carrying on and we are looking at concrete ways and means to support the societies, from help with their finances, through to organising and advertising events and how to increase their membership.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Online Events Following our increased engagement after the two Freshers Fortnights (September-October 2020 and January/February 2021), it became apparent that we need to do more in order to keep our online events secure and issue-free. We've provided updated technical training for all the hosts (online events hosts, online meetup hosts, clubs and societies host, CEC members), and we are working on developing and presenting a training session for dealing with students with mental health issues attending our events, and how to deal with disruptive attendees. This is work in progress, Microsoft Teams and Adobe Connect have been upgraded and had new features introduced.</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	85
<p>ISSUE 1: Freshers Sessions – Lots of students met me in the Freshers sessions and ask me question about it – ranging from technical queries, access to rooms, availability of recordings, programme, prizes for our competitions.</p>	

ISSUE 2: Password issues – Following from the December implementation of the next step of the Core Systems Replacement programme, I've been contacted by students seeking guidance on how to change their password and reporting issues. I've directed them to the OU Help Centre

ISSUE 3:



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Cinnomen McGuigan
ROLE:	Vice President Education
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: I am seeing a massive increase in the sense of community in the academic representation spaces. We have a great turn out for the monthly Student Voice Drop-In sessions, and they are informative news sharing meetings that allow reps to get together to voice concerns and see what is going on in shared spaces. We can talk out issues of great concern, like the AL Contract Delays – and get involved in discussions on how we might respond as an Association. I am getting some solid feedback on reps feeling valued and heard at their committees, which is all really great for the Representation team as we have worked hard to ensure that we are treated equitably in our meetings.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Networking across my spaces has allowed me to get better representation for students and has enabled me to be able to speak up for students in areas I have never been able to before. Being closely involved in some strands of the Access Participation and Success enabled me to be heard and contribute by way of a panel on the experiences of care and care experienced students, and I was able to bring my own lived experience to those discussions. Because being part of a uni that is open and accessible to all is a driving factor in why I stood as a rep. And me getting more involved and visible in those areas will hopefully bring more diversity to the rep team.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: I am seeing a move towards greater student involvement in the Quality, Monitoring and Enhancement (QME) area of the university. I co-chair the Peer Review Group that is responsible for monitoring the Boards of Studies (BoS) QME reports and ensuring they are up to the standard that the OU wants to see. During this process I am pleased to see that the majority of the Boards have included students in their reports. Some have gone so far as to allow the student reps on the BoS to write the Student Voice/Engagement section in its entirety. But the best ones are the combination of the Board writing what they have done to better engage students, and then encouraged the reps to add a section too, which gives well rounded view of how well they involve students and make them feel like vital members of the team. Since I became VP Education, I have tried to encourage our Central Committee Reps to gets more involved in the QME process, and I have spoken to the Chairs</p>	

of Boards of Studies about building this in this too, so to see it actually happening is such a win for the work we are putting in.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

Upwards of 250

ISSUE 1:

AI Contract concerns, will my tutor strike, will they still mark our EMAs and will we need to tailor our work to an as yet unknown marker, and how do we mitigate that, have been the main issues of concern this week. I have been signposting to the OU Association statement and pointed out we are doing what we can to support our ALs throughout this period of upheaval. But I am taking the time to speak to any students who want me to.

ISSUE 2:

Credit Transfer – a concern for a fair portion of the students who contact me. Depending on the timings of module registration it gets much busier, but it is an ongoing issue that I deal with consistently. I have made strong contacts with the team dealing with this, so can help if needs be.

ISSUE 3:

Discretionary Postponement, deferral, and fee liability points, all kinds of issues of “what to do if I can’t complete” seem to be consistent concerns of many of the students I get contacting me.

