OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)
18 July 2020

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The CEC is asked to:-

i) **note** this update

1. Background

1.1 For October CEC 2019 I presented a paper on Student Engagement Workshop that was due to take place during Student Voice Week in November 2019. This is a follow up paper to feedback on the workshop and to show next steps.

2. Update on Activities

2.1 The first workshop was completed on the Friday 22nd November 2019 during Student Voice Week and it was an in-person workshop. It was attended by OU staff, students and OU Students Association Staff. The second workshop was conducted with W E L S Extended Leadership Team (ELT) on Wednesday 27th November 2019. The workshops were conducted using Lego Serious Play. A third session was arranged on Saturday 23rd November as part of the C C R training day but it was decided due to time constraints to remove it and run it at a later date (As yet this has not happened).

2.2 On reflection, when running in-person workshops on campus, Fridays should be avoided as there are many staff who work from home. But, although the workshop in Student Voice week wasn't as well attended as had been hoped, the OU staff, Association staff and students who attended engaged well with it.

2.3 The workshop that was conducted during W E L S Extended Leadership Team meeting was well attended and was ran with 4 groups in the room and an online contingent. This did come with its challenges, especially technical. On the whole it was extremely well received and even staff who panicked at first that they didn't know what to do with Lego admitted that it was one of the best workshops they had attended and the conversation continued for many weeks afterwards.

2.4   Although I haven't written a paper yet due to time constraints the information gathered will be passed to Sue McCabe to be utilised as part of the strategy implementation as there are some insights that could be used.

2.5   The plan is still to do some scholarship work around this subject with Kate Breeze and Tyrrell Golding using Lego as a research method, this however has been put to one side for the moment as Covid-19 has taken up too much of all our time.

2.6   Using Lego Serious Play as a method for gaining information has been really useful and once I have collated all the ideas that arose from the workshops I will circulate this, meanwhile what follows are the questions asked followed by a flavour of what was discussed. I have also attached some of the photos of the Lego models build during the sessions.

3.   Questions Asked and Discussion

3.1   WELS ELT 27 November 2019.

   3.1.1   Task 2: Using some of the Lego in front of you build something that describes student engagement to you.

   a)   Importance of listening – an OU with big ears
   b)   Have a transmitter that we want to hear from the student, but it only wheeled out now and again.
   c)   Concern about what students are going to tell us.
   d)   An iterative process where one voice builds on another.

   3.1.2   Task 3: Using the Lego in front of you build something that describes what Student Voice means to you.

   a)   Student voice = really needs work, we've started but it needs to be prioritised.
   b)   Student voices! There are so many diverse students, thinking of just one voice over-simplifies.
   c)   We collect student views, we hear them, but we may lack creativity to enact.
   d)   Lots of diverse voices, walls need to come down to engage with the diverse voices.

   3.2.3   Task 4: Using the Lego in front of you build something that describes what students may understand and how can we with the Students Association to better include them. (This was a quick discussion at the end due to lack of time).

   a)   Massive population – how representative can reps really be?
   b)   More of a partnership with the Students Association than previously encountered.

3.2   Student Voice week workshop 22 November 2019

   3.2.1   Table A and B; What does Student Engagement and Student Voice look like, what should it look like, what would you like to change?
   a)   Everyone connects

b)   Colours shapes and diversity
c)   Flame of motivation to ignite will to participate
d)   Gradual process of developing skills enables you to have your voice heard

3.2.2   Table C: What do you understand about the terms 'Student Engagement' and 'Student Voice?' What do you think students understand about these terms? How can we bring these closer together?

a)   Students as real 'Partners' and co-creators
b)   A tree of ideas with humans around to show real people are involved, on wheels, driving to a better place or goal.
c)   Small group of students very involved and large group not very involved.
d)   Structures that support change.

3.2.3   Table D: What do you understand about the terms 'Student Engagement' and 'Student Voice'? How should the Association explain and portray this to OU students? How should we all talk about this with the OU?

a)   Doesn't feel accessible for students.
b)   Open door whish isn't visible because there is a bit of a wall still.
c)   Sometimes engagement is hop-on, hop-off.
d)   Different sizes and direction as one size does not fit all.