

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

19 – 21 October 2018

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 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 President (page 7)
- Vice President Student Community (page 11)
- Vice President Education (page 13)
- Vice President Equality & Diversity (page 15)
- Vice President Media & Campaigns (page 18)
- Vice President Student Support (page 21)
- Vice President Student Voice (page 24)
- Student OU Council Member (page 26)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for England (page 29)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Wales (page 31)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Scotland (page 32)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Northern Ireland (page 35)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Europe (page 37)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) (page 39)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Wellbeing, Education & Language Studies (WELS) (page 40)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Arts & Social Sciences (FASS) (page 42)

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

This report covers the two months since I started in my role on 1 August. (My predecessor provided a very good handover by inviting me to meetings and involving me in discussions prior to that, but those items are not discussed here). Inevitably, not everything is covered but this report aims to give an overview.

In the period between Handover in July and Induction in September, together with the rest of the CEC, I was spending a significant amount of time getting on top of my new role, understanding what it entailed and building relationships with the relevant people. But despite the fact we've yet to have our first formal CEC meeting, there has also been plenty of work going on.

There has been quite a significant amount done on feeding back on OU documents – for example, on the communication to students regarding changes in assessment strategy, the revised Social Media Policy, sending feedback on the Research and Enterprise Plan, commenting on an early draft of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission, and our response to the Critical Review. My personal role in this has ranged from being one contributing voice to collating views to producing the document.

We have also had our own materials to produce – the campaign, led by VP Media & Campaigns, to promote the Ban Essay Mills petition, an article in Open News, our magazine and website articles on NSS, and internal documents such as our revised social media guidelines. These have been collaboratively produced documents, with one CEC member taking the responsibility for producing the original and others feeding their comments, revisions and improvements in. As President I have of course been involved in all of these, either feeding in or producing the original, but they are very much group efforts.

The remainder of this report is grouped under headings, which I hope will aid clarity (and make it easier for the reader to find any items in which they are particularly interested).

Concerns raised with the OU

Discussions with OU bodies, and individual staff, of course, will very much focus around issues relating to student satisfaction, success and views. In addition to this, however, I have raised concerns brought forward by students, including:-

- Issues relating to study at Masters level:-
 - Mismatch between schedule of payments of postgraduate loan in England, and when payments to OU are due
 - Issues relating to overall Masters fees payment schedule and the student finance available in Northern Ireland
 - The concerns around 120 credit modules at Masters level
- Concerns about the very high financial cost of deferral now, and its impact specifically on disabled students who may not be able to study at a 60 credit intensity

- Incorrect use of outdated social media guidelines to dissuade students from forming social media groups (now resolved)
- How a piece of work is under review for academic conduct reasons is flagged to students

Media

No one warned me I'd spend so much time in front of a camera! I've done the following filming:-

- "Welcome" and "welcome back" messages which went out by email to all OU students, alongside a similar film from the Vice Chancellor.
- With the Pro Vice Chancellor Learning & Teaching Innovation discussing how we will be working together and the importance of student voice
- Question and Answer sessions with the Vice Chancellor (fortunately you see much more of her than me!) some of which will go out on Student Hub Live, and others linked to from "Open News"
- A clip for the Association for Freshers Week

Appointments Committee

I am *ex officio* a member of our Appointments Committee, which decides on the appointment of Central Committee Representatives (CCRs) and Senate Reference Group members. Following our initial online training session, the Committee has made decisions on 28 applications to date.

Board of Trustees

I am *ex officio* Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees, but am acting as Chair until a suitable person is recruited for this role. So far this has included:-

- Online discussions on appointment of external chair
- Meeting with a member to discuss some specific issues
- A Skype meeting

OUSET (OU Students Educational Trust)

I am *ex officio* a trustee of the OU Students Educational Trust (OUSET) which makes grants to students otherwise unable, for financial reasons, to continue their studies. After initial training, I have been involved in making decisions on 14 cases to date.

Specific committees with the OU that I co-chair

Student Voice Steering Group

The SVSG is not new this year, but it is fair to say it is being "relaunched" with a more extensive membership, and both co-chairs are new (Hazel Rymer, PVC Learning and Teaching Innovation is the OU's co-chair). So far, this has involved:

- Initial meeting with co-chair and others to discuss concerns and direction of travel, membership etc
- Meeting to rewrite proposed questionnaire for Student Voice Mapping Project
- Communications to promote this within the university.

Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group

This is also not new, but the OU organiser is new to the role, and, like me and my OU co-chair Liz Marr, is very keen that it should address actual issues with student satisfaction, not just attempt to improve NSS scores. So far this has involved:-

- Initial meeting with OU organiser
- Initial meeting with co-chair
- Discussion of Student Hub Live session on student satisfaction
- Debate on Student Hub Live “Who is responsible for student satisfaction”
- Working group meeting to discuss and confirm plans for the year

Meetings

This is not intended to be an exhaustive day-by-day list of everyone I ever speak to! It's intended as an overview indicating the areas covered. Some of the topics discussed elsewhere also included meetings; I have not duplicated those here. My first two months in post has inevitably involved quite a few induction meetings. There are still some of these to come, including with the Group Finance Director, three Executive Deans and Marketing. These are the ones I've had so far:-

- Director, Technology Enhanced Learning
- Embedding employability
- Director of Communications
- Secretary, Education Committee
- Vice Chancellor
- Open Programme
- Director, University Secretary's Office
- IT
- Pro Vice Chancellor Research & Academic Strategy
- Chief Commercial and Strategy Officer
- Head of Governance
- FBL Executive Dean

I have also had a number of other one-off OU meetings, either about specific issues with individuals or groups, or else as part of a general introduction

- Student engagement with TEF submission
- Use of student personas and proposed new mobile app
- Planning for filming, Student Hub Live, question and answer sessions etc
- Supporting OU postgraduate students
- With the development office, on the potential for use of crowd-funding
- Student Casework issues
- Attending “Service Review” meeting (meeting is regular but I was attending on a one-off basis as a guest)
- Planning for new Postgraduate Research Students common area
- Academic Quality & Governance Committee – attended to discuss report on Student Engagement
- Director of eSTEE M re. Scholarship Plan
- Development Office re. “OU at 50” and our involvement
- Communications on Curriculum Review
- Chairs of Boards of Studies group, to give an overview of the work of the Association and discuss student engagement
- Acting Director of Strategy, to discuss involvement in Strategy Week
- Deputy Director Scotland (Student Experience and Widening Access) to discuss how to work together)

- Long-listing meeting for recruiting a senior member of staff

Similarly, I have had some introductory and specific-item meetings with our office staff and with fellow CEC members:

- To discuss and plan CEC induction (x 2)
- Proposed social media guidelines and CEC social media presence
- Communications
- Preparation for “Student Satisfaction” debate on Student Hub Live
- Planning for future CECs

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

- Pro Vice Chancellor Learning & Teaching Innovation
- Communications
- Research and Academic Strategy
- Director of Academic Services
- UCU branch president concerning matters of common interest

And similarly there are regular meetings with our staff:-

- With Deputy President, Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive
- With Chief Executive
- With Sue McCabe

I am a member of formal OU Committees and groups, as below; two of these (Student Voice Steering Group and Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group) I co-chair, and these are dealt with above. Another important body is Senate, but this has not yet met this year.

- Education Committee (meeting by correspondence in August and face to face meeting in September)
- Council
- Senior Team
- SEaM Management Group

Other events

- Milton Keynes Degree Ceremony
- VCE Questiontime
- Seminar on Thresholds for Formative Assessment

Training

Taking on a new role has meant a fair amount of training has been appropriate. This has included:-

- Student Governors training (for Council)
- Student Leaders training at Houses of Parliament
- Trustee training
- Senate induction
- Online training: GDPR, Prevent, Safeguarding

I have also delivered some training to fellow CEC members:-

- Hosting in Adobe Connect
- Producing reports and papers

Other ongoing engagement with students

I continue to be a frequent visitor to the “Talk to Your Students Association” forum and to the main Open University group on Facebook, as well as various other forums and groups connected with the Association and the OU.

I am using my president Facebook page (though not as often as I intended) and my twitter account to engage further.

Cath Brown
President

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

This is the first C E C report of my 2-year term as Deputy President (D P). I have had a very positive experience throughout the handover period, leading up to the Induction weekend and feel very excited to be in this role. Cath Brown (President) and I worked alongside Beth Metcalf (Head of Volunteering) to plan the Induction weekend for the new C E C team. This involved sharing of information, training, C E C planning and team building exercises.

I had the opportunity to have some personal induction time with Wendy Burrell (Deputy Chief Executive) who is my main staff contact in my new role. We spent time going through the O U Students Association Strategy deliberating on how we will work on the strategy points related to my role over the next 2 years. I was also given an induction by the Volunteering Team as volunteering is within the D P remit, which allowed me to start working on current volunteering activities as soon as the term started.