Not a problem cos these are all things I can actually help with, so have no problems with anyone contacting me for further info on these issues.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Fanni Zombor
ROLE:	Vice President Engagement
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: OU Consultation</p> <p>Each year the OU runs a number of consultation sessions (usually face to face, this year fully online due to Covid) in a range of topics selected by the Student Consultation Management Group. In the group itself, I sit with 2 other CEC members and a wide range of OU staff. After a lot of discussion, 2 topics were selected- OU strategy and tutorial events. I had the opportunity to help write the outline and questions for the consultation around tutorial events following the management group meeting.</p> <p>The 12, 2-hour long events also included a 30-minute session dedicated to being ran by the Association for students. Sue Maccabe and I had the opportunity to design these sessions in the most effective way. Each consultation had 2 CEC members and an Association staff member present, to support the 90-minute OU consultation alongside OU staff as well as running our dedicated session. An agenda plan was made to dedicate 10 minutes to getting feedback from students about their experiences with the consultation first. This was then followed by a 5-minute video specifically created for these sessions, to showcase the Association’s strategy and demonstrate what we do for students. Then the floor was opened up to students to ask any questions about our work or raise any burning issues they had around their study journey. Overall, most students stayed for this 30-minute segment after the OU consultation and we were able to collate some rich feedback as well as answer and pick up a range of points from students.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Website Development</p> <p>In January 2021, a website panel was formed to look at the website proposals received for our tendering document sent out to 30+ providers in December. The panel allowed us to interview 4 potential providers marked against a range of different criteria in February. At the time of writing this report, the panel has chosen the most favoured provider and made a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval. The recommendation details all the benefits of the selected provider as well as detailing the risks involved.</p>	

With the website being one of our key communications platforms, and the bank for all information for students, this is a real opportunity to make our website more appealing, user friendly and overall, more useful to students.

AREA 3: Interview with Phil Smith

In January, I was interviewed by Phil Smith, an independent HE consultant as part of a research piece he was carrying out with Explorance. The publication is called 'Module evaluation during National Lockdown'. The publication was released on 24th of March, with over 10 student union representatives and students directly contributing from across the 4 nations as well as a wider research piece informing the overall book. As part of launching the book, I have also taken part in an online panel, which was the first time the book was made publicly available.

Being asked to participate in sector wide publications like this, really helps us raise the profile of our students amongst the HE sector, so I was very grateful for the opportunity to be able to be part of this piece of work.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

100

ISSUE 1: Tutor/extension issues

Plenty of student contact around anything to do with tutors and assignments. Lots of non-responsive tutor issues picked up particularly in FBL. Also, students facing issues around asking for 21 days extension due to Covid, as many tutors aren't aware of the change in policy that there is currently no cap on the number of extensions. Lots of signposting in this area.

ISSUE 2: Covid fund and support

Fielding student questions and providing support/ guidance in filling out the Covid support grant currently offered by the OU with some government funding. Also help and guidance around the study support fund (to help with printers, laptops, Wi-Fi and stationery costs). Pointed out both of these lots of times when seeing financially struggling/ stuck students.

ISSUE 3: February registrations (and full-time study)

Materials and alternative formats not arriving for February start has been picked up plenty of times as well as late tutor allocations. I have had conversations with many students who registered for 120 credits starting in February in England as they were not aware, they couldn't then register for 120 credits in October, due to seasonal academic year. Also, lots of general chat with February starters around studying with the OU and how it all works.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Patrice Belton
ROLE:	Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (VPEDI)
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: <i>Implementing areas of the Edi Action plan</i></p> <p>Launch of the (new) ‘Group Chair’s monthly meetings’, the re-structure and streamlining of the EDI Groups’ Forum spaces, the initiation of the ‘BAME Committee elections, the development and plans towards an EDI Conference (in late spring), the recent EDI Update on our Website to highlight some positive actions being taken by the Association</p> <p>This has links with point 7 and 14 strategy. The EDI Action plan</p>	
<p>AREA 2: <i>Student/Association representation in OU Interviewing processes</i></p> <p>This was another important moment for collaboration and appointment. The Vice President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (VP EDI) was invited to sit on an interview panel, with the OU’s Marketing and Communications Team (MarComms), to help them interview and appoint a (new) Programme Director for ‘Marketing and Outreach’. Like the Dean of EDI’s appointment, this role will directly impact ‘<i>Student Recruitment, Community Liaisons and Sustainable Inclusion</i>’ at the OU. This aims to, not only refine how we look at engaging and communicating with Students from <i>Black, Asian and (other) Minority Ethnicities</i> (as a whole), but also how we integrate and support (All) Students across (All) Nations, with emphasis on those with Protected Characteristics.</p> <p>This links with the Influence and Transform strand of the Strategy</p>	
<p>AREA 3: <i>OSTARS work</i></p> <p>At the Association, we have collaborated with OU Staff/Volunteers to help set up a club (‘OSTARS’ Open University Students and Staff with Asylum-Seekers and Refugees) and basis for these students to begin to build a community and to help support the initiative for the OU to become a ‘University of Sanctuary’ for these students.</p>	

