

## OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

### Central Executive Committee (CEC)

18 July 2020

### CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

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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)
- Vice President Community (page 6)
- Vice President Media & Campaigns (page 9)
- Vice President Student Support (page 12)
- Student OU Council Member (page 15)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for England (page 17)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Wales (page 19)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Scotland (page 20)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Northern Ireland (page 22)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Business & Law (FBL) (page 23)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Wellbeing, Education & Language Studies (WELS) (page 25)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) (page 27)

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

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This report covers the period from 10 April onwards and is an overview rather than a complete list. Forthcoming items (30 June onwards) are in italics.

### **General Comments**

This is my final report as President, so I am starting with some general remarks before going into the list of specific meetings.

When I stood for election, I made three specific pledges; this seems an apposite time to review them:-

- **I would be visible and accessible to students**

I have done my best with this one – I have spent a lot of time on social media and forums talking to students and answering queries, and have had many contact me proactively. Unfortunately, there are still students who do not know we exist; addressing that is very rightly a focus of our new Strategy and something on which we must continue to push the OU.

- **I would work to embed student voice and partnership working at the heart of the university**

We have greatly increased representation on non-governance committees such as working groups or task and finish groups, including very high-level bodies such as the CSR Student Delivery Board. We also routinely now have representation on the appointments panels for senior roles. We have involvement in the scholarship of teaching and learning and in delivering training events amongst other things. We have seen some examples of genuine partnership, including in event organisation, in scholarship projects and in work to improve resources for new students.

There is still lots of work to be done here – including our getting better at recruiting reps to satisfy the demand for student representation – but progress has been made.

- **I would try to get individual representation introduced, if feasible**

Individual representation is one of the projects in our new strategy. Research has been carried out into it, with students, and looking at what is offered elsewhere. A business case has been produced, and we have the support of the Student Casework Office. At the time of writing, we have not yet had the meeting at which we present the business case – fingers crossed!

I thought I would also mention a few developments of which I am particularly proud

- **Recording tutorials** – at the time of writing, we have a policy set to go to Education Committee for approval which will give students access to a recording of every “tutorial type” (with the only exceptions if the tutorial involves students sharing sensitive personal experiences, or is just for practising language conversation, for example). Getting this far has taken a lot of hard work, and we have been fortunate that PVC Students has backed this completely.
- **Student Support Videos** – these are a series of videos designed to support students at crucial times in their study journey. They have been very popular – typically having up to 10,000 views – and have been well received.
- **Our Strategy** - the development of our new strategy has involved input from CEC, Trustees, staff, other student volunteers and the student body more widely. We have produced a succinct, focused and stretching but realistic strategy, with

a range of short, medium and long term projects, and obtained buy-in from key stakeholders including VCE and the Nations offices

- **Our student-facing response during the pandemic** – this response has been on two fronts. To keep morale up, CEC and other volunteers pulled out the stops to offer three or four online events a week to students, including quizzes, chats, book club, film night, and specific focused sessions on topics from pets to cookery to study skills. To help students confused or worried by the changes to module assessment and approaches more generally during the pandemic, many CEC members put in incredible amounts of time answering queries, addressing misinformation and rumours and replacing with correct information, escalating problems and student issues. We could not reach everyone but we did our best to have eyes and ears everywhere, and to be always ready to offer practical help for students on an individual or collective basis.

Of course, like any term, ours has seen failures alongside successes. And we have had an unprecedented depletion of our ranks – several key individuals' personal circumstances meant they could either not stay in role or give as much time to it as they might have wished. But I have been so grateful to CEC colleagues who went the extra mile or ten to cover for absentees. And all in all, I am very proud of what we have achieved – I hope it will prove to have lain a good foundation on which our successors may build.

## Meetings

Not an exhaustive list.

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

- To discuss promotion of an opportunity to OU students by Careers and Employability Services
- To discuss the content (and the appropriate timing for) an alumni survey
- To discuss Student Voice action plan for a Board of Studies
- To discuss support for resits and resubmissions
- To discuss Covid crisis fund
- To discuss communications regarding Student-Nominated Tutor Awards (as part of the Recognition of Excellence in Teaching)
- Concerning new single subject degrees and their requirements
- With the Vice Chancellor, to discuss ongoing student concerns in the pandemic
- To support the running of quizzes in Adobe Connect
- To discuss student representation
- To discuss communication of specific matters around assessment changes in the pandemic
- To discuss research on student views on changes and communications in the pandemic
- To discuss CSR and AL Contract with University Secretary
- To discuss how students could be further engaged as partners in learning design
- To input into the design of new help centre pages and tools to support students post-results
- To discuss ideas on enhancing support for credit-transfer students
- *To review the process involved in the Recognition of Excellence in Teaching awards*

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

- Library
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Students
- Team in PVC Students office
- Government & External Affairs
- Research, Enterprise and Scholarship
- *Internal Audit*

#### Regular meetings with Association staff

- With Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executives
- With Chief Executive
- With Sue McCabe

#### Specific Students Association meetings

- Induction with new staff member
- To discuss subvention
- QAA submission working group
- With CEC and volunteers to discuss plans for student-facing online events during pandemic
- Appointments Committee, to discuss approach to recruiting
- Steering Committee
- OSL Board meeting (*I was appointed to the OSL Board due to Steph Stubbins' resignation*)
- With CEC and CCRs to give an update on assessment changes during the pandemic
- To discuss handover weekend
- To discuss plans for consultation at conference
- To discuss the proposed business case for individual representation
- To discuss how better to support and represent our Black students
- Board of Trustees
- *Planning session for development of materials to support best practice in OU staff working with student reps*
- *Societies AGM*

#### OU Committees and Groups

- Emergency Management Team –student support (once a week)
- Emergency Management Team – communications (once a week)
- Emergency Management Team – academic implications (twice a week)
- Student Voice Steering Group
- Access, Participation and Success Steering Group
- Senior Team
- Student Delivery Board (CSR)
- Apprenticeships Steering Group
- Apprenticeships Change Programme
- Social Media Policy Working Group
- Exams & Assignments Steering Group
- Curriculum Portfolio Panel
- Support for New Students working group (and various associated Task and Finish subgroups)
- Council
- Digital Strategies Steering Group
- Addressing Student Dissatisfaction Working Group

- Recognition of Prior Learning group
- Senate (and Senate Reference Group, which I chaired following the resignation of VP Education)
- *Student Consultation Management Group*
- *Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group*
- *PVC Students Advisory Group*
- *eSTEE M Student Reference Panel*
- *Education Committee*
- *QAA Reference Group*

## **Other events**

### OU events

- Presenting at eSTEE M conference
- Delivering two workshops on Students and Social Media at AL Professional Development event online
- Attending Scholarship of Mental Health event
- Attending seminar on student experience of feedback and assessment

### OU Recruitment

- *Interviewing for Institute of Educational Technology Director*

### External events

- *Presenting at Horizons in STEM HE Conference*

### Delivering Association training/ information

- On use of Adobe Connect
- For forum moderators
- Explaining conference business papers

### Association events

- Co-running chats and running quizzes to support students in lockdown

*Cath Brown*  
*President*

## REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNITY

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This is my last report as Vice President Community for the 2020-2022 term, and it covers the months of May and June 2020.