I spent time in the first month of my term getting to grips with the different facets of my new remit and how it relates with other roles within the C E C. I contacted new members of the C E C to offer them support as they orientated themselves in their new roles; offering regular or one-off catch-ups when needed during their term. I feel that we are already communicating well as a team and I am looking forward to working with them during our term together for the next 2 years.

Cath and I have already initiated the beginnings of an effective working relationship, having catch-ups when we are both on campus or online when convenient for the two of us. We also have regular President/Deputy President Team Meetings along with our staff contacts Rob Avann (Chief Executive) and Wendy Burrell, where we can have conversations around current issues, CEC planning and general topics of interest that need our input.

Volunteering Update

I attend fortnightly Volunteer Team meetings (face-to-face when on campus or online) for a general update and discussing projects and work that we are undertaking. We have also discussed the OU Students Association Strategy points related to volunteering and are making plans to address these moving forward.

We have been working on key areas such as 'Fitness to Volunteer Policy', 'Student-led projects' (a new volunteering opportunity for students to propose and be involved in projects of their own) and 'Investing in Volunteers Project'. Please see the separate Volunteering Update CEC paper for further information.

Postgraduate Research Students

I have met with members of the OU Graduate School to try to understand what provision there is for part-time and full-time campus-based students. I have been networking with Postgraduate Research Students (P G Rs) and their representatives to understand the issues they face and how we can help to address them.

I believe it is important to support P G Rs as an Association, ensuring they are recognised and represented as part of our work. This can be through helping them to

build a strong community and for their student voice to be represented and heard within the Association and the University.

I was delighted to be present at a 'Supporting O U ~ P H D Students' workshop, where it was announced that the Amy Ferguson (Students Association Community Officer) had secured a social space for P H D students to use on campus. I am working closely with Amy and Wendy in our work related to P G R Students, including presenting at the Induction for new P H D students.

Representation Review

I am working with Peter Cowan (Vice President Education) along with Sam Harding (Head of Student Voice) on the Representation Review. This is an appraisal and overhaul of the O U Students Association representation structure, from governance level to grass roots student voice volunteering.

We will be looking at the process of volunteers in representation (e.g. code of practice, where responsibilities are, quality of representation, how student voice is monitored, what Academic representation should be).

We will be evaluating this at an institutional policy and agreement level, ensuring the right people are involved in quality and governance, that the policy supports everyone. This is an immense piece of work which is in line with our Students Association strategy, which should be completed by the end of our term in 2020.

Student Leader Programme

I attended the 'Student Leader Programme' with Cath Brown, as Sabbatical Officers of the OU Students Association. This was held in the Education Centre at the Houses of Parliament where we were invited to attend training on how Parliament and the House of Lords works, effective campaigning and lobbying a Member of Parliament (MP) and how the process of changing law works.

We met and had discussions with MP Chris Mattheson who explained about select committees and how to enable change through local Government and Parliament. We also spoke with Baroness Garden of Frognal who talked us through the work of the Select Committees, including the differences and commonalities with the House of Lords.

We completed some training on effective campaigning, followed by a tour around the Houses of Parliament and the House of Lords. Cath and I had the opportunity to sit in the gallery at Parliament listening to MPs discussing the 'Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Bill'. We were then allowed to sit in the House of Lords while they scrutinised the governmental decisions on 'Brexit' which was a very topical subject to listen to.

Trustee

I have attended a Charity Trustee Training event at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (N C V O) in London alongside other new Trustees. This gave us the chance to work together for the first time while we learnt more about the responsibilities of the role.

Other Roles

- appointed to be a member of the Honorary Degrees Committee and
- elected by the C E C to become a member of the Appointments Committee, with the responsibility of sitting on a panel who appoint students to Central Committees within O U Governance and to be members of the Senate Reference Group.

Moving Forward

I am attending:

- an Association of O U Graduates (A O U G) event on the 5th October. This is A O U G 'Foundation Research Awards and Bursary Award Ceremony' followed by a Foundation Lecture.
- the NCVO Trustee Conference 'Good Governance, Great Organisations' with Alison Kingan (Vice President Student Support) on the 5th November. This will involve the sharing of the latest regulatory standards and best practice to be followed.
- representing the O U Students Association by taking part in the Holocaust Educational Trust's ground-breaking 'Lessons from Auschwitz Project'. This revolves around three key areas
- Orientation – (18th November 2018) pre-visit seminar including hearing a Holocaust survivor speak, learn about pre-war Jewish life and prepare for the visit to Poland on Sunday
- The Visit – (19th November 2018) day trip to Poland to tour authentic sites (the former Nazi concentration and death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau) and museum exhibits.
- Follow-up – (28th November 2018) to reflect on the visit and the contemporary relevance of the lessons of the Holocaust.

Meetings Attended

3rd July	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
5th July	Getting to Know You' Interview (President/Deputy President)
9th July	Student Consultation Management Group
10th July	Is the D B S Check fit for purpose - Safeguarding for Volunteer Organisations (Houses of Parliament)
11th July	Prevent Steering Group Meeting
19th July	Inclusion Meeting
20th July	Student Engagement Initiatives Discussion
20-22 July	Handover Weekend
24th July	Deputy President Induction (with Deputy Chief Executive)
25th July	Enhanced Employability & Careers Progression Steering Group (EECP)
25th July	C E C/ Senate - Communications & Engagement (Online)
26th July	Online Rooms Steering Group
27th July	Deputy President Induction (with Deputy Chief Executive)
1st August	Induction Weekend planning
13th August	Social Media Guidelines Meeting
23rd August	Induction Working Group
30th August	Appointments Committee (Online)
31st August	C E C Planning Meeting
6th September	Supporting OU Postgraduate Research Students Meeting
6th September	Freshers Filming
7th September	Open Programme Meeting

7th September	P G R's Issues meeting
7th September	Representation Review Initial Meeting
7-9 September	Induction Weekend
10th September	E E C P Steering Group
10th September	Student Consultation Guide Meeting
11th September	Student Leader Programme (Houses of Parliament)
14th September	Charity Trustees Induction Training
17th September	President/Deputy President Team Meeting
17th September	Student Satisfaction Debate Planning
17th September	Strategy Update Meeting (with Deputy Chief Executive)
17th September	Papers and Reports Training (Online)
24th September	Investing in Volunteers Project Meeting
24th September	Representation Review
24th September	Council Member Induction
24th September	Board of Trustees Meeting (Online)
25th September	Supporting Volunteers Meeting
26th September	Student Satisfaction Debate
26th September	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
27th September	V C E Question Time
27th September	STEM Freshers Faculty Chat (Supporting as Co-host)
27th September	Student-led Projects Approval Panel Meeting
28th September	W E L S Freshers Faculty Chat (Supporting as Co-host)
2nd October	Main P G R Induction and After Party
3rd October	P G R induction focus group for W E L S
3rd October	F A S S Freshers Faculty Chat (Supporting as Co-host)

Future Commitments

4th October	Student Hub Live sessions
5th October	Association of O U Graduates event
8th October	Peer Education Project Meeting (Online)
10th October	Senate Reference Group
11th October	Student Led Projects Review meeting
11th October	Trustee Meeting
16th October	Enhanced Employability & Careers Progression Steering Group
16th October	Representation Review
17th October	Student Voice Steering Group
18th October	Inclusion Meeting
19-21 October	C E C Weekend
25th October	Prevent Steering Group Meeting
25th October	President and Deputy President Team meeting
29th October	Appointment Committee Face to Face Meeting
31st October	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
5th November	N C V O Trustee Conference
12th November	Student Consultation Management Group Meeting
13th November	Enhanced Employability & Careers Progression Employability Fair
18th November	Lessons of Auschwitz Pre-visit Seminar
19th November	Lessons of Auschwitz – Visit to Poland
22nd November	President and Deputy President Team meeting
28th November	Lessons of Auschwitz – Post Visit Symposium

Stephanie Stubbins
Deputy President

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT COMMUNITY

This is my first report as the new V P Community after nearly 8 weeks in post. I have learnt a lot in the past two months from my team and from the handover I had from outgoing VP Community Steph Stubbins.

Community Drop Ins

I took over this project from previous V P Community and have continued to run fortnightly Adobe Connect sessions. I received training on Adobe Connect along with others to host these sessions. These sessions are varied in attendance, however, at times we can have up to 20 students. It is a good way for students to socialise, ask questions about studies and feel less isolated in studying. I will be running a Community drop-in during Freshers week for students that cannot attend face to face meetups. We have also had new faces join with hosting rights that support this project by co-hosting and facilitating conversation.

OU Students Association Freshers

I have been working with Projects Officer, Jodie Denton, to create a full and engaging timetable of activities and content for Freshers weeks from 24th September – 5th October. We have organised live Facebook chats (A welcome event and a Societies fair event) hosted by myself and the community team. Affiliated student clubs will be hosting events throughout Freshers including the Young Students Club Adobe Connect session which I was involved with. Representatives for the faculties held Adobe Connect sessions throughout the week for students. I helped to host the Faculty for Business and Law Adobe Connect Session with Steph Stubbins and Fanni Zombar. On the 29th of September we held simultaneous meetups throughout the country – I hosted my meetup in Sheffield. There were also other student meetups throughout Freshers. I also ran a special Community Drop In session for students that could not attend face to face events, so they could still be involved digitally. We ran prize draws throughout the week and had an online interactive game. I was also on STUDIO (the student radio show) with Fanni Zombar.