Having attended the Club's introductory Fresher's event and having had an opportunity to discuss with students and a representative from the UK's STAR (Student Action for Refugees) Organisation, there is now an opportunity for us as an Association to help the Club become formally affiliated with STAR and, to collaborate with 'Marie Gillespie' (OU's Lead on this project) and team to join-up efforts across the Nations (***to be followed up***)

What might success look like:

(Across the OU)

- More flexible learning opportunities, entry routes and funding to offer equitable support and opportunities for these students to both study and complete their studies at the OU.
- Fewer reports of inequities for students from 'Forced Migrant' backgrounds,
- The OU formally being recognised as a University of Sanctuary and working more closely with the STAR organisation to help support students in the wider Further and Higher Education sectors.

(At the Association)

- An alternative Peer support initiative; for language, translation, and academic upskilling.
- To engage with and involve these students more to help build a better community.

there's an "opportunity for us as an Association to help the OSTAR Club become formally affiliated with the UK STAR Network; which would enable students to have access to resources, tools and bodies, from across the UK. At the OU 'Marie Gillespie' presently Lead on this project and has a few other Staff who volunteer their time to support the cause. However, what was amiss (not unlike the OU) was a joined-up collective across the OU Nations and Association, which I felt necessary for us all to move forward. I have now contacted Marie and all others (*including Staff from the Association*) to set up an initial meeting (hopefully for early March) so we can both plan around and have collective understanding of what is being asked of us and students, but also to ensure we have effective representation across the board.

This links with all areas of the Strategy

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	Approx 50+
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ISSUE 1: *Trans Student Issues*

Students from the Trans community have been reporting various instances of being misgendered on forums (which video and/or audio discussions) and due to not being able to highlight or display preferred pronouns alongside their names. This has been raised with gender identity champions in the OU and OU Pride have been supported in promoting Trans day of Visibility. This has also been raised with the Student Mental Health working group.

This links with our inform and support strand of the strategy

ISSUE 2: *Support for students with Forced-migrant status (e.g. support for the OU to become a University of Sanctuary)*

This issue has been raised with the PVC-students office to be investigated further

This links with our Inform and support strand of the strategy

ISSUE 3: *Student Consultations*

At the end of the student consultation with Black and Minority Ethnic students there was a discussion around how they felt they had been segregated. This discussion is being fed back to the University.

This links with the Strategy strand of Support and Inform



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Alison Kingan
ROLE:	Vice President Student Support
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
AREA 1:	
AREA 2:	
AREA 3:	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	
ISSUE 1:	
ISSUE 2:	
ISSUE 3:	

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Danielle Smith
ROLE:	Student Member of Council
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Council Meeting 23rd February 2021</p> <p>My second meeting as a member of the OU Council took place in February. Council received a regular update from the Vice Chancellor, an update on the progress of the implementation of new IT systems (CSR) and discussed the progress of the new strategy, which is currently in development and is set to be approved by Council in the autumn, among other things.</p> <p>Council also received an update regarding the ongoing work happening within the OU to produce short credit bearing courses known as microcredentials, which will be hosted on the Futurelean platform. Whilst we at the Students Association are excited about these new short courses, offering more options for people to learn and develop skills, we are concerned about the impact this will have on the OU's resources and we want to ensure that students on traditional OU qualifications will not be impacted. We will continue watch closely and ask questions of the University throughout this process to ensure appropriate scrutiny of these proposals.</p> <p>A particular highlight of the Council meeting was the Students Association update, which I delivered jointly with President Sarah Jones. Details of the update can be found here . Council were very impressed by the amount of work going on in the Association to deliver on our strategic aims.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Student Consultation Events</p> <p>March is always Student Consultation month at the OU. Normally the University would hold these events face to face across the UK with online alternatives for people who cannot attend a face to face event and for our international students. However, given that we are still living under the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, all events this year went online. This did mean a revamp of the usual timetable, since consultations are usually an all day affair with lunch included. The online versions were condensed into 2 hour slots, so there was a lot to get through in the limited time we had. I attended the under 25s consultation alongside Vice President Engagement, Fanni Zombor.</p> <p>Though originally due to take place on the 15th March, it ended up taking place on the 22nd, since MS Teams decided to crash, right across the globe on the evening</p>	

