

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

19 – 21 October 2018

OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION STRATEGY UPDATE

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **note** the updates on the progress of the objectives in the OU Students Association Strategy

1. The 2017-20 OU Students Association Strategy was approved by the CEC and ratified by the Trustees in July 2017. A number of discussions and working sessions had previously been held with the Board of Trustees, the Central Executive Committee (CEC) and the staff team to build the strategy around three major objectives:
 - Listen to OU students and represent their collective voice and academic interests
 - Engage students in a vibrant and supportive community and create new opportunities
 - Raise awareness of our actions and the impact of our work to enhance the student experience and student success
2. Underneath each objective, there are action points detailing the operational actions that we wish to undertake. The full strategy is available at <https://www.oustudents.com/our-strategy>.
3. Following feedback at the last CEC meeting, we have changed the update this time and instead of providing the full appendix here we have drawn out and summarised some key points to note.
4. Under the objective to listen to OU students and represent their collective voice and academic interests, we have made progress in a number of areas. The Kitemark initiative has now been re-titled as the 'Student Engagement Standard'. It is planned that this will be piloted on three projects later in the year, with a report coming to CEC in January 2019. The review of representation will be feeding into the development of the code of practice for academic representation. The student voice twitter account has passed 700 followers, with 20-30,000 impressions each month. The annual report on

student voice has been published and we hope to encourage the University to adopt a similar approach. Finally we are working with the University on the potential achievement of the Race Equality Charter Bronze award. Our second round of student researchers will be looking at the student community and the experience of carers and students from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. A separate workshop is being undertaken to seek CEC input into the development of a research strategy.

5. On our objective to engage students in a vibrant and supportive community and create new opportunities, we have worked with the University to launch the new Postgraduate Research student common room with 60 people attending the launch event on 2 October. The first student-led project is being progressed and we have signed contracts to be assessed for the Excellence in Volunteering quality standard, following completion of all the preparatory work over the last 12 months. We have also been asked to potentially help to provide and support student volunteers in support of a major academic conference in 2020. We are in discussions with the University around potentially stocking celebratory and exclusive merchandise for the 50th Anniversary celebrations throughout 2019. Finally, the Peer Support scheme has been re-launched and 19 supporters have been trained.
6. As for our objective to raise awareness of our actions and the impact of our work to enhance the student experience and student success, we've begun to include inclusivity statements throughout the volunteer recruitment process and we're looking to take forward the outcomes of the volunteer research project. This year's Freshers programme has had great take up and a full evaluation will be carried out after the completion of the period. OUSET processed an unprecedented number of student applications for the October and November presentations. We understand that thousands of students accessed the new induction badged open course which we had fed into, with further information to follow.
7. Shortly into the new term, the Central Executive Committee and Board of Trustees will need to think about a review of the strategy to bring in new ideas and initiatives following the completion of some of the key actions under each objective. We will also be impacted by the ongoing changes within the University, including a revitalised strategy.

Rob Avann
Chief Executive