### **OU Students Association Conference**

After lockdown, it became obvious that the Students Association Conference won't be able to go ahead as planned – primarily a face to face event, bringing to the Milton Keynes campus a great number of students. There were several options considered, for example going ahead with Conference all online, or postponing it until this autumn or next summer. A decision was made to go ahead and have Conference all online, which is in line with the University's policy of no face to face events during this calendar year, and was the right thing to do.

I was very apprehensive about attending Conference online, as VP Community I know the importance of face to face events, having students together, visiting the campus, attending workshops, talks, etc. But my fears were unfounded, as Conference was a very social event, with plenty of interesting talks, debates, information sessions, chats. We even had a few rooms in our virtual pub on Microsoft Teams! All student volunteers involved, and the office team worked tirelessly for a number of months to pull this event together, and we received very positive feedback. I would like to thank all involved, particularly Amy Undrell, the Conference Project Manager, for making this event a success, and for bringing such amazing speakers!

A particular note about this Conference's pledge drive – we asked students to pledge to join a society... or two! Societies play such an important role in our students' academic journeys, and even have an impact on their wellbeing, mental health and, in quite a few cases, were instrumental in developing lifelong friendships. I am looking forward to our societies growing, acquiring new members and organising even more awesome events for the benefit of their members. If you would like to join a society, or set one up if we don't have what you are interested in, please visit our website at <https://www.oustudents.com/societies>

### **Clubs and Societies**

The number of clubs is growing, almost every week we have applications for a new club. They range from Airsofters Club to Young Students Club. Note: We need a club with a name starting with Z, so this way of explaining actually works!

The societies are ticking over nicely, although it was a particularly quiet patch, with EMAs and revision time playing the top part. We saw some of the societies starting to advertise their events, which are open to all students, in the main Facebook areas frequented by students. I am sure that in time, more and more societies are going to adapt to the online-only activities and will reach an increasingly wider audience.

### **Community Drop Ins**

Community Drop Ins are ticking over nicely. We have the Tuesday lunchtime and Thursday afternoon/evening weekly chats, we also have Netflix Watch Parties, Book Clubs, quizzes. Our great meetup hosts started to organise local meetups in their areas.

These are mostly happening in Adobe Connect, and they are all advertised on the Events page on our website <https://www.oustudents.com/events>

### **Students Association Presence at the Residential Schools in Bath**

Due to the cancellation of the Engineering residential schools due to take place in July and August in Bath, with no alternative online replacement, the Students Association presence won't happen. This gives us the time to look at the activities we offer, and we can have a review, get new ideas on board and make this experience even better than before!

### **OU Students Shop**

As you know, VP Community is one of the company directors for OSL (OUSA Services Limited), the commercial name for the OU Students Shop. After a period of not trading, the shop is now up and running, with deliveries providing OU students with study aids, gorgeous hoodies and zoodies and all sorts of wonderful OU branded merchandise. We are going through a difficult time, the University's decision not to charge for the past exam papers, the chance of branding and the lockdown affecting the bottom line. We made a very tough decision to bring OSL back to the Association and look at what we can do to improve the sales and return the shop to profitable status. The profits from the OU Students Shop go to OUSET, the Open University Students Education Trust, providing help for existing students in financial hardship.

### **Task and Finish Group – Community and Sense of Belonging**

I have been invited to take part in this task and finish group, and we are looking at how to nurture the OU Community and increase the sense of belonging. The group comprises of University representatives from all faculties, departments and the Students Association. The first meeting is due to take place on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> July, and I am looking forward to being part of the group and playing my part. We all know distance learning can be very isolating, and I welcome the University's initiative to look into this issue and help alleviate it.

### **End of Term Thanks**

As we are fastly approaching the end of the 2018-2020 term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped me in my role and helped OU Students Community be where it is now. First and foremost, my Central Executive Colleagues, who, during these very challenging times, pulled together, supported each other, stepped up to the new way of working. Special thanks to our President, Cath Brown. She's not only a great friend, but a wonderful volunteering boss, and I am not sure a lot of the things I've done in my role would have happened without her gentle nudges, kicks into action and much deserved "are you going to do anything about this?" questions. The Community Team in the Students Association Office, a wonderful team of people working tirelessly for the benefit of the students and also succeeding to support me and my, sometimes, weird ideas. The Students Association Office Team, in particular the Operations Team, who I worked with closely when attending face to face events and taking the OU Students Shop to reach different audiences. The wonderful student volunteers, without which most of our activities, societies, clubs, meetups etc won't be happening. Thank you all very much for all your hard work, support, encouragement and dedication.

In closing, I would like to wish all the non-returning CEC colleagues all the best in their future endeavors, and I hope we'll all keep in touch.

### **Future meetings**

At the time of writing, there is only one meeting scheduled for the 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2020, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. With the end of the term fastly approaching, and the impending holiday season, I know there won't be as many meetings as there would normally be.

*Anca Seaton*  
*Vice President Community*



## REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT MEDIA & CAMPAIGNS

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My final report as Vice President Media and Campaigns, well this came around rather quickly! A lot of my work in this quarter is currently confidential and I seemed to have done a lot more ad-hoc, one off things and just general day-to-day stuff than usual, but please be assured I have been even more busy than usual lately. Of course, these are not things that make my report nice and long and they are very hard to form into paragraphs, but I am really proud of all the work I have been a part of these last few months. This report covers my activities since the last CEC meeting held in April.

### **Centrally organised online events**

As an Association, we carry on offering an increased number of online, community type sessions for students, which I oversee in consultation with the rest of the CEC. With the easing of lockdown on-going, we are slowly reducing the number of these and we are receiving a lot of help from our volunteer pool in the running of them. For reference, we held 18 online sessions in May, 13 in June (slightly less due to Conference weekend) and we are planning to host 14 of them in June. These sessions vary from general drop-in and chat, through themed sessions such as bring your pet or craft sessions, to Quizzes, Movie Nights and Book Clubs. In the coming months we hope to keep 2 Quizzes, a Movie Night, a Book Club and 1 drop-in chat a week on offer every month.

### **OU communications about change of assessment (due to pandemic)**

Undoubtedly, you will see most CEC members mention our efforts in informing, signposting and reassuring students around the time of changes to assessments (due to the pandemic) being communicated to students. The OU has certainly been much better in some parts of this work than others, but I think we can all appreciate that writing a guidance makes sense to the author after reading it so many times, and spotting easy to misunderstand parts becomes rather hard. Unfortunately, in this case, it often left students confused about what is happening on the end of their modules. Due to Student Support Teams operating e-mail, webchat, and forums only, the response times to students have increased up to 5-7 working days. This chain reaction meant that a lot of my colleagues and I ended up spending hours on end on facebook and whatsapp groups clarifying communications they were sent, and messages put on the help centre. Overall, I think most of it is now clear to students.