of the 15th, so there was nothing we could do. However, when it did eventually happen, it was lovely to “meet” some of our young students, and to listen to their views on the consultation topics, which were the OU strategy and tuition. Fanni and I then had quick slot to talk about the Association and answer any questions about what we do. The students who attended were really happy to have the opportunity to have their say on things, and also to engage with other students their age.

Though I only attended one consultation, I was actually “present” at them all! Along with Sarah, Fanni, Patrice (VP Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) and Gareth (Faculty Rep for the Faculty of Business and Law), we recorded segments for the Students Association video that was played at each event. This video appears to have gone down well even within the University, as there’s talk of putting it into some areas of the faculty sites!

AREA 3: AL contracts

At the time of writing this is still a very changeable issue, but students may be aware that, in the week of 22nd March, the OU took the decision to delay the implementation of the new Associate Lecturer contract (ALs = tutors). This has had a massive impact on the ALs who work at the University and rightly, the Students Association is concerned about the impact this will have on students as a result. We are also very concerned about the way this was communicated by the OU and the impact this has, most of all, on those ALs on whom we rely so much during our studies. You can read the full statement from Sarah [here](#)

The Students Association stands fully with the ALs and we will be looking to work closely with the University and the ALs to achieve a satisfactory outcome on this matter. At the time of writing, the CEC has a meeting planned to discuss this further, and we will keep you updated on developments.

AREA 4: Elections Review Group

The Elections Review Working Group met on the 17th March to discuss some of the proposals we are hoping to put forward to the CEC. We have discussed lots of thoughts and ideas on how we can make the elections more engaging for students, and also for those who chose to stand as candidates. Some scoping work has been done by members of the Group, such as meeting with elections provider Civica, to see what other organisations are doing, what works well and what could be changed. The CEC will be receiving a paper on this at the April meeting and it will be interesting to hear their views on the work being done and to agree the way forward.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

0

ISSUE 1:

ISSUE 2:



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Elyse Hocking
ROLE:	Area Representative in Scotland
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Streamlining social media ownership so it benefits the OU Student Association</p> <p>I realise that this is currently being looked at but I'm mindful that we may be missing large groups of people by not having direct admin or supporting positions within our devolved groups. Currently the process for updating Scottish students is messy, with students at the forefront of what we do, we need to consider them above all else and having a current admin team that is updating them regularly in one [social] area and is central to answering their questions and comments in a timely manner rather than an off-set page having to post into the central pages. This looks unprofessional.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Creating online communities that can reach further than before</p> <p>By utilising most social media websites we can reach more students and communities through online outreach which is especially important during the Pandemic. Going into 2021, I hope to reach more through hashtag research, setting up regular time slots and council appointments so that if need be I can host Teams calls on a one-to-one basis to discuss any issues or recommendations our students have and also looking at more local groups that may have Scottish students who may not know what we can offer them in terms of inclusion, community and support.</p>	
<p>AREA 3:</p> <p>With module registration re-opening I'm keen to tackle promotion of OU courses within Scotland once again, especially to those who were unaware that they could apply to SAAS for the PTFG if they earned individually less than 25k per year. This information isn't widely known across Scotland (strangely) however I have been promoting it with positive results. Uptake has been higher with many within the 35 years and over, signing up to start their first higher education courses with OU.</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

Estimation - 43

ISSUE 1:

During the Scottish student consultation it was very clear that although we try to ensure inclusivity for all, many of our older or disabled students felt that what we put out as an association was geared more to the younger student. This was disheartening and absolutely needs to be something we look at for the next quarter to ensure they feel included and they truly get the benefit of what the association can do for them.