Meetups

As part of Freshers we ran a big meetup on the 29th of September. This expanded across the two weeks of Freshers, however, we had over 700 people interested in the event and meet ups running in over 25 locations. We had many new hosts start meetups and hope these will continue throughout the year.

Bath Residential School

Although not officially in post at this point, I attended Bath Residential School as a volunteer. This gave me a good insight of what to expect and how the Association presence enriches the student experience at Resi Schools.

Clubs

Clubs have continued to expand at rapid pace. We now have 29 official clubs with over 3600 students engaged in clubs. They played an active part in Freshers with lots of

chats, competitions and social media takeovers happening. I am co-host of the Young Students Club and have created the Open Degree Club.

Meetings attended

4 th -5 th August	Bath Residential School
9 th August	Community Drop In
14 th August	Freshers Planning
16 th August	Community catch up meeting
23 rd August	Community Drop In
6 th September	Community team meeting
6 th September	OU Services Limited induction
6 th September	Community Drop In
7 th -9 th September	Induction weekend
20 th September	Community Drop In
24 th September	Freshers Welcome Chat
25 th September	OU Corporate Parenting working group
25 th September	Young Students Club Adobe Connect
28 th September	Open Degree Club Adobe Connect
29 th September	Freshers meet-up

Future Commitments

4 th October	Community Drop-in
5 th October	Clubs and Societies Meeting
5 th October	STUDIO
6 th October	Freshers meet-up
19 th October	Young Students Club Meeting
19 th -21 st October	CEC Weekend
10 th November	Societies Committee Meeting

Kat Crammond

Vice President Student Community

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION

It has been a busy nine weeks since taking up office as Vice President Education as the University gears up for a new academic year and starts to approach the post-critical review era. The implementation of both the Academic Strategy and the Curriculum Plan agreed at Senate earlier this year has commenced which will also lead to changes. Changes and opportunities for student involvement in helping to shape the University.

Parallel to this there are Association initiatives in progress. The Deputy President, Head of Student Voice and I will be conducting a full review of representation which will occupy a large part of the next eighteen months. I will also be working with the V P Student Voice and the rest of the team to implement those elements of Student Voice in the Association's 2018-20 Strategy over the next two years.

As part of this the Student Voice team is also working on a project alongside the University to provide a quality standard for student engagement in University projects affecting students. One part of this involved a 'task and finish' day in which a group of students identified what constituted good and bad student engagement and how to recognise it. They also suggested new branding for the project as the working title 'kitemark' is a protected trademark.

I have replaced Lorraine on various ongoing committees including the Academic Strategy Steering Group and the Curriculum Forum (to be renamed Curriculum Portfolio Advisory Group) which monitor the implementation of the Academic Strategy and Curriculum Plan. I am also the student member of the working group preparing for accreditation by the Mid States Commission of Higher Education due in 2019. The criteria for this includes showing evidence of student engagement in learning and teaching and as well as my involvement a wider consultation with the Association is planned. I have also been involved, along with the President and Student Member of Council, in early discussions regarding possible O U involvement in the 2019 Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).

As well as Committee work there are other areas which occupy time and examples of these include following up my predecessor's work on 'pending' exam results. Also student representative attendance at meetings where the President and I both made representations against a plan that might have led to online attendance at some committees the default option. I have also arranged a meeting to discuss the process for Association comments on withdrawals and changes to qualifications. In particular, to reinforce the idea that this should be done before these go into governance and not, as often happens, afterwards (if at all).

The Appointments Committee was assembled in early August and is currently finalising the appointment of new student members to Committees and has appointed five student volunteers to the Senate Reference Group (S R G). We are now in the good position that with the exception of the Access Board of Studies all committees have student representatives and many have a full complement.

Due to the absence of a V P Administration, I have also continued some aspects of my previous role where possible.

I would like to end this report to thank the Student Voice Team for their support in helping me settle in to the role and also to Lorraine, my predecessor, for her invaluable help in the period before taking office and for leaving me a solid platform to build on.

Diary

August 1st TEF	Student Engagement Meeting
August 14th	Student Association Achievement Day (looking back through 45 years of archive material)
August 22nd	'Kitemark' shortlisting
August 23rd	'Kitemark' Advisory Group
August 29th	Academic Strategy Steering Group
August 30th	Appointments Committee Meeting
September 3rd	FutureLearn Postgraduate Qualifications Steering Group
September 6th	Student Casework Steering Group
September 7th	Representation Review Meeting
September 7th–9th	C E C Induction
September 10th	Student Voice Team Day
September 13th	Incorporation meeting
September 17th	Academic Quality and Governance Committee (substitute for Sandra Summers)
September 20th	'Kitemark' Task and Finish Day
September 21st	Barbican Graduation Ceremony (as volunteer)
September 24th	Curriculum Forum Representation Review Meeting TEF Meeting
September 26th	S R G Induction Planning
September 27th	Senate Induction for new members Mid States Commission on Higher Education Accreditation
Working Group	
September 29th	Freshers Big Meet-up London
October 3rd	FutureLearn Postgraduate Qualifications Steering Group
October 4th	Shortlisting for Deputy C E O (Finance and Resources) Post-Graduate School Liaison meeting 2017/18 Audit Completion Meeting
October 8th	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Assessment Workshop Quality Enhancement Advisory Group
October 9th	S R G Briefing and Induction for new members
October 10th	S R G and Senate
October 11th	'Kitemark' Advisory Group
October 12th	Interviews for Deputy C E O (Finance and Resources)
October 16th	Academic Strategy Steering Group Representation Review Meeting
October 17th	Q A A Quality Matters Conference
October 19th	Student Voice Communications meeting
October 19th–21 st	C E C Meeting

In addition, I have had various informal meetings to get to know key university staff and with Association Staff

Peter Cowan
Vice President Education

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

July 9 to October 2, 2018

This Report briefly outlines my activities since the date of my last Report to the C E C. Note: Because I live over a 100 miles away and require wheelchair-accessible transport to and from home, all my meetings with O U people and attendance at any events, are scheduled around C E C (Central Executive Committee) meetings wherever possible. Therefore, to make the best use of my time (and to keep costs down) I usually stay in Milton Keynes for several days to fit in as many face-to-face meetings as I can during my visits. All other 'meetings' and tasks are done from home online via Skype or via telephone conference calls.

Since my last report and throughout the wonderful Summer we've just had, work has gone on both here at home in Sussex and during trips to Milton Keynes for CEC meetings and other meetings with Open University people. Oh ... and I actually took two weeks off to spend time with friends and family.

This is my first report under my new title – VP Equality & Diversity - but I'm pleased to say that the work I started when elected VP Equal Opportunities in August 2016, continues and grows. It's a broad brief, but here's a brief summary of what I'm involved in on behalf of students.

The OU's Race Equality Charter Mark Application

This application was due to be submitted in February 2019 but due to a low response to both staff and student surveys, this has now been pushed back to July 2019. New surveys will be sent out in the coming months.

Mental Health Awareness

The OU and the Students Association are very keen to promote the importance of students' mental health wellbeing and the support that's available. A first meeting took place in July and another is scheduled for later this month to further discuss the ways in which we can work together on this important issue.

Students in Secure Environments (SiSE)

Currently working with the SiSE team on a 'study buddy' project and reinstating the issuance of a redacted copy of the OU Students Magazine which can be sent to OU students in secure environments.

Objective 1c – Improve equality declaration data for students

The rationale for this OU-led 'Objective' is to improve the monitoring data to allow the OU to measure participation and outcomes for students across a wider range of characteristics and circumstances. The OU says: 'This will help ensure that all individuals, especially those who have not declared their status on their student profile, feel able to access and participate in their learning experience with the OU'.

BaME – Black and Minority Ethnic students

Because of the degree-award-attainment gap in respect of BaME students, I'm involved with a number of activities on subject. I attended an all-day workshop in July which focussed on ACCESS students.

At the moment I'm working with one of the Student Support team to formulate our (the Association's) activities during Black History month this month.

Assessment Exceptions Group – Disability/Reasonable Adjustments

I was invited to join this group by Peter Taylor - Professor of Organic Chemistry STEM, Life Health & Chem Science – after working with him on the Open Board of Studies committee. Prof. Taylor heads the team who work with students across all Faculties who submit special circumstances forms after an exam or EMA (End of Module Assessment). First meeting last month (September). Next scheduled for January 2019.