### **Student Consultation Management Group**

I attended my first meeting on this group, which looks at the OU's consultation process both online and in person. At the meeting I attended, we were looking at the student submitted consultation topic recommendations. It also seemed, that despite most of the face to face consultations having to be cancelled, the online replacement events were able to generate some valuable feedback from students.

### **Student Voice week (and Student Voice steering group)**

I am due to attend my first Student Voice steering group in a few weeks, but work is already undergoing around Student Voice week. It is going to be a partnership event run by the OU's Student Voice team and the Association. We are due to start having meetings around the timing and gathering of session ideas next week.

## **Adobe Connect and Microsoft Teams training**

With all of the volunteers, groups and everyone across the Association relying entirely on online spaces to do all parts of their work, I have delivered various Adobe Connect and Microsoft Teams training for those who needed it to ensure they are able to replicate all their meetings and events into online spaces.

## **NSS**

The National Student Survey closed on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. With the OU centrally agreeing not to put a lot of effort and time into advertising it (due to the pandemic), we await the confirmation of final completion rate from Office for Students.

## **Website**

Work behind the scenes (for now) carries on in developing a consultation process, to ensure the website represents our needs as an Association and is also a central hub for students in finding out information and engaging with us.

## **Conference 2020**

Without a doubt Conference is always one of the highlights of everyone's term. Due to the current pandemic, unfortunately it had to be held entirely online. As worried as I was about it being fully online initially, it turned into the same exciting weekend as my first Conference on campus 2 years ago. I attended pretty much as many sessions as I could, and I was fortunate to run one of the consultations looking at the online experience with Barbara Tarling as well as taking part in a Q&A about what it's like to be a student rep, alongside Gareth Jones. It was most definitely a very fun filled weekend for me and I look forward to conference 2022!

## **Moving forward**

As part of my transition into my new Vice President Engagement role I have also been involved in introduction meetings with the OU's MarComms unit, Student Voice team and with their external engagement team. These meetings were mainly to help me understand where they sit in the OU's structure and to give them an overview of how my role will be changing from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. It also gave me a good head start on seeing the points and opportunities for joint working. Within the Association I also carry on taking part in the handover and induction process, and establishing how I am going to shift from mainly working with the Digi Comms team to spreading my time across them, the strategic projects and the Student Voice part of the volunteer team. Although this is my last report as Vice President Media and Campaigns and my new role as Vice President Engagement will have a slightly different focus, a lot of what I have covered in my reports over the last 2 years, will also carry on being part of my reports for the next 2 years.

## **Meetings since last CEC weekend:**

27<sup>th</sup> April- Online Activities planning meeting  
30<sup>th</sup> April- Student Consultation Management Group  
7<sup>th</sup> May- CEC induction  
28<sup>th</sup> May- MarComms meeting  
1<sup>st</sup> June- Student Consultation Management sub-group  
4<sup>th</sup> June- OU Student Voice team meeting

4<sup>th</sup> June- OU External engagement team meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> June- participating in a UCAS event  
19<sup>th</sup> June- supporting black students  
19<sup>th</sup> June- OfS access and participation plan meeting  
23<sup>rd</sup> June- Digital Strategy Steering group  
26-28<sup>th</sup> June- Conference 2020  
30<sup>th</sup> June- referencing communications meeting  
2<sup>nd</sup> July- Student Voice planning meeting  
6<sup>th</sup> July- Student Consultation Management Group  
18-10<sup>th</sup> July- Handover weekend  
22<sup>nd</sup> July- Student Voice steering group

Digi Comms meetings- 28<sup>th</sup> April, 29<sup>th</sup> April, 4<sup>th</sup> May, 5<sup>th</sup> May, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 10<sup>th</sup> June 11<sup>th</sup> June, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2<sup>nd</sup> July

*Fanni Zombor*  
*Vice President Media and Campaigns*

## REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT SUPPORT

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Since my April report, the strange way of living and attending meetings continues. I hope you, your friends and family are keeping safe and well. I wish the best to all of you waiting for module results. The OU continues to update its website [here](#) with information about how the OU and study has been affected by the virus.

This remit includes anything that can impact on students. I oversee the Peer Support Service, Chair Service Review and jointly Chair Student Support Team staff / Association Reps meetings, and I am a Trustee of OUSET (OU Students Educational Trust). Until July 31<sup>st</sup> I will be more involved in the Disabled Students Group (D S G) and be at some OU meetings normally attended by V P Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

This report is tinged with sadness as this 2 year term ends on July 31<sup>st</sup>. It's been an incredible 2 years, many thanks to those who went above and beyond what's expected of us, to make us a team I am proud to have been part of. I won't single anyone out, other than Cath who was an extraordinary President. I look forward to working with the new team. From a staff perspective, Sammi went on Maternity leave earlier than expected due to the arrival of Austin, mother and baby doing well. We welcome Myles to our team who is already making an impact in this role.

### **Peer Support Service**

Our Peer Supporters continue to support students and answer one off queries. The Service is available to all students needing a listening ear. There are contact details and information [here](#) and on the Peer Supporters Facebook Page called 'OU Students Peer Support' - <https://www.facebook.com/OUstudentsPeerSupport/>. If you message the page, your posts and replies will be private.

If the chance to help students sounds amazing, read on. We are recruiting Peer Supporters and the closing date is July 20<sup>th</sup>, if you want to find out more, look [here](#).

### **O U S E T (OUSET)**

The OU Students Educational Trust is the Association's Charity for students experiencing financial hardship. Details can be found [here](#).

### **Inclusion July Meeting**

Inclusion discusses issues that can have an impact on students with protected characteristics. VP Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will take this on after July 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **S M H A (Student Mental Health Agreement) working group**

This group is Scotland specific and looks at actions rather than strategy or policies. As a result of this Agreement, the Students Association and the OU in Scotland will be working more closely to improve student mental wellbeing.

### **Recording online (Adobe Connect) Tutorials**

Cath and I are on the group ensuring that most modules will show in advance which tutorials will be recorded and which won't. Hopefully, all modules will have that information eventually. Details of how this will operate will be available shortly.

### **D S G (Disabled Students Group)**

I currently keep an eye open for unanswered questions and share pieces of information. Some students are still receiving emails from the OU asking for evidence to support requests for alternative formats. If, on receiving this email, you have any concerns please contact the OU to see whether the evidence they have is sufficient and to advise you if you need to provide anything more. They might also discuss how else they can support your studies.

### **E D I S G (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Steering Group)**

The OU is currently reviewing how as an institution it approaches all aspects of E D I (EDI). We heard that the OU is planning activities to celebrate Black History Month and Patrice (VP EDI elect) spoke about her involvement.