ISSUE 2:

Many are unsure on what the guidance is for carers versus care-experienced and there have been many discussions as to what evidence is required for each fund. There needs to be further clarification for required evidence going forward. I know from personal experience that many mature care-experienced students may not have access to specific proofs, many leave or go into care as children so no direct communications are provable as these tend to be held with the adult and not the child.

ISSUE 3:

Naturally, mental health and coping has been tough for Scottish students, there seems to a rise in students asking for information on how to stop studying, how to defer and many just wanting to outright quit. This is disheartening. We need to look at ways we can further promote support and assistance as well as understanding what the main causes are that are causing the barriers to them studying. Hopefully as restrictions ease in localities, many students will find their studying to also become easier however, we need to look out for those who are struggling out with the pandemic to see if we are missing any opportunity to support them in their modules.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Lorena Fontan Grana
ROLE:	Area Association Rep Wales
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2020
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Building a Welsh community</p> <p>Social media. My presence in social media through our Facebook page and Twitter is proving effective when it comes to sharing news and engaging students in events.</p> <p>My newsletter. March has seen another 180 students that had signed up for the quarterly newsletter. I am very pleased about the success of this project because it means that I can reach around 400 students directly by email every 3/4 months.</p> <p>Clwb Cymru. In February we hosted the LGBT+Black history month in partnership with the OUiW. We had the pleasure to have OU Pride to come and present too. The event was successful and has taught me that I am very keen on doing work/events with other groups and associations. Looking forward organising something early on in the summer.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Establishing strong relationships with the OU in Wales and the Welsh students</p> <p>The Wellbeing and Mental Health Project went live early on in March. I have not stopped sharing the links in all spaces as I think the resources will be very helpful to those suffering with their mental health at the peak of the pandemic. What this project has taught me is that the OUiW is very keen to work with me and the student's association. It was a pleasure writing up the blog for the launching of the project and it was fantastic having the opportunity to work with such a lovely bunch of people. We all feel very positive about both the project and the work that we done in partnership. I am sure that they will contact me again as soon as something else comes up.</p> <p>The Wales Volunteer Panel. The project came to an end later on in February. The Panel was a project that was brought to me during the beginning of my election. There have been positive outcomes such as the Wales Manifesto and</p>	

there have been challenges too. I am grateful for the relationships that I made and to the people that continue to support me in my role, without them I would not had been able to do as much as I did. I do not know what the future will look like for the Panel but I, as always, will support and guide Welsh students in every way I can.

The Wales Manifesto. I am in the middle of promoting the manifesto in as many spaces as I can hoping to spread the interests of Welsh students and the OU. We have created a video, an article for the Hoot and we are trying to get politicians attention on Twitter.

HEFCW'S Student Opportunity and Achievement Committee. Gareth Jones went to the meeting in March as I am still unable to leave work without a strict reason. Positive to say that they are welcoming our feedback. On the other hand, as Gareth mentioned to me in his feedback, during the PT review OUSA was not mentioned even as they represent the biggest cohort of part time students. Gareth brought this to their attention.

AREA 3: Community, student engagement and participation and building relationships between the OU in Wales and the office at MK

Student Consultation. Pretty quiet. Same issues as always raised around tuition: not consistent, different feedback from tutors during tutorials and your own tutor, not able to contact tutor.

It was brought up that the PGCE in Wales (first year running) is encountering some problems with mentoring and the workload. I am looking at this with Alayla as we feel we don't know enough about it.

Student feedback during Consultation was that they felt it was not enough time, it was rushed. My opinion is the same, most students were focused on tuition and their own experiences so the Strategy was a little bit left behind in the discussions.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

0

ISSUE 1:

I do not get contacted directly. If issues are raised in the Facebook Page then any of the moderators are dealing with the issues. If they don't know then I get involved. I have heard of students having problems with registration for October as they are not able to get finance for it. It is very early days to predict if this will become a problem.

ISSUE 2:

I have read quite a lot in social media about students struggling to juggle family, work and study in the middle of a pandemic and how the OU is not taking any consideration towards these students. That's their feelings.

