

## OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

### Central Executive Committee (CEC)

25 – 27 October 2019

### STUDENT LED PROJECTS

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The CEC is asked to:

- i) **receive** an update on the progress of the project
- ii) **discuss** the recommendations for Student-Led Projects
- iii) **approve** proposed models for the continuation of Student- Led Projects and vote for the preferred outcome.

## 1 Background

1.1 In April 2018, the Central Executive Committee approved a pilot year for the volunteer team to run student-led projects following a proposal from a working group made up of 2 staff members, 6 CEC members, 1 Trustee and 2 volunteers. These were described as one-off short-term projects which students could run with 'light touch' facilitation support from the Association. A budget to support small grants accompanied this project and was allocated upon project approval from the student-led projects panel.

## 2 Defining student led projects

- 2.1 Student-led projects come from, and are carried out by, students with advice, support, promotion and at times funding from the Association.
- 2.2 Student-led projects consist of a project leader bringing a group of student volunteers together with a shared goal and specific outcome in mind.
- 2.3 They offer students an opportunity to engage in a rewarding volunteer experience and meet other people with similar interests, while impacting positively on their community.
- 2.4 The experience of working on a project requires the use of a wide skillset and bringing an idea to fruition often takes determination. There is a lot of learning that can be taken from such an experience and students can develop skills required to manage others as well as delivering their outcomes.

### 3 Existing model

3.1 The Pilot for Student Led Projects followed the timetable below.

April 2018:	CEC contributions and approval for project
April-June 2018:	Creation of application form and supporting documents around the application process. Working group to continue to explore finer details of the project including decisions around training and welcome packs.
Conference:	Possibility of running workshops around student led projects and how the process works. Resources available to students wishing to apply.
July 2018:	Applications open.
From August 1 <sup>st</sup> 2018:	Members of the Approval Panel given guidance and training/added to the forum.
October 2018:	Approval Panel make decisions on project applications. Successful students told and training provided. Student leaders to work with office on how they would like to recruit.
Freshers:	Advertise Student Led Projects coming soon, students are able to add name to mailing list if interested.
From October 2018:	Volunteer recruitment for projects (timings may vary based on when the project is due to take place).
Window 2	Open October 2018 to January 2019. Panel decision Beg February 2019. Recruitment of Volunteers from end Feb 2019.
Window 3	Open January 2019-April 2019 Panel Decision Beg April 2019 Recruitment of Volunteers from end April 2019.
Window 4	Open April 2019-July 2019 Panel Decision Beg July 2019 Recruitment of Volunteers from end July 2019.
Pilot end	October 2019 – Pilot finishes, CEC guidance needed for continuation

### 4 Current Panel Membership

4.1 Currently the panel has 7 members: all AARs (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland (vacant), Wales and Continental Europe), Deputy President, VP Administration.

## 5 Pilot measurables

Project received	Volunteer at time of submission?	Progressed to Panel	Panel Decision	Outcome
Aspie hub	No	No – Student had a very good idea but sadly not the time to complete project at time.	-	-
Social Olympians	No	Yes	Approved with some amendments	No student response following approval from panel.
FASS Ambassadors	Yes	No – Project was instead put to the OU who are funding and supporting the creation of a Psychology forum in Scotland.	-	OU and Association Partnership project to support FASS students in Scotland. More information in paper from FASS FAR.
Homelessness Project	Yes	Yes – pilot project to show students what could be done within SLP.	Approved providing no fundraising/ monetary donations involved.	Successful Project – Homeless event 28 January 2019. Details below.
OU Students book	No	Yes	Approved provided books are free of charge.	OU Student book created. Project briefly paused over summer, but 1000 were provided for Freshers packs and a digital copy is available online.
#OUBUDDY	No	Yes		

Wellness booklet	No	Yes	Approved as an accumulation of the three projects.	#wellboxed project led by lead student. Others as contributors. 150 boxes completed and sent to students. Details below.
Self-care Kits	Yes	Yes		
Eyepatch challenge	Yes	Yes	Approved, however time for the specified event has changed, so a new timescale is being devised.	In progress
DSA support video	Yes	Forwarded to Support team for joint working – Panel advised.	-	In progress
Homeless People Matter	No	No due to timing (application received at end of pilot year).	-	Student communicated with, will be contacted if SLP continues.

## 6 Project success and engagement

### 6.1 Homelessness Project

<https://www.oustudents.com/slpsuccess>

28 January 2019. Just over 100 individuals attended the event in Milton Keynes, 12 more brought in items to the campus office. 196 responded to the Facebook event, including those who did a group collection with just one bringing the items to the event. Five charities participated in the event.