### **S M H W G (Student Mental Health Working Group)**

The Mental Health Strategy for Students and Staff should soon be available for students to read. Another group will look at its implementation. The OU has put Mental Health and Wellbeing information in one place on the Help Centre [here](#). We heard about a new OpenLearn module to help students build confidence in using forums, it will hopefully be available in July. BWW (Big White Wall) is changing its name because it can unwittingly cause hurt, confusion and anger.

### **CEC Meeting**

At the previous CEC Meeting PVC Students Liz Marr spoke about last year's Alternative Formats delays. This can be found in the Minutes [here](#).

### **Association and Student Support Team / Student Recruitment Support Centre Staff Meeting**

In a joint meeting between Student Association reps and staff from SSTs and SRSCs they mentioned the SST forums ([here](#)) are very popular. Incoming phone calls are not currently possible but the Webchat has been expanded, so students can now register for modules on it. The response to emails is usually happening within 5 days. Students in Scotland were having problems but a workaround has been found for students needing to complete paperwork when registering.

### **Conference**

Considering our staff and Steering Committee had a short time to organise an online Conference we had an amazing weekend. We asked students their views on matters that will help inform future approaches to the OU. Societies had a major plug – more information about Societies, Groups and Clubs is on our website [here](#). Amazing speakers included Brian Cox – I couldn't understand the questions, let alone the answers, but he seems a lovely person, keen to share information in a very engaging way. I wasn't able to hear all speakers but Sabrina Cohen-Hatton talked about the influence her research is having on training emergency service workers. She spoke

about some dark times as a youngster and was very inspiring, with comments such as circumstances define where you start but do not have to determine where you end up.

## **Mental Health Online Conference**

As this was not arranged by the OU, any websites and comments are not the OU's or the Association's. Many of the speakers spoke of being kind to ourselves and others, one spoke of the importance of ensuring that part of each day is focussed on what we want to do and how to achieve it, because that helps our mental wellbeing. They emphasised the importance of reaching out to others if you need help. Another speaker spoke about the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service, run by Remploy and funded by the Government, their website is [here](#).

## **Black Lives Matter**

As an Association we are taking positive steps to support the principle that Black lives matter. All EDI will move across to Patrice on August 1<sup>st</sup> but it does not mean that the Central Executive Committee, Association staff, and Board of Trustees will put everything on her shoulders. We have made a start by our statement which can be found [here](#). A way to send your comments is included on that page, please use it to share what you feel we need to know to be able to fully support, represent and include all students.

## **Various Meetings**

I attend various Task and Finish Working Groups, including Supporting new students, Communication, and Exams and Assessments. One area mentioned in a few of these is trying to ensure students on study breaks or in between modules are aware of resources or free modules they could be accessing.

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

## **Commitments until July 31<sup>st</sup>**

July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Communications Meeting
July 7 <sup>th</sup>	Exams and Assessment
July 8 <sup>th</sup>	SRSC Staff / Association Meeting
July 14 <sup>th</sup>	SMHWG
July 15 <sup>th</sup>	SeGA (Securing Greater Accessibility)
July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Access, Participation & Success group
July 16 <sup>th</sup>	Inclusion
July 17 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup>	CEC Meeting
July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	SMHA
July 27 <sup>th</sup>	Service Review
TBC	OUSET Trustees Meeting

*Alison Kingan*  
*Vice President Student Support*

## REPORT OF STUDENT OU COUNCIL MEMBER

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By the time this is published most of us will be coming out of lockdown and adjusting to our new, if limited, freedom of movement. For the OU and the Students Association however, activity will continue to be 'online only' at least until the end of the year. I have largely made my peace with technology and adapted to online meetings; I've even taken part in the Association's first ever online Conference, brilliantly planned by the Steering Committee and superbly executed by our hard-working staff team. I loved every minute of it, especially the amazing and inspirational guest speakers. Many congratulations and heartfelt thanks to everyone involved.

### Council Meetings

#### Extraordinary Council Meeting 16 April 2020 (held via Microsoft Teams)

At this meeting the Council

- focused primarily on matters relating to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic
- agreed that the OU had risen to the challenges it faced in an impressive way and that staff were doing an excellent job to maintain services to students in difficult circumstances
- noted the measures the University had taken, in compliance with OfS guidance, to enable students to complete their modules and qualifications
- approved the process to be followed for the appointment of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Enterprise, and Scholarship).

#### Council Meeting 12 May 2020 (held via Microsoft Teams)

At this meeting the Council

- received updates on the progress of CSR and implementation of the AI contract
- approved in principle a temporary, fixed-term increase in the number of external co-opted members of Council from 9 to 11 in order to redress the imbalance in BAME representation on the Council.
- welcomed the announcement that the OU will participate in the UCAS Clearing system this year
- approved the Student and Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- noted approval of the OU's Access and Participation Plan by the OfS, and the University's monitoring plans
- noted current institutional performance against the agreed strategic measures

#### Governance and Nominations Committee (held by correspondence 10-23 June 2020)

- considered the Annual Effectiveness Review
- other items were deferred until the autumn

### Academic Governance Advisory Group

Parts of the implementation plan have been paused while staff focus on the work needed to support students through the impact of the pandemic. Senate has agreed that

- work will continue on workstream 1 (Faculty governance) and workstream 5 (operational improvements)
- Workstreams 2, 3, and 4 – Senate and Senate sub-committees (Teaching) and (Research) – will be paused until the autumn
- The Academic Governance Advisory Group will stay in existence until the autumn, at which point it should be able to hand over to the planned Oversight Group

### *Academic Governance and Student Representation*

Taking the Association's review of representation as a starting point, regular meetings are now taking place between the Students Association, members of the Governance team and staff from the PVS-Students office to discuss how the OU can best support students in their representative roles.

### **QER Review**

We are a bit behind where we hoped to be at this stage because the pressure of other work (conference, handover, committee AERs etc) has impacted all the staff and student members of the working group. Sarah Jones (President elect) and Cin McGuigan (incoming VP Education) will be joining the Working Group at the end of July and writing will get underway in earnest at the beginning of August. It may be a bit optimistic but we still hope to have a first draft of the written submission by the end of August and will be inviting comments from the new CEC, CCRs and SRG members in due course. Work on the video is scheduled for September, when we will be asking for contributions from a diverse range of students.

### **Student Charter Task and Finish Group**

I'm absolutely delighted to report that Senate approved the new Student Charter at its meeting on 17 June. It's a great moment when a Task and Finish group finally reaches the end of a task! Lots of people contributed to this work but special thanks are due to Rachel Garnham and Julia Levitt from the PVC-S office, who did most of the heavy lifting.

### **Meetings and other activities**

Since my last report I have attended meetings of QAC, SRG, Senate, Council, and the regular quarterly meetings of the Student Voice Steering Group and the Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group. Sandra Summers and I continue to have had regular QER catchup meetings with our OU counterparts to share information and report progress.

Only one CEC meeting and one final Council meeting left before handover and the end of my time as a CEC member. I'm looking forward to my new role as a Student Trustee and if life ever gets back to normal I hope we will all be able to meet up and celebrate together as a team.