Diary (Meetings attended on campus and at Kents Hill)

16 July	LTI Curriculum Innovation Team day. Closing the Black Attainment Gap
16 July	Student Tutorial Venues - Meeting with David Knight
17 July	OU & Association meeting (first) to discuss Mental Health
17 July	Meeting with WASS (Widening Access & Success Services) on-going discussions re the provision of alternative formats. Update.
18 July	First meeting with Prof. Taylor re joining the Assessment Exceptions Group.
18 July	First meeting with Helen Labrum re Objective 1c.
19 July	DSG (Disabled Students' Group) meeting.
19 July	Pre-Inclusion Meeting briefing
19 July	Inclusion Meeting
20 July	SiSE (Students in Secure Environments) Study Buddy ideas meeting.
20 July	Student Engagement – Projects meeting
320 July	Catch up meeting with Head of Student Support
20 July	CEC Handover weekend start evening
7 Sept	CEC Induction weekend start evening
10 Sept	Service Review Meeting (10 th)
10 Sept	1Objective 1c – Meeting with Helen Labrum
11 Sept	Catch up meeting with Jiten Patel, Head of Equality, Diversity and Information Rights.
11 Sept	Meeting with SiSE re study buddies (research volunteers)
11 Sept	Visit to Library to meet new members of the Accessibility team.
12 Sept	Full meeting of the Race Equality Charter Mark Application Committee
12 Sept	Assessment Exceptions Group – first meeting
12 Sept	Website testing observation session.

Upcoming events

- Trip to Belfast to attend Belfast Degree Ceremony. Invite extended by the OU in Northern Ireland (October 4 - 8)
- CEC weekend and other meetings on Campus/Kents Hill (October 17 - 22)

Monthly Meet-Ups

- West Sussex OU Students Coffee 'n Chat at Haskins Roundstone Garden Centre, Angmering – Monthly when possible
- August 4
- September 1
- September 29
- Next October 27

Online/Phone/Skype Meeting Activity

- Phone meetings with Legacy & Support team re Disabled Veterans Scholarship Fund. New Appeal in October. (July 12 & August 29))
- Live interview via Skype for Module Y032 for students facing obstacles to study. (August 15)
- Big White Wall webinar (September 17)
- Community drop-ins (fortnightly when available)
- Freshers Events including all for DSG and PLEXUS

Ongoing/Day-To-Day

- Up and running. A new (closed) Facebook group for O U students who have carers or are carers themselves. It's called 'Caring and Dependency'. Link [HERE](#)
- Up and running. A new (closed) Facebook group called 'Diversity!'. This group is a catch-all group for O U students to discuss anything to do with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Link [HERE](#)
- Predominantly working at home - I subscribe to and participate in a lot of forums on the V L E (Virtual Learning Environment) including the very busy suite of C E C (Central Executive Committee) forums.
- I also read and participate in the D S G and PLEXUS suite of forums on the V L E and both groups on Facebook which are wonderful resources for me to pick up any potential problems that might arise. Both the D S G and PLEXUS fall within my Equality and Diversity role remit.
- Added to PLEXUS and the DSG groups, which are official Association-affiliated groups, I now monitor and contribute to the two new groups (Caring & Dependency and Diversity!) on Facebook. I am also still involved with the Association's South East region (Surrey, Kent and Sussex) (closed) Facebook group.
- There are also the 'behind the scenes' confidential student issues to deal with. Most of these are dealt with via my V P mailbox when (and if) I need to get an O U member of staff, other Officer colleagues and / or the Association involved.

*Cherry Day
Vice President Equal Opportunity*

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT MEDIA & CAMPAIGNS

The first 2 months of my role has been much busier than expected and instead of lightly picking it up, I took the jumping straight into it approach and picked up things as I went along. To be honest, the role turned out to have a lot more 'behind the scenes' activity than initially expected, so alongside picking up on all those tasks while understanding how and what my team works on and how I fit into the picture, I have been trying to increase my social media presence more or less successfully.

In terms of student facing activities, my role is more about supporting other CEC members in their work and generally being around on social media, so I have decided not to set up an Association specific Facebook page but use my Facebook page and Twitter account for Association purposes.

Social Media Guidelines

Since the beginning of August, I have been working on the social media guidelines for volunteers of the Association. It went through various versions, including input from CEC members and was shared with them for comments. At the time of writing this report, the guidelines are currently on the CEC forum for approval and will be shared with the wider student body once approved.

The piece covers best practice on different social media channels and code of conduct for the behaviour of volunteers while on social media.

Essay Mills Petition

After discovering the essay mills petition through Cath, we have taken some steps to promote it within our student body. I have written a Magazine piece on it alongside a news story item on the website and we came up with the hashtag #OUStudentAction to encourage student involvement.

I have also been and still am in contact with Iain Mansfield. The discussion started to stay updated on the progress and media coverage the petition has and to provide student support where needed from the Association.

I also prepared a letter to other student unions about the petition.

Accessibility and usability of the website

In August I have been brought up to speed on the different companies we work with in terms of our website, including the free advice service signposted on our website (AbilityNet).

During September, there have been a number of website accessibility and usability sessions, some of which I have attended. As a result of these sessions, we will consider and implement some of the findings from the report relating to this by the January 2019 CEC Weekend. An information paper is available for the October 2018 CEC Weekend detailing the sessions and the changes will be in a paper for January 2018 CEC Weekend.

Instagram (@oustudentslive)

My team and I recognised that Instagram, especially with the new features, has a lot more potential for engaging students. So a group of 2 staff members and I will be having monthly meetings to track the changes in terms of Instagram. The aim is to have 4000 followers by the end of 2018.

It has been agreed that content will mainly be coming from staff members, but CEC members will be able to submit pictures of different activities and will also make time for 'CEC takeovers' (where CEC members will be posting for a day or weekend about the things they are up to, Q & A sessions etc.).

We will aim to get daily content out on the Association's page in engaging format, mini video series, polls and anything we can come up with.

Magazine

Just to briefly mention, my team and I started putting together a case for a CEC project meeting around the relaunch of the Magazine to be able to discuss a new, revised and more engaging format for it. We have met to discuss the next steps for this project.

STUDIO

I will be attending the first STUDIO show around Freshers as part of my show, where I will be around before and after the show to understand how we set up and operate these sessions.

Social Media for CEC members

One of my main aims for the short term is to come up with better ways in which the CEC can communicate with students, especially on social media. I am working on different recommendations for the CEC to consider to support us communicating as a whole, rather than as multiple individuals (Discussion item for October CEC).

Induction with the OU's Communications team

In September I had a meeting with Lucian Hudson, Director of Communications to look at some initiatives we could work together on and what projects are a better fit in the President's remit.

I have also been introduced to the whole team and we have made some further plans on consulting with each other in the near future.

Other, not role specific CEC commitments

I have attended the Student Consultation Management Group as a substitute for Stephanie Stubbins, Deputy President. We have agreed the direction of topics and locations of 2019's Student Consultations.

I have been in conversations about Big White Wall being advertised as one of the services the OU (and the Association) offers for students and where it would fit in within our websites and mental health campaigns the Association is doing.

Meetings

20-22 July	Handover Weekend
27 July	Brainstorming about Magazine Ideas
13 August	First Induction Meeting with the Digital Communications team
14 August	Freshers communications (skype)
30 August	Communications Team meeting
30 August	Catch-up with Cath
4 September	Observing website testing
6 September	Freshers videos filming
6 September	Planning meeting for CEC discussion paper on Social Media
7 September	Pre-meeting ahead of meeting with OU Communications Team
7 September	Observing website testing
7-9th September	CEC Induction Weekend
10 September	Observing website testing
10 September	Meeting with FAR's about communications
10 September	Big White Wall communications planning
10 September	Meeting with Lucian Hudson, Head of Communications and Induction to the OU Communications Team
11 September	Student Consultation Management Group (as a substitute for Stephanie Stubbins)
11 September	Communications Team meeting
17 September	Big White Wall webinar (online)
17 September	Session on CEC papers and reports (Adobe Connect)
27 September	Meeting with an OU member of staff about student characteristics
27 September	VCE question time
28 September	Communications Team meeting (Social Media Guidelines, CEC discussion paper and Magazine)

Other events to mention: I have organised freshers meet-ups in London and in Milton Keynes, I have attended Community Drop-In sessions and organised and attended various Freshers events and I have co-ordinated the London Graduation Ceremony shop on the 21st and 22nd of September.

Future Meetings running up until October CEC Weekend

2 October	JISC Conference planning group (Cath is attending in my place)
4 October	Student Hub Live
5 October	Studio
19-21 October	CEC Weekend

Fanni Zombor
Vice President Media & Campaigns

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT SUPPORT

This report covers my role as V P Student Support since July. The Student Support remit generally includes anything that can affect all students. In particular Peer Support and being a Trustee of OUSET (OU Students Educational Trust) are my major priorities. Although I sit on the Association's Board of Trustees those activities will not be covered in my Officer reports because that is a separate role to that of V P Student Support.

