



OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

19 – 21 October 2018

REPORTS FROM OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION GROUPS

C E C 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:-

Disabled Students Group (DSG)

PLEXUS

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

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REPORT FROM THE DISABLED STUDENTS GROUP (DSG)

‘Students Supporting Students for 15 Years’.

What Have We Been Doing Since The Last C E C Meeting?

Our Committee have:-

- Our Committee meetings have now been established as bi-monthly with Officer’s Meetings in between.
- 3 of our Committee have now taken up positions on C E C and have now resigned due to their C E C commitments.
- Several of the Committee held Freshers Meet Ups which were well attended. They hope to continue holding more events over the next year.
- The Committee have been discussing the rules for introducing Associate Membership and a change to our Guidelines is in the process of being written.
- Our new style Bulletin has been rolled out with its first issue.
- We continue to Signpost Students to a variety of help including their S S Ts, D S A, etc via our Open and Closed Social Media Areas and our Website.
- We have just held our Fresher’s Open Facebook Event which was very successful and resulted in several new members.
- Adobe Connect training has now been completed by all Officers. Each Officer now Mentors a group of Committee Member.
- Our Meetings are hosted in both the Committee Adobe Connect Room and Events Room. Feedback continues to be positive.
- We continue to work with the O U to test various material and equipment and have provided active feedback. Next meeting is October.
- We are working with the DRILL Team to set up an Online O U Journey App. Further adaptations have now taken place. This is still ongoing.
- We are working alongside Cherry and PLEXUS about the OU’s Equality Objective 1 C. This is ongoing.
- We continue to work with the Library on the Sensus Access Trials as well as the Carers Section which is ongoing.
- We continue to co-host Community Meet Ups with our new V P Community. These events are all-encompassing and very productive.
- Our collaboration with various O U Teams is ongoing.
- Our Microsite is well established and updated regularly.
- Committee now have name badges and business cards.

Future Commitments

- Committee Meetings will become embedded in Adobe Connect
- Regular Open Adobe Connect Events are being organised with subjects such as ‘How are you settling into your New Studies?’; ‘Come and join us for Virtual Tea and Cake’.

- Sensus Access trials are continuing.
- Chair will attend Inclusion Meeting in October
- Several Committee and D S G Members will continue to work alongside L T D in various capacities
- A Big Picnic is in the process of being planned for May 2019 to Celebrate our 15th Anniversary Year and the O U's 50th.
- Operational Guideline changes are ongoing to take into account Associate Membership. Once agreed and checked then we will advertise Associate Membership to past Disabled Students.
- We are hoping to have a Full Committee via co-option shortly (Once new students settle in an advert for co-option to the Committee will take place to cover the current vacancies).
- Committee Members will also be continuing to supporting students 24/7 in our various Open & Closed Social Media Platforms.
- We will be supporting new students via Freshers Events on Campus and online.
- Our new Newsletter is in development and will have the same corporate look as our Bulletin.
- A new Information leaflet is being produced.
- We will continue to work with other O U S A Groups and O U Departments supporting each other in whatever way is required



Disabled
Students
Group

Sheila Cameron

Chair, Disabled Students Group (DSG)

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

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REPORT FROM PLEXUS

Engagement

Social Media

As our social media presence continues to grow, we've also recognised that our members (including the wider OU student community) are communicating via our social media platforms. One of the targets for the next 12 months is to consider our forums and how to increase traffic to this space. The forums are only available to members and is our official platform, including Annual General Meetings and elections.

We are going to start reporting on our social media presence and each quarter we'll provide the report below which will demonstrate our reach on each of our platforms.

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SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

2018/2019



Facebook

Page				Group	
Views	Engagement	Followers	Reach	Members	Engagement
373	988	92	1237	299	647

Twitter

Following	Followers	Impressions	Interactions		
			Likes	Retweets	Clicks
394	50	29383	144	31	24

Instagram

Followers	Reach	Impressions
85	65	102

Website

We have been working extremely hard with the Association staff team, particularly Sammi Wright in ensuring our new microsite is up and ready. We have successfully launched our new site, which contains lots of information about PLEXUS and what support we offer, including news, events and much more. I recommend you visit the

site using the following link www.ouplexus.co.uk. There is still some work to be on the site, which includes our link to the OU careers service and other external partners.