*Barbara Tarling*

*Student Member of OU Council*



## REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR ENGLAND

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This is the last CEC report for the Area Association Representative (England) for this CEC term and covers the period from April to July 2020.

### Activity

Coronavirus continues to impact on our everyday lives, and we continue to manage the best we can with the current restrictions. I'm awfully sad that the current CEC will not be able to meet face to face for the last time this term before the new CEC take over on August 1<sup>st</sup>, but completely understand and support the need to protect the health and safety of everyone around us and follow Government guidance. Consequently, in this period I have not attended many meetings or events due to things being put on hold or cancelled. Combined with the increased workload in the day job which has had an effect on being able to attend some of the remote meetings that have taken place.

That said, I have had the opportunity to attend some online meetings, not least the first ever wholly online CEC meeting at the end of April. We were all pleasantly surprised that things seemed to go off without too many IT issues and the social quiz night held on the Friday night with the CEC and staff team from the office was a good opportunity to have some fun together.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April I attended a meeting to discuss ideas for student online events. Since the beginning of lockdown, volunteers from the Students Association have been running online social events, including drop in chat sessions, Netflix watch parties, quizzes, online meetups and themed chats. We've had lots of feedback that these events have been very well received and appreciated particularly by students who are having to remain indoors. Though I haven't been able to attend every session, I have dropped in on a few and enjoyed chatting to students.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> May, I was in attendance at the online meeting of the Board of Trustees as an observer along with my fellow AAR from Scotland, Mark Cameron. It was an extremely interesting morning and provided me with a better understanding of the discussions had and decisions made by the Trustees in terms of the work they do.

There was a session held on the 19<sup>th</sup> June with some of the current CEC members, some of the incoming CEC members and staff from the Association office to talk about the issues arising as a result of the tragic death of George Floyd in the USA and the subsequent protests across the world in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. We recognise that there are students in our community who will have been affected by what is going on in the world and we want to make sure that as an Association, we are there to support our student community. By the time our CEC reports are published, you will have already hopefully seen our published statement in relation to this subject.

As ever I continue to be present on social media, answering queries and signposting students to resources, regional groups and helpful pages where they can find information. We as an Association know how difficult it has been to get answers sometimes during the current pandemic with the OU staff all working from home and with no option to speak to anyone on the phone, so many of the CEC and other student reps have really been doing their utmost to help and we will continue to do so, as we always have.

## **Conference**

The weekend of the 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> June saw the first ever wholly online Students Association Conference. Our Conference is held every two years and when planning began for this one at the end of last year, few would have imagined that by March the world would be turned upside down on its head. Sadly it wasn't possible to host a face to face event on campus, which was a huge disappointment to many of us, but I'm pleased to say that, with incredibly short notice, the Association staff team in the office and the Conference Steering Group managed to pull together an outstanding event. My thanks go to all who were involved in organising and delivering this event, in particular Amy Undrell from the staff team who worked her socks off to make this happen. On top of that, she only went and secured Professor Brian Cox off the telly box to speak at the Conference! He was pretty amazing. Well done Amy.

I was very happy to see so many students attending the various sessions and engaging with the activities on offer and learning more about what we do as an Association. Lots of fun was had and new friends were made. The England welcome chat on the Friday night was gate crashed by a few pets too! I hope everyone had a cracking time at Conference 2020. I know I did.

### **And finally...**

The term for the current CEC team ends on 31<sup>st</sup> July. Some are continuing into the next CEC, some are going on to pastures new. I'd just like to say a huge thank you to the 2018 - 2020 CEC team, you have been wonderful to work with over the past two years. I'm incredibly proud at some of the things we have achieved together and how we have worked to represent the students who elected us. It's been a pleasure serving with you.

Thank you also to the staff team in the office for your support, guidance and encouragement over the last two years. You all do a fantastic job in our Association and you work so hard to ensure all of our students are supported and informed in every way. Keep up the good work!

*Danielle Smith*  
*Area Association Representative England*

## REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR WALES

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### **Local volunteer panels**

Recruitment is now complete for this pilot with six volunteers now having applied and being approved, and are awaiting training in early July, followed by the first meeting of the panel.

### **Social media channels**

There is a big need to increase the use of the Wales Facebook group moving forwards. Whilst it is off platform, it is one of the few remaining spaces for welsh students to engage specifically with other welsh students.

### **Conference 2020**

Unfortunately, the Wales specific teams chat was beset by myriad technical issues, but it was most heartening to see that the majority of welsh delegates put in an appearance despite these issues.

### **Day to day duties**

I continue to perform my regular monitoring of papers, discussions, and chats in both CEC areas, and more widely in monitoring the overall student body's opinions espoused across multiple social media platforms.

### **COVID 19**

This continues to be an ongoing issue that is causing many issues in gaining access to staff resources in both OU in Wales, as well as causing issues in carrying forwards projects, and staying in informational loops. This has caused problems in the work I was doing with the OU in Wales office, which has also been hampered by the early election.

*Lucy Richardson*  
*Area Association Representative Wales*

## **REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR SCOTLAND**

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As this is my final report as Area Association Representative for Scotland, I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to my CEC colleagues, the Students Association staff team, the OU in Scotland and those I have also worked with at the various external bodies, whose events we have continued to attend throughout the 2018-2020 term, for their support in my role which has proved invaluable to me in representing the students of Scotland.

I will greatly miss all of you and wish you all well for the future. The Association will always have a place in my life, whatever I choose to do in the future and will be willing you on wherever I am!

### **Social activities and meetups**

Social meetups and activities continue to take place across Scotland, and I continue to get involved where I can with the regular Community Drop In sessions on Adobe Connect and MS Teams. I really enjoyed the Scotland chat at Conference, and hosting a social meet up there solo for the first time! I think it went so well that we did not want to stop chatting and the chats continued on well into the evening in the virtual “bar” rooms set up for students to drop in to and chat to each other.

### **O U in Scotland and external meetings**

One of the major areas that I have been involved in helping students in Scotland with since my last report to the C E C in April has been that of module registrations and applying for the S A A S Part Time Fee Grant (PTFG), which as some members will be aware, is usually done via a paper based system. As offices are closed at present due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students have been rightly concerned and have many queries over how this can all be done, and have everything they need in place for the October 2020 module starts.

The O U in Scotland have now launched an online applications process which went live on the O U website on June 10. Feedback has been mixed and I have had feedback from students with replies received from S A A S either referring students back to the O U I S or vice versa, and also suggesting applications are not open, despite the online process being live. I have taken all student feedback to the S R S C (Student Recruitment and Support Centre) team dealing with the new process and they have prompted S A A S to update all information on their website and social media platforms, as well as their advisors, as the S R S C teams inform me that the problems our students have experienced may be in part due to incorrect information being given from some S A A S advisors. The link to the new process can be found at :

<http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/apply/scotland-grant-apply>

Module registration deadlines were also a problem initially. An I T workaround has been put in place to alleviate this.