O U S E T (OU Students Educational Trust)

OUSET is the Association's Charity for students experiencing financial hardship. Details can be found here - <https://www.oustudents.com/open-university-students-educational-trust-students-charity>. The Trustee meeting during Handover Weekend was to inform potential new Trustees about what the role involves. Online meetings followed shortly afterwards to vote on proposed Trustees for co-option, to elect a new Chair and discuss having a Deputy Chair. Immediate Past President, Nicola Simpson, who was automatically an OUSET Trustee due to her role, was elected Chair, which is normal practice. However, shortly after that Nicola resigned as an OUSET Trustee. This left the Chair role vacant and reduced the number of Trustees; our Declaration of Trust specifies which Association roles are OUSET Trustees. We are currently seeking advice on whether we can take steps to overcome the reduction in our Trustee numbers. A new Governing Document which included flexibility of membership could prevent future OUSET Trustees being faced with this situation. Lorraine Adams, who had recently been co-opted as a Trustee, has been elected Temporary Chair. We hope to welcome a new V P Admin later this month because being an OUSET Trustee is part of their remit.

Peer Support

I mentioned in my last report that we were on target to relaunch the Peer Support Service. We opened hypothetical bottles of champagne and set off fireworks to celebrate that Peer Support is now open for students. Our new Supporters have completed their initial training. If you want to ask one off questions or, in some instances, receive longer one to one support, please check out what we offer on the Association website here - <https://www.oustudents.com/peer-support>

Peer Support T T G (Through the Gate)

We used to offer a specialised Peer Support Service for students who had recently been released from a Secure Environment because they potentially had additional problems. I am keen to relaunch this Service and a very fruitful discussion with the OU staff resulted in ways we could proceed with this. Hopefully, in my next report I will be able to share more details.

Service Review Meetings

Service Review meetings discuss matters relating to Academic Services and IT. The most recent meeting was held in September. Matters under discussion included;

- The importance of the OU considering accessibility issues when procuring new systems

- Students need to be informed that their OU email addresses are only available to them up to a short while after they cease being students and therefore should not be used as their everyday email address
- The OU could better inform students about exam Special Circumstances forms
- The OU has made a concerted effort to reduce non-essential emails to students during exam and result periods. We fed back that this had been noticed and welcomed by students.
- A number of comments and questions were posted by students about the new Dashboard / Qualification site. The OU provided a detailed response which can be found in an attachment posted by me in this thread <https://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/forumng/discuss.php?d=97780>

Students Mental Wellbeing

The OU is continuing to review how it helps students' mental wellbeing. V P Equality and Diversity, Cherry; and I, are due to have regular meetings with OU staff. The OU has recently enabled students to use the Big White Wall (B W W). This does not replace our Peer Support Service which is for OU students run by OU students. B W W is an online community, not just for OU students, which provides information; self-help programmes; and means to talk to others anonymously. Big White Wall can be accessed here – www.bigwhitewall.com follow the instructions from clicking 'join us' completing the form with your Office 365 email address.

Freshers Facebook

I took part in a Freshers Facebook Chat and it was lovely to speak to enthusiastic starters and give a plug for Peer Support.

Student Led Projects

I was on Working Group looking at how the Association could facilitate projects led by students to improve their community. I am currently substituting for V P Admin for decisions about which proposals will be accepted. If you want to submit a proposal, there is more information on our website here - <https://www.oustudents.com/student-led-projects>

S S T / S R S C Roadshow (Student Support Teams/Student Recruitment and Support Centres)

Verity from the Association Office and I gave a presentation to STEM SST (Student Support Team) staff in July to give them information about what the Association offers which they might like to share with students who contact them. The relevant FARs; the AAR for England, Danielle; and I will be giving this talk to staff in the other England S R S Fs in October. Further details can be found in the relevant paper to this CEC Meeting.

Corporate Parenting Steering Group

This initiative is led by the OU in Scotland. V P Community, Kat; and I attended our first full meeting via Skype. This group will consider additional requirements and support needed by OU students who have experienced being in care. There is more information here, <http://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/study/care-experienced>, including

their Corporate Parenting plan. If there is anything you would like to bring to this group please contact me on the email address below.

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

Future Commitments

October 9 th	Nottingham WELS Roadshow
October 10 th	Senate, Senate Reference Group
October 19 th to 21 st	Central Exec Committee Meeting
October 22 nd	Milton Keynes F B L and FASS Roadshow
November	Service Review Meeting
January 2019	Corporate Parenting Steering Group

Alison Kingan
Vice President Student Support

REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT VOICE

This is my first report as VP Student Voice, and therefore relatively short as I have been finding my feet in the role since taking office on 1st August 2018. Over the last two months I have considered my aims for the rest of the term, worked together with the Student Association Student Voice Staff Team to put together a work plan and timetable, and began to make relevant contacts within the university.

Central Executive Committee

Within the C E C I have attended an induction session as well as completed GDPR, PREVENT and Safeguarding training. The first weekend offered a productive opportunity to meet the new committee members as well as to agree on a team agreement and refresh tasks for the next two years, such as writing papers. During this weekend I arranged a meeting with the Faculty Association Representatives in order to discuss the student voice aspects of their roles and the future of the L E R role, and we have agreed upon a regular meeting during every face to face C E C weekend.

Student Voice Induction

On 10th September I took part in an induction day together with the Student Voice Staff Team and VP Education, to agree upon priorities and targets for the next two years; my priorities are to close the feedback loop to students who communicate student voice issues, to reach those who are currently unheard, such as students in secure environments and with specific mental health conditions, and to increase NSS scores. Another major focus is to adapt and improve the efficiency of the L E R role which will be an ongoing project until January 2019 and will be my main project during October. During the day we also discussed the dates for upcoming events and volunteer trainings, and had introductory meetings with members of staff from the Student Consultation Office and the library.

Regular Committees and Working Groups

I was kindly invited to the June meeting of the Senate Reference Group (S R G) in order to meet the other members and gain understanding of how the group works. At the time of writing, I am preparing for the October meeting. I have attended one meeting of the Student Consultation Management Group, in which future topics for consultations were agreed together with venues for face to face meetings in Spring 2019. The Kitemark Project Advisory Group is discussing how to recognising good levels of student engagement by different university projects; I have also been appointed to the Kitemark Working Group which is yet to meet. The other group with whom I have met is Developing A Staff Facing Student Voice Hub, in which the format of resources to aid staff in involving students in their work, eg. In module design, is discussed.

Social Media

I have not been active as an individual on social media for two reasons. Firstly, I was advised to wait until the introduction of new social media guidelines in late October, and secondly, as student voice is very serious yet sadly not as prominent as other features, I feel it would be more productive to build on existing channels rather than

create new ones at this time. I have access to contribute to the Student Voice Twitter account, which as of 2nd October has 734 followers, and plan to write blog posts as agreed with VP Community.

Meetings attended

23/8/2018 Kitemark Project Advisory Group
7-9/9/2018 C E C Induction
10/9/2018 Student Voice Team Induction including meetings with Jerard Bretts, Rachel Garnham and Selena Killick.
11/9/2018 Developing A Staff Facing Student Voice Hub
11/9/2018 Student Consultation Management Group
17/9/2018 C E C Papers Training Session

Upcoming meetings

9/10/2018 Senate Reference Group Induction
10/10/2018 Senate Reference Group
11/10/2018 Kitemark Project Advisory Group
15/10/2018 Developing A Staff Facing Student Voice Hub
17/10/2018 Student Voice Steering Group
18/10/2018 Meeting with Jiten Patel, Head of Equality, Diversity and Information Rights
18/10/2018 Student Voice Communications Strategy
19-21/10/2018 C E C Meeting
11/2018 TBC Meeting with Ruth McFarlane, Senior Manager, Students in Secure Environments

Amelia Gackowska
Vice President Student Voice

REPORT OF STUDENT OU COUNCIL MEMBER

This report covers the final months of my first term as Council Member and the first two months of my second term.

Council Meeting - 17 July 2018

This was Council's final meeting of the 2017/18 academic year and, unsurprisingly, the Critical Review findings were the main discussion item. Council commissioned the review in response to the widespread concern throughout the University that the Students First Transformation Programme (SFTP) had become unmanageable and that the strategic priorities had become lost in the complex maze of workstreams and subgroups. Council Members welcomed the report and supported its high level recommendations. Measures to address the financial deficit remain important, but clearer communication around the reality of the financial situation is also essential. In the short term, the first priority must be to address the underlying deficit. However, more work is also needed to understand the kinds of student that the OU is likely to attract in future and to decide how the University should develop to support them. In this context it was noted that only a small number of student representatives had contributed to the Critical Review and that there had been no communication with the wider student body.

Council agreed that the next step in the review process should be for the Acting Vice-Chancellor, the University Secretary, and members of VCE to prepare an implementation plan demonstrating how the recommendations would be taken forward, and that this plan should be presented to an additional meeting of Council in September.

Other points to note from the July meeting:

- The forecast consolidated outturn deficit has been revised to £30.6m. After taking account of non-operating items this represents an underlying operating deficit of £10.6m, compared to the budget forecast of £29.8m. Full details can be found in C-2018-04-08
- The appointment of Maggie Galliers CBE as an external member Council for a period of 4 years from 1 August 2018. Maggie's background is in Further Education (she was Principal of Leicester College from 2002-2012) and she has extensive experience at national board level, including membership of HEFCE's Teaching Quality and Student Experience Committee. There is a more detailed biography of Maggie on the Council website.
- My reappointment as the student member of GNC (Governance and Nominations Committee) and SPRC (Strategic Planning and Resources Committee) for a period of two years from 1 August 2018.
- The University's OfS registration application was approved
- The discussions concerning FutureLearn remain confidential.
- Early discussions around the appointment process for a new Vice-Chancellor stressed the need to ensure that students are appropriately represented.

