

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee
19 - 21 July 2019

STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE PROPOSAL

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **discuss** the items on this report.
- ii) **approve** further scoping of this project.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Student leadership conferences are common in the sector, with many institutions and students unions (from further education to higher education) offering similar events for their volunteers. They can vary, with some initiatives focussed on students developing entrepreneurial or campaigning skills – to being prepared for employment.
- 1.2 The Open University Students Association has many who could be described as ‘Student Leaders’ volunteering with the organisation. We are committed to not only supporting our students to be as successful as they can be within their roles, but also to inspiring and empowering those who might take the reins next.
- 1.3 Student leaders at the Association have gained many skills and competencies whilst in their role, and it would be a great shame for future student leaders to miss out on the knowledge and expertise that current volunteers bring to the organisation. We propose that a peer to peer networking and learning event should take place, to encourage dialogue between those who know it best – and those that are keen to be more involved.

2. Links to the Strategy

- 2.1 A student leadership type event or conference aligns itself with the developing Students Association Strategy’s ‘Engage & Empower’ strand, in terms of increasing engagement and developing opportunities for students. In the current Association 2020 strategy it is also relevant to “Enhancing our support for student volunteering”.

3. Aims of the Project (these can be developed further)

- to enhance Association volunteer skills and competencies
- to gain momentum for elections and increase the awareness and confidence of potential candidates
- to support students interested in enhancing their role as volunteers with the Students Association
- to increase the amount of peer to peer / student to student led events and activities
- to enable volunteers in leadership roles to share their experience.

4. What could the day look like?

- 4.1 Getting into Leadership: This stream would be most relevant to volunteers who are thinking of taking on a leading role in the future and who would like to develop their confidence and relevant key skills. Think: building confidence, learning about what is on offer and being professional. Best facilitators for this stream: current volunteers, Association staff and CEC members.
- 4.2 Advanced: This stream would be most relevant for those already in a leadership role who would like to develop their competencies and enhance what they do. Think: innovating, reflecting on own practice and ways of working. The best facilitators for these sessions would be student chairs, student project leaders and CEC members.
- 4.3 Elected office: This stream would be for students who are interested in undertaking an elected position at the Students Association to provide them with good quality, practical information. Think: empowerment and inspiration. To remain impartial, the best facilitators for these sessions would be mostly staff

5. General Themes

Conflict and challenge	Communication and confidence	Digital communications
Influence and impact	Being a leader	Information and planning

- 5.1 These sessions would need to recognise the diversity of our student population.

6. Student Leadership Toolkit and Online Activities

- 6.1 In the run up to the event, it would be helpful to devise a student leadership toolkit ([See here for a Student Leader in Sports Example](#)). Participants at the event could have a reflective log / pack that would enable them to review some of the day's activities and take it away with them for reference. There are also examples for specific projects e.g. [Campaigning](#).
- 6.2 It would be possible to have an online version of this event, with some of the resources being available for students around the same time with potential to stream key activities. In some sessions, a live Adobe Chat could also take place

in parallel. Some sessions, however, would only be practical in a face to face environment.

6.3 A successful event could:

- measurably improve student development
- encourage the sharing of practice amongst student leaders and develop skills for both participants and presenters
- provide an opportunity for volunteer training, across various roles, with attendees ranging from meet-up hosts to Senate Reference Group members
- be the start of potentially creating an Association student leadership programme, for all volunteers to optionally access.

7. The Central Executive Committee is asked to approve this idea in principle, so that we can continue to further scope the event and develop its objectives. We would also welcome reflection on content and themes that may be useful to consider.

Steph Stubbins
Deputy President

Sam Harding
Head of Student Voice

Agenda, for visioning purposes and not actual set sessions, as the content would be determined by the project working group.

0900 hrs	Registration		
0915 hrs	Welcome and opening remarks from President		
	Getting into leadership	Advanced	Elected office
1000 hrs	Public speaking	Developing your leadership style	So, you are thinking of standing?
1045 hrs	<i>Refreshment and Reflection Break</i>		
1115 hrs	Basic leadership	Chairing effective meetings	Writing a winning manifesto
1200 hrs	Confident online communication	Influencing: How to get what you want	Meet and greet – CEC
1300 hrs	Lunch		
	Getting into leadership	Advanced	Elected office
1400 hrs	Managing conflict	Making an Impact	Winning campaigns and digital communications
1445 hrs	Enhancing your employability skills	Student led projects	Challenging conversations
1530 hrs	<i>Refreshment and Reflection Break</i>		
1600 hrs	Panel Discussion on the role of Student Leadership (Possible panel: BAME Chair, Deputy President, Societies Chair, Student Project Leader)		
1630 – 1700 hrs	Close of Meeting		

[\(There are some great suggestions here for more sessions\)](#)