I continue to attend the weekly Scotland officer meetings that N U S Scotland have set up for student officers across Scotland during the current pandemic and continue also to attend the weekly Think Positive forum meetings where Student Mental Health Agreement related activities and initiatives are discussed. As I mentioned in my last

report, the face to face Conference that had been due to take place in May, took place online and I attended this. The day included a variety of chats with various institutions about initiatives they have to support students' mental health, as well as staff, during the current situation and discussions about the future (post lockdown) and the challenges that all institutions will face, going forward.

As part of the work, as I have previously mentioned in these reports, we were afforded a small fund through the Small Grant scheme, that the Think Positive team awarded to some institutions for projects or initiatives that they are working on in relation to student mental health. The O U in Scotland sent out virtual versions of the wellbeing boxes that the Association has created previously, to students in Scotland containing a variety of resources, including links to Students Association resources in the week prior to Conference. I have received good feedback from students in Scotland so far on these and the usefulness of them in supporting students through the pandemic and I would really encourage students in Scotland to make use of these if they have not already done so.

The Q A A Enhancement Themes Conference took place online in early June and looked at dealing with the disruption that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused to institutions and the challenges for the sector going forward as restrictions start to ease. The new theme has been decided upon as the current one comes to an end. Resilient Learning Communities will be the new Theme, running until 2023.

I also virtually attended the final NEON (National Education Officers Network) meeting organised by Sparqs (Student Participation in Quality Scotland) for student officers across all universities and colleges in Scotland, to discuss the latest developments in the sector. We heard what Sparqs are doing in terms of their work during the pandemic and discussed the challenges all of us have faced during the current situation.

### **Activities and meetings attended since the last C E C**

Weekly - N U S Scotland All Scotland Officers' Weekly Covid-19 Meeting

– N U S Think Positive Weekly Forum Meeting

May 4 O U I S Virtual Wellbeing Boxes meeting

May 7 S P A R Q S National Education Officers' Network meeting

May 11 N U S Think Positive Student Mental Health in Scotland during Covid-19

May 11 S R S C Meeting

May 19 O U I S Student Mental Health Agreement Working Group

May 21 Universities UK Mental Health and Covid-19 webinar

May 22 Board of Trustees Meeting (observer)

June 3 – 4 Q A A Enhancement Themes Conference

June 11 O U I S Student Mental Health Agreement Working Group

June 26 – 28 O U Students Association Conference 2020

*Mark Cameron*

*Area Association Representative for Scotland*

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

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In the period since my last report was submitted, activity in my role has been minimal and this has been due to lockdown for Covid-19.

My efforts have been concentrated during this time in maintaining the OU Students page for Northern Ireland. Through this I have assisted students with their queries regarding the uncertainty surrounding their module gradings and exams/EMAs.

The main activity was the Association election campaign where I was re-elected Area Association Representative for Northern Ireland, the role now being expanded to include the Republic of Ireland. I continue to maintain the NI students page which is seeing a growing audience and I am making progress on the Republic of Ireland page. I have identified the issue with the ROI page in that the audience needs to grow and engagement with it increase. This is an ongoing project.

I attended my first Association Conference just recently and wish to congratulate the staff and Association members for their excellent organisation of the event. The sessions were informative and the guest speakers well-chosen for their diverse fields of expertise.

In closing, I would like to wish my colleagues who will not be returning for the 2020-2022 mandate all the very best. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with them and have benefited from their experience and knowledge. I am looking forward very much to working with the newly-elected CEC Committee.

I particularly want to thank outgoing President Cath Brown for her work and excellent leadership of the CEC over the past two years and significantly through this current crisis. It has been an honour to work with someone so dedicated and committed to the Association, the university and its students. I wish Cath all the very best for the future.

This concludes my report for this period.

*Wendy Reid*  
*Area Association Representative for Northern Ireland*

## **REPORT OF THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (FAR) FOR BUSINESS & LAW (FBL)**

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Activity since the last Central Executive Report

### **FBL Teaching Committee (TC)**

There have been two online TCs since the last report and the student representatives contributed to both. The reports are available for other representatives in the forum. Our concerns about the rushed launch of a joint masters degree with the University of Bologna appear to have been heard and this is now delayed by one year which should allow proper scrutiny. The two new level 1 Law modules have been approved, the design workshops included student input for the first time. There have been some senior staff changes including Carol Sherriff being promoted to Assoc. Dean Student Experience.

### **QAA Webinars**

I have taken part in two QAA Webinars with Mychelle Pride, Head of Student Experience, and other FBL academics, aimed at other UK Universities who are facing lockdown and having to induct, engage and teach students online. The latest attracted 189 delegates with over 40 either staff or leadership from student unions. I appeared to get the majority of questions at the end and, as we ran out of time, I suspect I will be getting more by email.

### **PQR Maths & Statistics**

I took part in a Periodic Quality Review of the Mathematics and Statistics school as the student reviewer, as this reviewer is always from an unrelated school. It was obvious that the M&S school is a popular one with students as, when we interviewed a diverse panel of students, they were unanimous in their praise for their tutors. It was encouraging to discover that student voice was strong in many areas reviewed, from module design (where they changed a planned online only module), to participation in scholarship activity.

### **Referencing Implementation Group**

Since Billy Docherty, FASS FAR, stood down I have been the only student on this group managing the change from Harvard to Cite Them Right referencing. The implementation work is largely complete apart from Law where there are some additional complications and the activity will now be mainly communications, so I requested that Fanni Zombor, as our communications expert, be invited on to the communications sub-group.

### **Faculty Assemblies**

Once again, the FBL Faculty Assembly was cancelled. This is no longer considered an academic committee in FBL and is a loss of an opportunity to communicate to the whole faculty. The Association had asked to present and promote our new strategy at both assemblies which have been cancelled. At this stage I don't know the future of these for the next academic year.

### **FBL On the road with Exec Dean**

This is a blatant copy of the brilliant initiative launched so successfully by Billy Docherty in FASS. Unfortunately, due to lockdown, this first one is taking place online with myself as one of the co-hosts. The idea is for the Executive Dean to face students and answer their questions, supported by a member of staff and the FAR. As I write this, the first one is planned for tomorrow and we have 23 questions submitted. As this is my last report as FAR, I can only hope it goes well and continues in the future as an excellent way to make the faculty accountable to students and to take the engagement out around the nations (post-lockdown).

## **Conference 2020**

I would just like to add my congratulations to everyone involved in this event which had to be completely rearranged at short notice to make it online only. The FBL chat was well attended and generated vigorous discussion as well as interest from some delegates in finding out more about voluntary roles with the Association. I'm sure other CEC members will give full reports.