Council Meeting 25 September 2018

This was the first meeting of the 2018/19 academic year and it is normally reserved for development activities and presentations designed to give external Council members a better insight into the work of the University. However, on this occasion there were a number of formal business items on the agenda, some of a pressing nature. In particular, Richard Gillingwater, the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, has announced that for personal reasons he will not be seeking reappointment when his current term expires on 31 December 2018. The process for finding a replacement has already begun. An executive recruitment firm has been appointed to lead the search and the applications window is open until 14 October. Applications will be considered by a sub-committee of the GNC, comprising two external Council members, one Senate member, the Acting Vice-Chancellor (ex officio) and the student member (me). It is hoped that the sub-committee will be able to make a recommendation to Council in time for its next meeting on 27 November.

Critical Review

Council approved the high level implementation plan (Action Plan) prepared in response to the Critical Review findings and agreed the approach to implementation and accountability set out in the plan. On 27 September the plan will be shared with and considered by the OU's Senior Team, so that a finalized, more detailed Action Plan can be collectively owned and implemented across the University. A communications plan will inform the wider OU community of the Action Plan and the timescales envisaged for its execution. Council requested that the finalized plan should be brought to the November Council meeting, highlighting any significant changes made as a result of Senior Team deliberations and reporting on progress against the early priorities that have been identified.

Development Activities

- A presentation from Smita Jamdar (Shakespeare Martineau) on the role of the Council Member in a changing regulatory landscape
- A presentation from Jhumar Johnson, the OU's Director of Development, on plans to celebrate the OU's 50th Anniversary with a whole year of fun and fund raising
- Afternoon tea with VCE members

Other points to note from the meeting:

- The search for a new VC will be delayed until the new year. Mary is willing to remain in post until the end of 2019 if necessary.
- It was agreed that the Student Association President should have an automatic place as an observer on the Joint Appointment Committee for the Appointment of the Vice- Chancellor. Cath will have the same rights as other committee members with the single exception that she will not be able to vote. I am sure that will not stop her from making her views known. I hope that there may also be a small 'student panel' as there was last time, when a number of us were able to meet the short-listed candidates and ask them some pointy questions.

- The selection of a vendor for the Core Systems replacement should be completed by the end of October and contract negotiations are expected to start early in November
- Discussions on FutureLearn remain confidential.

Meetings and activities attended since last report

17 July	Council meeting
20 July	Student Engagement meeting
20-22 July	CEC handover
7-9 Sept	CEC Induction weekend
17 Sept	Adobe Connect CEC training session
20 Sept	Meeting with Minerva re Pro-Chancellor recruitment
24 Sept	WELS ED recruitment: Longlisting meeting
25 Sept	Council meeting and development activities
26 Sept	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
27 Sept	VCE Question Time (via Stadium)

Future meetings (until the end of the year)

10 Oct	SRG and Senate
10 Oct	Education in Prisons event (as Council Member)
15 Oct	WELS ED recruitment: Shortlisting meeting
19-21 Oct	CEC meeting
24 Oct	Governance and Nominations Committee
	Strategic Planning and Resources Committee
31 Oct	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
27 Nov	Council meeting
28 Nov	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group
19 Dec	Student Satisfaction Improvement Working Group

Barbara Tarling
Student Member of OU Council

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR ENGLAND

The following report is a brief update of my activities as the new Area Association Representative for England since taking office on 1st August 2018.

Committees and Meetings

I have been appointed to the Student Consultative Management Group which aims to look at the topics for student consultation over the coming year. Regrettably I was unable to attend the first meeting held on 11th September due to a diary clash.

As A A R for England, I am automatically a member of the Approval Panel for the Student Led Projects and have participated in a training session with other members and staff.

In addition, due to my role as A A R, I am also a member of the Student Consultation Forum though as yet I have not taken part in any Consultation activities since August 1st.

Social and community activities I hosted a meet up in Newcastle on 29th September as part of the Freshers meet ups being held across the UK – this was attended by 12 students studying a variety of qualifications. One of the students attending is interested in setting up regular meet ups in Darlington as we have identified a number of students in this area and I have offered to support this student in doing this.

I attended the live Freshers chat held by the Association and V P Community on 24th September and was able to contribute to several threads welcoming and advising students.

Alongside Billy Docherty (F A S S Faculty Rep), we have created OU Fit, a new club dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles, fitness and positive mental attitudes. The club has grown quickly since its inception (members - 528). Billy and I co-hosted an Adobe Live chat for OU Fit members on 25th September 2018 along with the other two admins for the group. This was attended by a handful of students who have discussed ideas for promoting the group further and challenges that might be held. Future plans to hold more chats are being worked on.

Social Media

I have taken over the Facebook page run by the former A A Rs for England. I am posting regular updates relating to Association events and opportunities for students.

Page likes have increased since taking over the page, currently standing at 118 likes and 124 following the page.

I have taken over the main running of the Association Northern region Facebook group from the previous representative for this region. Membership of this group currently stands at 213 and as with the A A R page, I am posting regularly in the group and trying to increase interactivity as this page has been very quiet before in the past. In addition, I have joined every other England regional Facebook group.

Furthermore, along with other members of the C E C who are studying/ have studied on the Open programme, I am an admin of the new OU Students Open Degree club set up by V P Community and this club has grown steadily, membership is currently at 88.

I have not set up a dedicated twitter account for my new role but continue to tweet under my personal account as I have been doing for my other role as a Central Committee Representative, however I am endeavouring to keep the majority of my A A R related social media activity to the Facebook page.

Future Commitments

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 19 – 21 October | Central Executive Committee meeting at Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes |
| 22nd October | Joint presentation with Alison Kingan, V P Student Support, and Billy Docherty, F A S S Faculty Rep, to the Milton Keynes S S T as part of the S S T Roadshows |
| 12th November | Student Consultative Management Group meeting. |
| 14th January | Student Consultative Management Group meeting. |

Danielle Smith
Area Association Representative England

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR WALES

Handover

I attended the Handover weekend in July.

Induction

I attended the induction weekend in early September. I also attended a range of online training events to complete induction.

Student Voice in Wales

Due to being a new academic year this has been quiet so far. I have had contact with the Open Universities Wales office in Cardiff, and will be having meetings in the autumn.

Community in Wales

I am pleased to say there have been a number of successful meetups around Wales. The Cardiff freshers meet up I organised was a success and has now become a monthly event.

Social Media

Wales has a large Facebook group and while it is quiet, it is populated with the latest association news, as well as a number of new students making use of it.

Day to Day Responsibilities.

I check the Central Executive forums daily and contribute as appropriate

Other Meetings

I have attended a meeting on campus to prepare an emergency evacuation plan.

Upcoming

Meetings at the OU in Wales in the autumn.
Digital skills delivery group November.

Lucy Richardson
Area Association Representative Wales

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR SCOTLAND

This is my first report as A A R since taking over from my predecessor, Patricia Gray on August 1st, 2018. Patricia is staying with us within Scotland and I would like to thank her for all her hard work, dedication and commitment to the A A R role during the previous term. We are grateful to her for staying on to be involved in other volunteer roles and I will benefit from her expertise as I go. My aim(s) are to continue that and communicate the views of students in Scotland to the C E C, but also to feedback decisions made by the C E C to students in Scotland, especially where they affect them.

I have spent the early part of the new term getting to grips with the changes to the role, and Association more widely, since my previous term ended in 2016, and also getting to know the new staff members at the O U in Scotland. I will detail this later in my report.

Social Activities and meetings

I have aimed to regularly participate alongside other volunteers in the regular Community drop in online sessions every fortnight. These are good sessions within Adobe Connect which allows students to have an informal, social chat and I try to promote these sessions wherever possible. To that effect, I am also in the process of revamping my former role Facebook and Twitter pages, and intend to use these as additional channels to promote what we are doing as an Association and what I am doing within my A A R role. I am also grateful to Billy Docherty, the Faculty Association Rep for the Arts and Social Sciences (F A S S F A R) for assisting me in promoting the forthcoming Glasgow meetup as part of Freshers', which will take place on the afternoon of Saturday, September 29th. Through promotion on the forums, plus social media channels, good interest in this event has been generated and will hopefully encourage students to create further meetups in other areas of Scotland.

The early social media discussions have been around new module starts, getting to know other students and other general areas such as N U S Extra (now T O T U M) discounts and the complexities of registering with the Unidays site, which also affords student discounts. I have introduced myself (or rather re-introduced myself!) on the Facebook page as A A R Scotland and this has been positive in assuring students that they can come to me with any issues that they face. I am also involved alongside V P Community and the A A R for England with an official Facebook group for the Open Degree which has so far proved popular amongst students.