ISSUE 3:

OUIW raised tuition fees with what felt like very little consultation with the Association. Although they may have justifications for the increase, it feels like the process could be improved to enable us to be comprehensively consulted.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Bev Smith
ROLE:	FASS FAR
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1:</p> <p>I have been involved with meetings regarding the Student Award project This is nearly completed and will be rolled out shortly. The two awards will be presented to two students in the BAME community, including Students in Secure Environments. Research is to continue on ways to present the monetary award without consequences to benefits etc.</p>	
<p>AREA 2:</p> <p>In a teachers and Students meeting I mentioned the popularity of the Study With Me Facebook groups. This was taken up by Student Support and there is now a link on the FASS Student support forum.</p>	
<p>AREA 3:</p> <p>The FASS Connect Monthly chats are proving popular. This month we were joined by Annie Taylor of student Support. Work is being carried out to see if there can be a Facebook group especially for Student Support for the FASS students in the faculty, with different topics every week/month.</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	8
<p>ISSUE 1:</p> <p>Students were concerned that they were given conflicting advice about assessment banking on A334. They were told banking was allowed when in fact the module is in life cycle review and so assessments can't be banked. I raised the issue and students were sent an apology with advice to get int touch with student support.</p>	
ISSUE 2	

Some students are unsatisfied with the length of time that tutors take to mark and return a TMA. Causing problems when tutor feedback was needed for the next TMA. This was raised in BoS. It was acknowledged that better communication was needed when AL's were going to overrun. However, it was also pointed out that with more students asking for extensions, Al's were under extreme pressure to get the TMA's marked on time, when TMA's were sent in at different times.

ISSUE 3:

Ongoing problems with Adobe Connect resulting in missed online tutorials is still an issue. I have raised this issue several times., but there is little the faculty can do except raise the issues themselves, which is what they continue to do.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Gareth Jones
ROLE:	Faculty Association Representative – Business and Law
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1:</p> <p>Engagement work with the other student representatives with the faculty continues to improve, with a more co-ordinated approach to issues. This has been supported through the pre-committee meeting briefing sessions, where issues can be highlighted and discussed as a team.</p> <p>These meetings are also supported through FBL organised student rep huddles, to which all student representatives within FBL are invited, in addition to the chairs of the respective societies with a focus on FBL. Unfortunately, the member of staff from FBL who coordinated these huddles, Mychelle Pride, will shortly be moving to WELS and will be missed.</p> <p>The work to extend the range of voices has continued too. This has included taking 4 observers to the recent FBL Faculty Assembly and, so far, 2 of these have been referred to the new student rep training pathway. Additionally, new representatives within FBL are becoming more involved in projects as they arise, expanding the range of voices from those usually involved in projects, and these reps will continue to be able to receive any support I can provide.</p>	
<p>AREA 2:</p> <p>Opportunities for students to engage with extracurricular activities has been a key focus during the last quarter for me. Whilst the obvious example of this was the FBL Freshers Quiz in February, there have been numerous other avenues explored to further.</p> <p>The first of this has been my involvement with the Societies, in particular the Commercial Awareness Society (OUCAS) and the Business Associate Society (OUBAS), on which I sat on both committees. Unfortunately, it was plainly obvious that attempts to revive did not have the required momentum and a decision was made to integrate OUBAS into OUCAS, which is currently ongoing. Both OUCAS and the OU Law Society continue to provide a wide range of events.</p>	

I have also been working with members of the faculty on ideas for a feature day on SHL due to take place in June/July for the benefit of students within FBL.

Very recently, I have been appointed to the working group set-up within FBL to host a student/AL conference in late summer early autumn. This is at an early stage of development, but for me is a very exciting project to be working on, as it was at a similar event that my interest in being more involved with the OU and the Students Association first started.

I have also supported a few faculty organised events where these have come up and will continue to so as they arise.

AREA 3:

Work to support the development of the FBL Strategic Goals in relation to EDIA for the upcoming 3 years has continued at pace. Key priorities have been established, including the barriers to achieving these and this will be going to the Faculty Executive and governance for presentation and approval shortly.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

100+

ISSUE 1:

Concerns have been raised over the impact surrounding the development and introduction of the new LLB degree (R81) and the withdrawal of the current LLB (Q79). Q79 has now entered teach out and will remain so for the next 5 years with 60 credits being removed year on year and from 21J the new LLB degree will be introduced at a pace of a level a year.