## **Meetings since the last Central Executive Report**

23 April	FBL Teaching Committee
27 April	OU Business Society (Virtual) Coffee Morning Student Event Planning meeting
28 April	FBL Student Experience Managers meeting
29 April	Meeting with Deputy Chief Executive, F&R.
30 April	QAA Webinar I, Engaging with Students Online
4 May	PQR Maths & Stats planning meeting
7 May	New CEC Welcome chat
11 May	New Law Degree Workshop
12-14 May	PQR for Maths & Stats
19 May	Referencing Implementation Group meeting
22 May	Meeting with Finance & Resources Team
2 June	New CEC Strategy update
4 June	FBL Teaching Committee
9 June	OU Business Society (Virtual) Coffee Morning Meeting with Finance & Resources Team
17 June	Senate Reference Committee
18 June	Referencing Implementation Group meeting
24 June	QAA Webinar II, Virtual Induction

## **Upcoming Meetings**

2 July	Audit planning meeting
6 July	New CEC Induction
8 July	SRSC/FAR/AAR meeting
9 July	Trustee Induction meetings
13 July	Trustee Investment Group meeting
14 July	New CEC Induction
18 July	Handover Weekend

*Matt Porterfield*

*Faculty Student Association Representative for Business and Law (FBL)*



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

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When I sat down to write this final report as W E L S F A R, I felt that this quarter I hadn't done very much. I haven't left my house since my last report as I have been shielding as have many others, so it felt like not much had been achieved. But along with all the Facebook posts, community chats and quizzes and emails I have been sending it seems that I have been busy!!!

Discussing Student Voice in E C Y S (Education, Childhood, Youth and Sport), and how the school want to involve students has been exciting. Being invited to the E C Y S Student Support Team (S S T) panel was interesting; having the opportunity to feed into this group some of the difficulties students are having and finding out how they are getting around the various lockdown issues has been beneficial. The PRAXIS festival of scholarship ran exceptionally well on Teams, a great event for showcasing some of the scholarship work going on to benefit students and teaching. PRAXIS is the Scholarship centre for W E L S.

I now have had the privilege of being elected to President of the Students Association; I am excited to get going and nervous as I have quite an act to follow!! Thank you Cath for all your hard work – I hope I can be as effective as you have been. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the other two people who stood for President for their engagement in the process – Selina and Verenaisi. I also want to wish Verity good luck as she takes over from me as W E L S F A R.

On a personal note, I have been shielding now since the first week in March, and we as a family have been cooped up!! The monsters have been home schooling and growing veg and Dave continues to work from home. They have been incredibly supportive of me as I have now finished my undergrad degree – and wait with bated breath to see what my results will be!! I am very much looking forward to getting back to some semblance of normality and seeing people again!! I will be continuing my studies with a Masters in Education, which I start in October.

I am looking forward to continuing to represent students, in my new role as President, and hopefully getting to see people in person again!

### **Meetings:**

<b><u>Faculty</u></b>	<b><u>Staff and C E C</u></b>
4.5.20 Catch up Tyrrell Golding	27.4.20 Discussion on Student online events – skype
14.5.20 E C Y S Board of studies	1.5.20 Wendy Catch up
14.5.20 Catch up with Tyrrell about reps	5.5.20 Beth Catch up
19.5.20 W E L S E L T (Extended Leadership Team)	20.5.20 CEC meeting about Assessment guide
20.5.20 PRAXIS festival of scholarship	26.5.20 Fanni Catch up
20.5.20 Planning Postgrad Study	1.6.20 Wendy Catch up

<p>22.5.20 Kate Breeze, Student Voice in E C Y S  2.6.20 W E L S E L T  3.6.20 E C Y S S S S T Advisory Panel  23.6.20 W E L S E L T</p>	<p>5.6.20 Rob Catch up  5.6.20 Culture catch up  17.6.20 Senate six  18.6.20 Sue Catch up  19.6.20 Meeting about scrutiny  19.2.20 CEC- discussion on racial equalities  22.6.20 Conference Consultation prep session  24.6.20 Beth Catch up  24.6.20 Training for Conference  25.6.20 Wendy catch up  26-28.6.20 Conference</p>
<p><b><u>Other Meetings</u></b></p> <p>27.4.20 FASS Peer mentoring tender demo  28.4.20 FASS peer mentoring tender demo  30.4.20 Student Consultation Management group  1.5.20 Student Experience Discussions  11.5.20 S R S C and O U Students meeting  12.5.20 Wellbeing and Mental Health Steering Group  13.5.20 Student Experience Committee  13.5.20 Athena Swan S A T Meeting  1.6.20 Student Experience Discussions  3.6.20 Scholarship Steering group  4.6.20 P G R Liaison Group  16.6.20 S R G Social  17.6.20 S R G  17.6.20 Senate  19.6.20 O f S Access and Participation reform  23.6.20 Athena Swan S A T  30.6.20 Catch up about Apprenticeships  30.6.20 P G R Liaison Group  30.6.20 Apprenticeships Change programme board meeting  1.7.20 Student Experience Discussions</p>	<p><b><u>Future Plans</u></b></p> <p>6.7.20 Trustee Induction  7.7.20 PVC-S Advisory Group Meeting  7.7.20 Sue Catch up  8.7.20 G E A Introduction  9.7.20 Board of Trustee  13.7.20 Student Charter T&amp;F Group  14.7.20 Wellbeing and Mental Health Steering group  14.7.20 Induction with Wendy  16.7.20 Assessment Policy Review group  16.7.20 Model Office Working group  17-19.7.20 C E C Handover weekend</p> <p><b><u>New C E C</u></b></p> <p>30.4.20 Phone call with Ian  7.5.20 New C E C get together  21.5.20 C E C Induction  28.5.20 Meeting with Dave Hall (University Secretary)  2.6.20 C E C Induction  22.6.20 Social Media and new C E C</p>

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

## REPORT OF THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (FAR) FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS (STEM)

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### Roles:

*Central Executive Committee (CEC) Member, STEM FAR, eSTEEeM Student Referencing Panellist, Senate Reference Group (ex officio), Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group (EDISG - interim), Mental Health Strategy Implementation Steering Group (MHSISG), Students Mental Health Working Group (SMHWG), Black History Month Task & Finish Group (BHMFG), Community & Sense of Belonging Working Group (CSBWG), Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) Students Committee, Admin @ OUSA BAME Group, BAME- Advocates Working Group.*

### Attended Meetings & Events Jan-April 2020

Role Specific & OU Related Meetings	
24-26 April	CEC Weekend (Online)
27 April	Lunch and Teams Training - eSTEEeM
27 April	OUSA Cobra – Plans to increase OUSA/Lockdown Community Meetings
27 April	Weekly Student Community/Rep Events – Chats, Quiz, Drop-ins etc.
29-30 April	eSTEEeM Conference (Online)
05 May	Catch up – Patrice/Liz Marr
06 May	CEC Elect / Volunteer Team Meeting
11 May	OUSA & SRSC (Meeting
15 May	(BAME) - FBL Student Voice Project – Videos introduction (Mychelle Pride)
18 May	Black History Month (BHM) Event Discussion (BHMFG)
19 May	STEM - BAME Discussions – with Nick Braithwaite
19 May	Catch up – Patrice/Liz Marr
20 May	Pre-Faculty Assembly Meeting – (Host STEM Dean)
20 May	STEM - Faculty Assembly – Presenters (Host Helen Carvalho)
20 May	STEM - Faculty Assembly – (Online)
22 May	STEM - Student Takeover Social Media
29 May	(EDI/BAME) - FBL Inclusivity
02 June	OUSA/CEC - Strategy Meeting
08 June	(EDI/BAME) Black History Month - Event planning
10 June	(EDI/BAME) Racial Harassment Discussion – Student Casework Office
15 June	Catch up – Patrice/Joan Simons
18 June	(EDI/BAME) BAME & Mental Health intro meeting - with Neill Boddington
19 June	CEC Meeting to discuss addressing racial inequalities
19 June	OUSA Student Voice - Introduction – with Myles Smith-Thomson
22 June	MHWSISG Meeting
22 June	EDISG Meeting