OU in Scotland and external meetings

I have also had contact with the Directorate at the O U in Scotland, and will meet with Susan Stewart, Director, at the O U in Scotland on November 20th prior to the new Staff and Student Engagement Group (S & S E G) meeting later that day. The new committee is essentially speaking, a continuation of the former Scottish Working Committee (S W C) meeting which I am sure C E C members and students that read Patricia's reports will remember. I'm happy to send a copy of the terms of reference to members on request if they would like to see this, the terms of reference for the new committee are almost identical to the old S W C and we will be afforded five student members in addition to myself on committee.

Susan is keen to engage as she has been since taking up post and I look forward to meeting with her in November once again.

I will also be involved again in the Q A A Enhancement Themes work as the student rep on both the institutional group within the O U in Scotland, and I have also been asked to be the student rep on the Theme Leaders Group as well, which I have agreed to. The next meeting of the Institutional Group takes place on Friday, October 5th, which is unfortunately too late to be included in this report, I will be including this in January's report to the C E C. I will be working with a new member of staff at the OU in Scotland as part of the team concentrating on Student Voice, Amy McDermott. Amy joined the team in mid-August so I look forward to working with her.

I will be attending meetings at the O U in Scotland with both Sparqs (Student Participation in Quality Scotland) and with Shona Littlejohn, Depute Director, Student Experience and Widening Access) at the O U in Scotland, on Monday, October 1st. I am having an initial meeting with Shona as one of the newer staff that I have not yet worked with at the Edinburgh office and will be introduced to some new members of staff during the time I am at the office on October 1st as outlined above. The Sparqs meeting is an annual support visit which they conduct with all universities/colleges within Scotland, and looks at what support they can offer to us and how we can work with them to achieve our aims.

In the last few days of writing this report, the O U in Scotland have had contact from the newly elected N U S Scotland President who is keen to meet with me. I am currently considering this request.

Degree Ceremonies

The 2018 Degree Ceremonies will be after a short spell in Edinburgh, returning to the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, due to take place on Friday, October 26th. Patricia Gray will be co-ordinating our stall on the day, and I will be there also.

Activities

27 August	Enhancement Themes Institutional Group meeting, O U in Scotland (via Skype)
Regular	Online Community drop in sessions (via Adobe Connect)
1 October	Sparqs Annual Support Visit, O U in Scotland, Edinburgh
1 October	Meeting with Shona Littlejohn, Depute Director (Student Experience and Widening Access), O U in Scotland, Edinburgh
5 October	Enhancement Themes Institutional Group meeting, O U in Scotland (via Skype)
18 October	Q A A Scotland meeting, O U in Scotland, Edinburgh

Future Commitments

19 - 21 October	C E C Meeting, Milton Keynes
26 October	O U in Scotland Degree Ceremonies, Glasgow
20 November	Staff and Student Engagement Group Scotland meeting, O U in Scotland, Edinburgh

20 November Meeting with Susan Stewart, Director, O U in Scotland,
Edinburgh
6 December (T B C) Q A A Scotland workshop, Glasgow
25 - 27 January C E C meeting, Milton Keynes

Mark Cameron
Area Association Representative for Scotland

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

This is my first CEC report as Area Association Representative for Northern Ireland. In the short time I have spent in this role I have identified several issues that need my immediate attention over the coming months and one long term project that I have begun to work on.

Freshers Northern Ireland (NI)

I have been disappointed to note that very little was organised in the way of events here in Northern Ireland. I received a comment on the OUSA/NI Facebook page regarding the absence of Freshers events here and submitted a query to head office in Belfast but to date have received no reply. My intention is to draft ideas for Freshers Week in February and ensure that these events are well promoted. I intend to canvass current students for suggestions.

Meet-Ups

Regular meet-ups have become a feature of the student diary in Northern Ireland. Meet-ups are arranged on twice-monthly basis where we have meeting space available in head office in Belfast. These generally attract up to six to eight students each time, they are held during the lunch hour break, and they are always productive and well-received. Students have indicated they want them to continue.

Student Finance NI

Issues regarding SFNI will dominate my term as AAR. I am currently working on a significant issue where a women's centre (Kilcooley, Bangor) hosting an OU health and social care module (K101) has been forced to defer the start of the module to February 2019. This is due to difficulties experienced in completing the forms and confusion as to who and where to submit them.

Students reported to me that the forms are complicated for first-time university students. I am in the process of submitting the issue to head office in Belfast with the suggestion that assistance be offered to staff at Kilcooley Women's Centre with handling the SFNI forms. As I worked to establish the link-up between the OU and KWC, I am deeply disappointed that the course has had to be deferred because of the application process. I will follow this up and report on progress/resolution.

YASS (Young Applicants in Schools)

I am working to facilitate the re-establishment of the YASS scheme in Northern Ireland. I am currently in contact with Kitty Chilcott (Learning Partnerships Officer, Open University, Scotland) who is providing guidance and information for the initial stages. I will be meeting with John D'Arcy and Northern Ireland's most-recent Education Minister, Peter Weir MLA, to discuss ways to take this project forward. It is my intention to establish strong links with the potential YASS scheme in Northern Ireland and the Students Association.

Community Link-Ups

I plan to visit community centres that provide educational courses to adults and offer the opportunity to link up with the Open University and thereby offer third-level education modules. The Students Association will be a vital aspect in this in providing support to the students who enrol on these modules.

Wendy Reid

Area Association Representative for Northern Ireland

REPORT OF THE AREA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (AAR) FOR EUROPE

This is a report about my activities as the Area Association Representative (A A R) for Continental Europe. In this role, I am responsible for representing and reporting upon the views of students living in Continental Europe to the C E C and informing the C E C about Association Activities within Continental Europe.

Social Activities

There has been some interest for face to face meetings from students at the Facebook groups (Northern Europe, Switzerland). In all occasions the link to the O U S A website about meet ups was provided (<https://www.oustudents.com/about-meet-ups>) so students can advertise their meet-ups there and be supported by the Community team. Moreover, I suggested to contact me if they needed any further assistance. In one case there has been a misunderstanding about the data that OU Students Association can share with students.

Social Media

I have been given administrator rights at the Facebook groups for Southern and Northern Europe. I am also member, and in some cases administrator, to some Southern Europe national groups (France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Switzerland). I have also requested membership to some local national Northern Europe groups without any response as of yet. Until now I use my personal Facebook and Twitter accounts for the role, but most news are shared through posting at the Southern and Northern Europe Facebook groups. The current number of group members are as follows: Northern Europe, 337 and Southern Europe, 260. V L E forums were silent as usual and I am planning to post something so as to show that they are 'alive' and they can be used. I also participated at the freshers Facebook event.

Other Activities

I have met with the former Student Association Representative for Continental Europe, during the handover C E C meeting, regarding their experience and for information exchange. 'Brexit,' and overseas degree recognition continue to be among the most pressing issues which are ongoing from previous terms. I was also informed and invited to participate in the creation of an information leaflet for students studying in Europe. I am also trying to create a regional 'heat' map of Europe with current student numbers. I participate at the Student Led Projects Approval Panel. Please note that I have, up until now, technical problems related to my email account and I have no access to the O U intranet for which the O U S A office is informed.

Activities since last report

22 – 24 June '18 Open University Students Association Conference 2018 at H U B theatre, O U Campus, Milton Keynes

20 – 22 July '18 Central Executive Committee Handover meeting at Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes

25 July '18 Critical Review Live Evening Event via Adobe Connect (online)

13 August '18 Adobe Connect Initial Training via Adobe Connect (online)

7– 9 September '18 Central Executive Committee Induction meeting at Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes

27 September '18 Student Led Projects Approval Panel Training via Adobe Connect (online)

Future Commitments

Cooperate for the creation of an information leaflet for C. Europe students

Create a 'heat' map for student numbers in C. Europe

Host an adobe connect event for C. Europe (probably in November)

Michael Kasoutas

Area Association Representative for Europe

REPORT OF THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (FAR) FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS (STEM)

To date, I have written an introductory email to the Executive Dean, Josie Fraser, to arrange a meeting to discuss any matters I should be aware of (or vice versa). However, I am aware that she has been away (her PA got in touch to let me know), so I will just have to wait until she is available.

I am also about to send an email out to the STEM Heads of School (I know some the other FARs have already done this), in the hope of meeting each of them in turn.

Last weekend, I attended the New Scientist Live event in London, and met with OU staff and volunteers at the stand being held by the STEM faculty.

I just hosted my first Faculty online chat – and although my way was a little unconventional (and we went in a slightly different direction than what we had planned), it was rather successful, and we had a lot of students join in the discussions we were having, while contributing their own ideas as well.

In addition to the Faculty chat, I also hosted a Freshers meet-up in Exeter on Saturday, I think it went rather well. About eight students turned up (which is actually pretty good for my neck of the woods) – but I also noted that some had travelled quite a long way to get there, as mine was the only one in Devon (nothing at all in Cornwall).