This generated a lot of questions, especially following correspondence from the OU, for myself, SST and the careers team, and continues to do so. In response to this, the 20 most commonly asked questions has been collated and on the 16th March a Q&A recording was made with myself, the Law School Teaching Director, and the Head of Student Experience for Law. At the time of writing this report, this is just being fact checked before release.

ISSUE 2:

As this quarter included critical enrolment points for B and J presentations (the closing of B and the opening of J), many queries surrounding this have been received. This includes a variety of questions, like:

- What module to choose
- Study intensity
- Issues surround R81/Q79
- Finance questions – particularly seasonal academic years
- Credit transfers

ISSUE 3:

Questions continue to be asked about the support available due to the pandemic. This has changed from comments about how sufficient the support is to more of how to access it. This often just involves signposting, though the granting of extensions does still need a more active involvement where the student is unable to achieve the correct outcome based on the current guidance available.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Katie MacFarlane
ROLE:	STEM FAR
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
AREA 1: Communicating between faculty and student body	
<p>This quarter I attended my first student consultation events, where I assisted with facilitating and was joint host of the OU Students Association section, along with another representative from the central executive committee. I absolutely loved hearing the varied and insightful viewpoints from the students present, it was great to see their voices being heard directly by the university.</p> <p>I am now involved in various committees and working groups where I am ensuring that the student voice is heard. I also attended my first interview panel for the selection of a new head of school within the faculty. I was able to bring the student perspective to the interview panels and felt that that perspective was welcomed and listened to.</p> <p>I have been continuing to establish and develop relationships with students and the faculty, as well as other areas of the OU. I have been actively listening to what students are saying and relaying these views to the faculty. Going forward I am continuing to explore potential methods for student's voices to be heard more directly.</p>	
AREA 2: Social events for STEM students	
<p>In February, I was able to host a PhD research presentation event where 2 students from the School of Physical Sciences gave a presentation and question and answer session on their research. This event was attended by approximately 30 students, who were very engaged and gave positive feedback on the event. I am currently working on scheduling further PhD presentation events, each featuring a different school. While these events were initially planned to be held on a monthly basis, this has proven difficult to achieve as PhD students who wish to participate need to be found, and they need to have enough time to prepare. Work is still ongoing to arrange future presentations and dates for each event will be announced once everything is in place.</p> <p>I have also started holding regular STEM drop-in meetings, where students can come for a chat with fellow STEM students or raise any concerns they might have. Going forward, my aim is to ensure there is at least one STEM event every month,</p>	

in order that to promote a sense of community. I will be making enquiries in student spaces to find out what kind of events students would like to see happen.

AREA 3: Engage with student body

I have continued to be present on social media platforms. In my previous quarterly impact report, I stated I intended to create a social media presence as STEM rep. I have begun this by creating a STEM Faculty Representative Facebook page, which I am using to promote events and to keep students updated of my progress. Going forward I will be further building upon this page and updating it more regularly.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

65

ISSUE 1: Reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities

I was contacted by a student who was having difficulty accessing tutorials due to Adobe Connect not having closed captions. I made several enquiries both within SST and with other student representatives to find out what potential options were available for this student. I then contacted the student to explain what these options were, and a suitable approach was found.

ISSUE 2: Return of TMAs

Have been contacted by students regarding return of TMAs out with the guideline period of 15 working days. I advised students to contact their tutors in the first instance and then SST if no response from tutor within a reasonable timeframe.

ISSUE 3: Additional funding application:

A student had filed an application for additional funding, but the request was taking a very long time to be processed. The student was advised to contact SST and it turned out that the application had been removed from the system due to a computer error. The student was able to resubmit application and issue was resolved.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Lucy Richardson
ROLE:	Open and Access Faculty Area Representative
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
AREA 1: Attended meetings to represent Open and Access students and keep the open and access programs at the heart of the conversation.	
AREA 2: Held freshers' event to engage with students at the start of their study journey	
AREA 3:	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	6
ISSUE 1: Issue with initial contact from Tutor signposted to Student Support	
ISSUE 2:	
ISSUE 3:	



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Verity Saunders
ROLE:	WELS FAR
QUARTER / YEAR:	April 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
AREA 1:	
AREA 2:	
AREA 3:	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	
ISSUE 1:	
ISSUE 2:	
ISSUE 3:	