

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

19 – 21 October 2018

VOLUNTEERING UPDATES

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **recieve** an update detailing initial work completed by Deputy President and Volunteering team.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Volunteering team is now supported by the Deputy President remit and a large amount of work has been undertaken since the elections. The Volunteer team previously did not have an officer to support work.
- 1.2 It is important for the Central Executive Committee to be aware of what is happening for student volunteers, so they can inform new students of opportunities and as volunteers themselves.
- 1.3 As this is a new term, this paper is intended to give an update and additional information about the volunteer service to all new and existing CEC members.

2. Current Projects and work

- 2.1 **Spotlight Sunday** - Following feedback from the outgoing CEC, #SpotlightSunday will now be used to recognise the efforts of grassroots volunteers. CEC members and trustees will not be recognised using this initiative. Any members of the CEC, trustees, volunteers, Association staff, OU staff, alumni and students can nominate volunteers to receive a Spotlight Sunday nomination.
- 2.2 Upon receipt of an award, student volunteers are sent a #teamOUstudents mug and receive a mention on the website and via social media. We are also looking to announce them in the volunteering forum.
- 2.3 **Slack for volunteers** - The volunteering research paper found that volunteers are looking for a community within the OU student community. Not all volunteers have the opportunity to talk or meet with each other. Feedback from the Volunteering Recognition Event in 2017 highlighted that meeting

fellow volunteers in a range of roles helped them to feel part of something bigger than themselves, giving them the opportunity to share information, stories and experiences and be part of a community.

- 2.4 Slack is a cloud-based tool which is constructed as a private social media platform. It can be used synchronous as a live text chat between members of a channel or can be used to leave messages for members. Businesses and organisations use Slack as an ideas, communication and social area for their members. These workspaces have individual channels set up that have permissions set depending on their use.
- 2.5 There has been significant feedback from volunteers that they would like a private space that they can talk to other volunteers when they first start up in a role and for continued support during their time as a volunteer. Finding new ways to support volunteers is also within the OU Students Association Strategy.
- 2.6 We are running a trial using Slack as an area that volunteers can communicate with each other away from other social media platforms and that has more versatility than a forum. Channels have been set up within Slack for the different types of roles (e.g. Student Community, Student Voice etc.) as well as some general open areas where volunteers can talk together. We are piloting this open area with some of volunteers from different volunteering roles.
- 2.7 **Investing in Volunteers** - The Association has signed up to be assessed for the 'Investing in Volunteers' accreditation provided by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). This is a quality assurance accreditation, to be led by the Volunteering team. It is a 12-18 month process in which input from the CEC may be required and regular updates will be provided as to progress.
- 2.8 **New volunteer roles** - The introduction of alumni mentors is currently being explored with VP Student Support. Training for staff and student volunteers regarding provision of mentoring services is also being considered.
- 2.9 Student Research Partners for students in secure environments (SiSE) is being explored with VP Equality and Diversity, with support from the Library and SiSE team.
- 2.10 Exploration of Faculty Ambassador's role with FARs is in initial stages; an idea has been shared by FASS Faculty Rep and we are exploring how this may work. Other Faculty Reps are welcomed to share their own thoughts on this proposal.
- 2.11 **Upcoming recruitment** - Relaunch of Community Champions, support from VP Community and Deputy President to support community team to re-establish this grass roots role.
- 2.12 Possible opening of Peer Support recruitment round two based on take up of service through Fresher's fortnight.

- 2.13 Radio Host recruitment to ensure team can fulfil regular dates for STUDIO shows, as well as prerecording clips for the shows.
- 2.14 Student Voice Researchers, following a successful Student Research Volunteer pilot, the Student Voice team have made some changes to the role and will be recruiting students to undertake specific pieces of research for the Association.
- 2.15 Following the restructuring of the forums, new moderators will need to be recruited, this is on hold until the structure of forums is completed. A review of the training resources and recruitment process will be undertaken alongside the current team of moderators once this is complete.
- 2.16 Current Volunteer numbers this year:

CEC	17
Trustee	8
Ouset Trustee	5
OSL Director	4
Central Committee Representative	61
Learner Experience Representative	15
Senate Reference Group Member	34
Student Forum Moderator	18
Lead Residential School Representative	4
Residential School Representative	7
Graduation Coordinator	14
Graduation Volunteer	17 (graduation recruitment still in progress)
STUDIO host	5
Conference Maker	81
Disabled Students Group Committee	7
PLEXUS Committee	7
Archive Volunteer	14
Peer Supporter	19
Volunteer Researcher	2
Community Champion	19

(Not currently including meet up-hosts, club leads etc. This needs further exploration.)

- 2.17 **Student Led Projects** - Volunteering team and Deputy President have closed the first application window. A review of the success of this is due end September. Training for the Approval Panel took place Thursday, 27 September 2018.

Three full applications have been received. Lots of students have ideas for project, but further support is often required to help students submit proposals. We are looking at ways to make the process easier and more accessible to all students. A previous Central Executive Committee member has offered to support a project pilot, which will enable us to film and collate resources as an example.

Stephanie Stubbins
Deputy President

Beth Metcalf
Head of Student Volunteering