So far, we have received we have received 65 unique hits on the site and we'll continue to report on the next few months. If you have any feedback, please get in touch with our Secretary, Kirean Dingley via email secretary@ouplexus.co.uk

Coming Up

For the remainder of this term the committee will continue to facilitate activities in the calendar. We have also been invited to participate in a University wide working group being led by the Executive Dean (FASS) and LGBT+ Champion – Ian Fribbance.

Elections 2019

We will be holding elections for the new committee which will be taking office on the 1st January 2019. Following the recent AGM there has been a change in the committee structure, with the removal of the caucus representative and this will see the introduction of three committee members without portfolio. We will also be introducing the Trans Officer who will represent our Transgender and non-binary community. They will also be the lead for all things relating to gender for the Association and the University, working closely with the Vice-President Equality and Diversity.

Mental Health Awareness Day

October 10th will be World Mental Health Day, PLEXUS along with the wider Association will have several activities schedule, which will end with the Live event on Adobe Connect.

50th Anniversary of Stonewall / OU Pride 2019

We all know that the University will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary next year. PLEXUS will be a part of these celebrations. In addition to this 1969 also saw the Stonewall uprising. We will be working together the wider OU community to mark this important milestone in LGBT+ history. Throughout the year we will once again be attending pride events across all four nations of the Open University.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Internationally the 20th November will be marked as Transgender Day of Remembrance. We will be encouraging members to post their thoughts on our social media platforms and holding a moments pause on that day.

World AIDS Day

We are all aware of the AIDS epidemic across the globe and that people are still diagnosed with the virus today. Although treatments and preventive drugs are starting to be available and affordable there is still a lot more we can do. PLEXUS will be leading a campaign around removing the stigma that surrounds those who are HIV positive or have AIDS.

Working with the University

PLEXUS has been invited to support the University’s activity surrounding Objective 1c which relates to student declarations around sexual orientation, gender and caring responsibilities. This project is in the early stages and PLEXUS will be working with the Vice-President Equality and Diversity where applicable.

Membership

At the time of this report PLEXUS have 481 members from across the UK, Ireland and Europe. Our highest proportion of member remains in London. However, thanks to our engagement in the Nations we have seen significant rises in members in Scotland and Wales. The Nation Director for Ireland has praised us for recognising the Nations, their comments also included that in Ireland is a little slower but is confident our engagement increase.

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MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS



Total Number of Members	630
Full Member	533
Associate Member	30
Friend of PLEXUS	48
HLM	1
Revoked	17

Members by Region			
R01 - London	70	R09 - North	17
R02 - South	46	R10 - Wales	47
R03 - South West	44	R11 - Scotland	65
R04 - West Mids	55	R12(a) - Northern Ireland	24
R05 - East Mids	41	R12(b) - Republic of Ireland	5
R06 - East of England	26	R13 - South East	59
R07 - Yorkshire	43	R14 - Continental Europe	18
R08 - North West	59	R15 - Rest of World	6

Membership Communications			
Opted - In	294	Not-Opted In Members	335

Future Commitments

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Tuesday 2 nd October | PLEXUS Live Welcome |
| Wednesday 10 th October | Mental Health Awareness Live Chat |
| Friday 12 th October | PLEXUS Election Cycle Starts |
| Wednesday 17 th October | 50 th Anniversary Working Group |
| Thursday 18 th October | Inclusion Committee |
| Monday 22 nd October | Launch of Identity Video |
| Tuesday 20 th November | Transgender Day of Remembrance |
| Saturday 1 st December | World AIDS Day |
| Saturday 8 th December | Committee Handover Event |
| Tuesday 1 st January | PLEXUS New Term of Office Commences |

And Finally

This will be my last report as the Chair of PLEXUS as I have taken the decision not to stand during the upcoming elections, as I chose to focus on my studies and my work commitments. I am so proud to have taken PLEXUS on this journey and I know that the new team will continue forward using the founding ideologies and incorporating their own ideas. The Central Executive Committee 2016-18 were fundamental in ensuring that PLEXUS was created, and I personally thank them for this. The newly elected Committee has demonstrated their passion for the support Groups, which demonstrates that they have the support needs of students close to their pledges, not just ensuring our academic voice is heard. The overall student experience of the Open University relies on both elements working simultaneously.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions, please feel contact me via email.

Graham Rimmer

For and on behalf of PLEXUS

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www.ouplexus.co.uk