22 June	Conference Consultation prep session – CEC / OUSA Staff
23 June	Catch up – Patrice/Mychelle Pride (Videos)
25 June	(BAME) FBL Student Voice Project - Video Project Webinar
25 June	Catch up – Re Conference Consultations – Patrice/Sarah Jones
26 - 28 June	OUSA Biennial Conference 2020
26th	- Faculty and Area networking – STEM Chat (Co-host)
27th	- Coffee & Consultation EDI - (Co-host) with Sarah Jones
28th	- BAME Networking Session – (Host)
29 June	(EDISG) Athena SWAN Review Project
30 June	OUSA - Inclusion Group planning meeting
<b>Student Voice / Personal Development / Non-OU EDI Meetings</b>	
21 May	(EDI) - UUK Mental Health and COVID19 - Webinar: #WeAreTogether
29 May	(BAME) - Universities Scotland – Focus Group (with Advance HE)
10 May	(EDI) – UUK Webinar - Domestic abuse
12 June	(EDI) – UUK Webinar - Disabled students and staff
12 June	(EDI) - Disabled Students Commission (DSC) Panelist - Clearing and disabled students (with Advance HE, OfS, ADSHE, NADP, NUS etc.)
16 June	(EDI) - UUK Webinar: Care experienced and estranged students
18 June	(EDI) – DSC Panelist - Blended learning Disabled students
19 June	(EDI) – DSC Panelist - Disabled students transition and induction
22 June	(EDI) – UUK Webinar – Technology-mediated abuse
25 June	(EDI) – DSC Panelist - Summary, Feedback and Takeaways

### **Key Meetings Overview: OUSA Biennial Conference 2020**

I attended and represented alongside other Reps, Staff and Students Volunteers; I co-hosted a networking session for STEM students, where I was able to share ideas, answer questions and connect students to other reps. Students were keen to listen, whilst verbalising their support in favour of informal STEM-related Chat sessions. Although our STEM highlight was Prof. Brain Cox. I co-hosted a consultation session on ‘Inclusion’ to help the Association understand how students envision their place here at the OU and to inform OUSA representation and strategy implementation, in future. Lastly, I hosted a BAME Networking session to query what the future of BAME Representation might look like. Students were keen to share their ideas ‘towards the future’ and have suggested the need for a forum space. This is on the cards discussed with OUSA Staff and Sue Goodyear (who volunteered to support us).

### **STEM Faculty Update / Overview of Action:**

During mental health week, I posted a series of resources and links from the STEM Faculty, OUSA and the wider community to ensure students had access to necessary resources should they need them. May’s Assembly was a unique one as it was carried out entirely online via Stadium, and delegates numbers were unlike any other attended. However, the interactive data capturing tools and widgets designed by the Knowledge and Media Institute (KMi) to accompany the presentations were a highlight, with one

illustrating the STEM reach in the UK in map form. This was highlighted on Social platforms and I directly shared with STEM students, who were pleased to see widespread staff and student representations. Since lockdown, I have also been posting a series of OUStudents community events on STEM student-facing platforms, along with other STEM Reps and, whilst Staff have been sharing Presentations, Events and Webinars from across the Faculty, as things begin to quieten down. I am presently collaborating, recruiting for and supporting the STEM Student Engagement Team, to facilitate a 'STEM Students Takeover Day', however, things are still at the planning stage. Lastly, *(unfortunately) due to increased commitments and student/rep activities (e.g. Chat/Quizzes etc) the 'OU Spring/Isolation Declutter Bingo' workload was far too much to take forward.*

### **Future Meetings and Events:**

<b>Role Specific &amp; OU Related Meetings</b>	
02 July	Patrice/Sas Amoah/Myles – BHM Discussion
06 July	Black History Month event planning
07 July	Patrice/Liz: Podcast conversation
07 July	eSTEEeM Student Reference Panel
08 July	OUSA & SRSC Meeting
09 July	(EDI/BAME) - OpenLearn Hub Project - Catch up With OU BME Network
09 July	Testing Vmix Session – with Ceridwen Greenwell (Liz Marr)
10 July	CSBWG Meeting – with Julia Levett
13 July	(BAME) Podcast Recording Session – Liz Marr
16 July	OUSA - Inclusion Meeting
17-19 July	Handover Weekend & CEC Meeting (Online)
20 July	MHWSISG Meeting
27 July	Service Review
<b>Student Voice / Personal Development / Non-OU EDI Meetings</b>	
08 July	(EDI) - Advance-HE Webinar: 'Equality implications for 're-opening' university and college campuses in the age of COVID-19' Event
09 July	(EDI) - Advance-HE Webinar: 'Global Perspectives - Higher education: Who belongs here?'
15 July	(EDI) - Advance-HE Webinar: 'Internationalising the Curriculum'
22 July	(EDI) - Advance-HE Webinar: 'Enhancing Good Practice - Progressing and normalising the conversations on Race in HE'

### **Other activities:**

- Continued with informing, signposting, supporting, engaging with and reassuring students on Social Media (mainly FB), due to COVID19 study formats; e.g. online EXAMS and EMAs; Module endings; Registrations; Connecting with other students in the community and, queries around OU response times and email contact; Study/Work/Life disruptions and; Mental Health (MH) challenges.

However, none were formal queries or one which the student desired for me to escalate or signpost further (but were advised to be annoying frustrations).

- Still playing an active role on the OUSA BAME Committee and, have been offering Student voice insights (in meetings). I also, supported the BAME Committee to create, lead and participate in the OU Students' Association BAME Group (Facebook), recruited moderators and carried out the first group discussion 'around Study and Wellbeing' during MH Awareness Week. However, activities around 'BlackLivesMatter protests and the murder of George Floyd', which has sparked global outrage', has amplified the discord on Race at the OU, so, I rallied for and supported statements to address students in the Black & BAME communities.
- Continued sharing information and events, answering (STEM & generalised) student questions, encouraging students and, liaising with CEC, (OUSA) Staff, CCRs and Moderators, on Social Media (mainly Facebook), to resolve queries.
- Lastly, I have been attending training sessions with the OUSA Volunteer Team, present CEC and elected CEC, having been elected as the VP EDI (2020-2022).

*Patrice Belton*

*Faculty Association Representative for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)*