I have been invited to visit the OU library by Hilary Johnson, which we have arranged for the 10th of October, after the SRG meeting.

Claire Davey

Faculty Association Representative for Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)

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

I have decided that my priority over my first few months is one of getting to know students and members of the faculty.

Faculty

I have met either face to face or over skype with the Acting Head of Faculty and all the heads of schools. The following meetings are the ones I have had just trying to start building relationships with the faculty team.

August

- E-mailed a list of people to introduce myself and started to arrange skype and face to face meetings.
- First skype meeting with Acting Executive Dean Sally Boyle 17.08.18

September

- Head of Student Success Dasha Ivankina-MacDonald 10.09.18
- Head of Education, Childhood, Youth and Sport, (ECYS), Steve Hutchinson 10.09.18
- Head of Languages Uwe Baumann and Head of Languages (Curriculum) Elodie Vialleton 11.09.18
- Head of Wellbeing Sally Boyle 17.09.18 and 24.09.18
- Associate Head of Wellbeing Chris Kubiak 24.09.18
- Associate Head of School, Innovation WELS, ECYS, Eric Addae-Kyeremeh 24.09.18

October (Upcoming)

- SST Roadshow in Nottingham – talking to Student support team within WELS 09.10.18
- An informal visit to WELS faculty team 19.10.18

November (Upcoming)

- WELS faculty assembly – I will be speaking for 5 minutes during the session about who I am and what my job is. 06.11.18

Students

As the other part of my job is talking to students I have been actively trying to engage with them in various ways. I started by engaging in the primary education forums and on some of the Facebook sites. I have set up some social media to try to reach other students. The schools are in the process of giving me access to their forums so I can promote all things Open University Student Association (OUSA) and WELS related. It also gives me the chance to look and see what is going on for students. I have given out my e-mail and social media information so students can more readily contact me should they want to. I was invited to take an active role in the Primary Education Induction Webinar so that I could promote my job and all things OUSA. I also had an invite to be interviewed on Student Hub Live as part of the ECYS Induction day. On the back of that, I have been asked to be part of it again next year, helping to shape it into something more student-focused. I have hosted (with much help from Billy Docherty, Stephanie Stubbins and Shelia Cameron) a WELS faculty adobe connect

session as part of Freshers Weeks that proved to be very successful, over the event 223 students accessed it. I plan to do this again once I have spoken to WELS to make sure there are no clashes with their activities. The following are the dates on which these events took place.

Primary Induction Webinar 11.09.18 (meetings to prepare for this were 24.08.18, 06.09.18, 10.09.18)

Student Hub Live 25.09.18 (meetings to prepare for this were 21.09.18 and 24.09.18)

Freshers WELS Adobe Connect session 28.09.18

Staff and CEC

I have had various meetings with members of the staff team to get to know them and work out the best way that they can help support me in this role;

Beth Metcalf 07.09.18

Verity Robinson 10.09.18

Kate Dungate 10.09.18

I have had great support from all the members of the staff team answering any questions I have had and sorting out all my IT issues.

I have had catch ups with Stephanie Stubbins and Cath Brown

I have attended some CEC training sessions including learning how to use adobe connect.

Other Meetings

I am a member of the Open Learn+ working Group. I have attended remotely one meeting so far, so I am only just getting to grips with how this will affect students taking part. Dates attended – 04.09.18 Dates to attend – 02.09.18, 16.09.18, 30.09.18

I will be attending my first Senate Reference Group (SRG) meeting 10.10.18

As a group of FAR's, we have met up a few times within adobe connect to chat and share ideas about how to engage with faculty members and staff. Dates attended – 16.08.18, 27.09.18

I am volunteering at the Cardiff Graduation Ceremony on October 18th as the co-ordinator. I have met with Joel McBrearty to discuss this.

I have also taken part in Resi weekends at Bath and hosted my first meet up. Both went well.

Future Plans

I will continue to build up relationships with faculty staff and students. I aim to have another faculty meet up just haven't as yet worked out a good date for this. I will be "putting my nose" into some student consultations for Wellbeing.

Sarah Jones

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

REPORT OF THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE (FAR) FOR ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES (FASS)

List of Meetings Attended (# indicates further information in main report)

Meeting		Discussion
Ben Duncan Jones Board of Studies (Bos) 17/09/18	B o s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students reps for B o S 2. Getting ahead report 3. F A S S specific meet ups 4. F A S S online events
Julia Prosser Anita Gnagnatti Jonathan Nimmo Student Support Team (SST) # 17/09/18	SST	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to promote service 2. How to support students with additional needs for exams 3. 4 possible adobe sessions for F A S S student's with disabilities, on how to access additional support, run by Billy and SST staff 4. Include Cherry and D S G 5. Look at processes for registration 6. Dates to be discussed and arranged through email (Mid Nov – Early Dec)
Alison Kirkbright/Damon Millar FASS Media Team # 17/09/18	Media	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Producing a Short intro video of role for Faculty assembly 2. Video to be added to student home pages 3. Possible section on module sites to advertise ongoing F A S S events 4. To keep updated with events being arranged
James Robson Head of School 17/09/18	Arts Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro to my role 2. Discussion on new school set up 3. Discussion on F A S S adobe chats 4. Information to be sent of ongoing FASS events so can be distributed through modules via tutors etc
Hilary Johnson 18/09/18	Library Service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tour of Library 2. Intro to archive section 3. Discussion on how students access 4. Possible Adobe/Facebook session on how to access library, service it offers 5. Was given the chance to observe the staff on call and internet handling. Seeing the process of dealing with requests and how people can be signed posted to appropriate service
Beverly Mason Siobahn Flint Becky Maxwell 18/09/18	Careers and Employa bility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion regarding how service is set up and split into faculties and how the service work collaboratively with other services 2. To plan some live events to promote the service and explain to students the service 3. Signposting students to careers service 4. Met with Siobahn and Becky to discuss how calls are handled and how careers interviews are conducted
Sam Harding x 2	OUSA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Catch up

Face to face and <i>Telephone</i> Sam Harding and Vice President Student Voice		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Planning 3. Feedback from meetings 4. Discussion regarding volunteering opportunities
Peter (Meet ups) <i>Face to face</i>	O U S A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possibly faculty-based meet ups 2. Meet ups general discussion 3. Online meet ups being planned through careers, S S T etc
Roger Knowles <i>18/09/18</i>	F A S S Director of planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro of my role and how I feed into FASS 2. Plans being discussed as mentioned above and how we can get this out to students 3. Working with the wider F A S S teams and distributing information on possible upcoming events
Damon Millar <i>18/09/18</i>	F A S S	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussed students attending F A 2. Discussed confidentiality statement 3. Expenses and accommodation
Julia Prosser <i>18/09/18</i>	S S T	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussed plans for online meetings 2. Possibly attending their team meetings when required 3. Meeting up with staff when on campus 4. Hot desk in centre if I need
Stephanie Stubbins	O U S A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Online catch up and support into new role session. 2. Adobe training sessions x 2
Sarah Smith <i>10/09/18</i>	Head of Student Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro to my role 2. Work collaboratively 3. Accessing the wider student community
Faculty Association Reps	Online sharing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reps for F A S S, W E L S and S T E M attended and online adobe sharing session. 2. Future sessions to possibly include V P Student Voice, V P Education and Head of Student Voice
Helen Jane	OUSA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To discuss a plan of work 4. To discuss my role and settling in

FASS and Student Support

To pre-empt future issues with students requiring additional support for exams I met with the O U student support team. The team highlighted the issue of students not registering on time for support, which maybe caused by them being unsure of the process. We are looking at the possibility of holding live chat session either Adobe or Facebook. These sessions will act as an information sharing session and allow students to ask questions to the S S T. The aim is to have these sessions running by the middle of November. The Disabled Students group are keen to be involved in these. I passed on information to the V P Student Support, V P Equality and Diversity and V P Education.

Social Media, Adobe and Introduction Video

I have set up a F A R for F A S S Facebook page and will be working with the F A S S media team to produce an introduction video about my role. This video will be used at Faculty Assembly, module pages and added to my social media accounts for the role. I am also holding a F A S S adobe live event for Freshers Fortnight.

Other activities

- Reading/posting in C E C, S R G and Central Reps forums
- Reading and responding to emails from colleagues, OU Student Association Staff and OU staff
- I have submitted to the Executive Dean and Director of planning of F A S S, a proposal for a new student consultation program. This program is currently being discussed with the senior staff in the faculty.

List of future meetings/commitments

3 October 2018	Freshers live Adobe session for F A S S
8 October 2018	Attending the FASS assessment conference
9 October 2018	Recoding Video for FASS
9 October 2018	Senate Reference Group (SRG) training
10 October 2018	Senate Reference Group
17 October 2018	Student Voice Steering Group
19 – 21 October 2018	Central Executive Weekend
22 October 2018	Presentation with VP Student Support
19 November 2018	Faculty Assembly Meeting

Billy Docherty

Faculty Association Representative for Arts & Social Sciences (FASS)