1 project leader, 7 volunteers (5 who had never volunteered before), over 2500 items donated.

### 6.2 OU Students Book

20-page OU student book created using contributions and content from students.

1 project leader, 25 contributors, 1000+ copies printed for Freshers packs and an online version available to all.

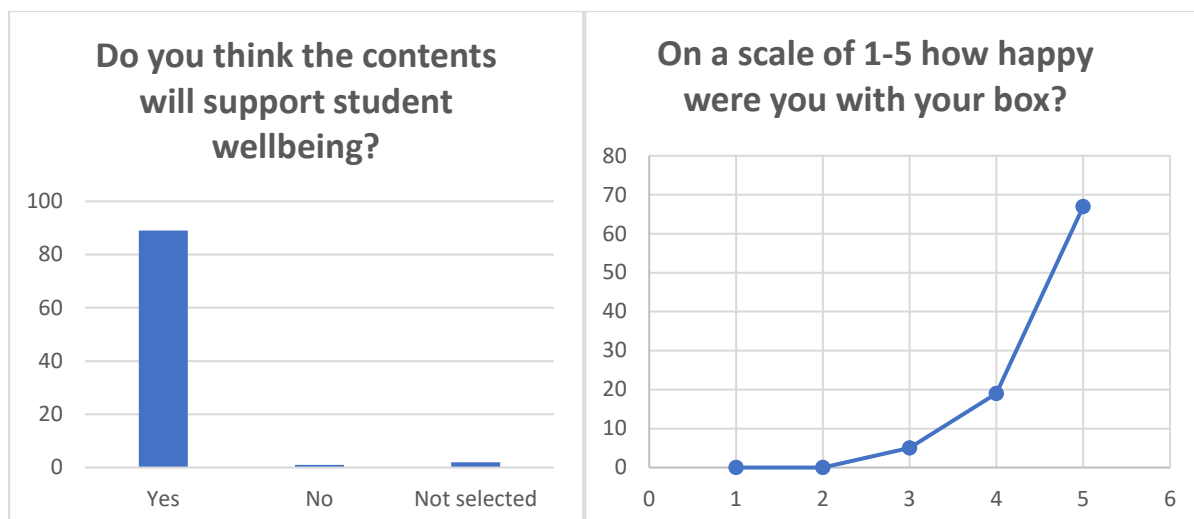
### 6.3 Well-boxed Project

<https://www.oustudents.com/well-boxed-project>

Three projects brought together to support student self-care and wellbeing. Box contents included: wellbeing postcards, colouring, seeds, teabags, pin badges, calendar of happiness, information about relevant charities, letter from the creator introducing the box and Association (including our support services).

1 project leader, 5 volunteers (4 new to the association), engaged many volunteers at the July recognition event, 150 boxes sent out, feedback received from 92 of the recipients!

Social media engagement #wellboxedproject 356 engagements (posts, shares, likes comments on the hashtag – all from students).



“I think the role the OUSA has taken on with these boxes and asking people is enough. Sometimes getting that smile though the post and knowing that there are people there should you need them is enough.” (Anon student)

## 7 Recommendations

- 7.1 Following what we believe to be a successful pilot, we recommend that the Student-led Projects initiative is approved for continuation with amendments to both allow the volunteer team to adequately support project leaders, and to reduce the time demands on CEC members.
- 7.2 CEC is asked to vote on their preferred outcome following the pilot.
- 7.3 **A.** Approve the initiative to continue, reducing the application period to once per year, during which time 1-2 projects for the year will be approved by a panel made up of volunteers rather than CEC members.

By limiting the number of projects we run, we will be able to effectively plan our time and support for the year, there will be more budget to support project leaders (including being able to pay for their expenses) and we will be able to create a buzz around opening of applications to engage as many students as possible. It is recommended that the panel be formed of 3 OU students to sit alongside Deputy President and Head of Volunteering. This panel will be offered as a volunteer opportunity, training around project criteria and the aims, objectives and values of the association will take place online before volunteers attend face to face shortlisting. This approach will reduce the time demands on an already very busy CEC, but should a project be approved which is linked to the remit of existing CEC members, efforts will be made to support link up.

(Recommended outcome based on the level of new student engagement, individual project outcomes, evidence and consultation with project leaders and team members).

7.4 **B.** Continue the project in the current format. Area representatives make up the panel and review applications 4 times per year, approving those that meet the criteria until the budget is used up. The risk with this model is that budget could already be allocated, and then an excellent idea could come in. It is also difficult to plan staff time based on the unknown number of projects and time scales.

7.5 **C.** Vote not to continue student-led projects.

**Stephanie Stubbins**  
**Deputy President**

**Beth Metcalf**  
**Head of Volunteering**