QUARTERLY
STRATEGY PERFORMANCE REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2021

SUPPORT   ENCOURAGE   EMPOWER

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SECTION A:
STRATEGIC KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

This section provides a quarterly update against the 20 strategy metrics.

Where the data collection mechanics have not yet been established and/or no new data is currently available, metric boxes have a strike through. Where data is being reported for the first time and there are no previous statistics to track movement against, this is indicated in the metric box.

Where there are previous statistics, this is displayed in the metric box along with a movement indicator.

Movement	For metrics where we are seeking to achieve upward tracking		For metrics where we are seeking to achieve downward tracking	
Significant improvement	G	Solid green upward arrow	G	Solid green downward arrow
Moderate improvement	G	Hollow green upward arrow	G	Hollow green downward arrow
No change	A	Amber horizontal arrow	A	Amber horizontal arrow
Moderate deterioration	R	Hollow red downward arrow	R	Hollow red upward arrow
Significant deterioration	R	Solid red downward arrow	R	Solid red upward arrow

For metrics which require supporting/qualitative information (eg profiles, impact reports), the information is attached as further appendices.

INFORM & SUPPORT

AWARENESS

Metric 1

Annual Membership Survey (AMS) - % response rate

2020 Roll-out 0.80%
2020 Soft-Launch 0.98%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Jan 2022)

Metric 2

Annual Membership Survey Question 8 - % of responders selecting options 1,2,3 (awareness of membership of Association)

2020 Roll-out 95.1%
2020 Soft-Launch 89.0%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Jan 2022)

Metric 3

Annual NSS Question 26 - % of responders selecting "N/A" (proxy for not aware)

2021 – 14.3%
2020 - Unpublished
2019 – 16.4%
(moderate improvement)

We are unable to publish the 2020 figure (due to the publication threshold not being met), but the movement indicator reflects the change from 2020 to 2021 showing an improvement in awareness of the Association.
The NSS Analysis is provided in the separate CEC paper 10/21/15

Metric 4
#new visitors to website & Hoot (rolling 12 month figures)

Website:
Year to Aug 2021 – 219,974
Year to Aug 2020 – 200,779
(moderate improvement)

Hoot:
Year to Aug 2021 – 16,230
Year to Aug 2020 – 8,590
(significant improvement)

Continuing improvement in website visitors year-on-year. The most visited pages in the period were Totum, Shop related (discounts, past exam papers, merchandise) and fees and funding advice. In the news section, the statement on the Gender Critical Research Network had the highest page views. The Hoot statistics are again showing a huge year-on-year growth (doubling) between year 1 and 2 of the Hoot's operation, reflecting its growing readership and content.

INFORM & SUPPORT

RELEVANCE

Metric 5

Service/resource usage – #students per area

See summary on pg 6

Reduction in Societies following recent audit which resulted in the removal of inactive societies. Newsletter sign-ups increased by 25% over same time period last year, reflecting overall increases in awareness. Totum decline continuing.

Metric 6
#returning visitors to website & Hoot (rolling 12 month figures)

Website:
Year to Aug 2021 – 47,558
Year to Aug 2020 – 45,254
(moderate improvement)

Hoot:
Year to Aug 2021 – 2,420
Year to Aug 2020 – 1,214
(significant improvement)

Good growth showing year-on-year in returning visitor numbers. If calculated as a percentage of new visitors however, the figures are holding steady year-on-year, suggesting that there is more work to do on improving the relevance of the website content for our members.

Metric 7

Social Media Engagements (Assoc Twitter a/c) – % of total impressions

3 months to Aug 2021 – 1.70%
3 months to May 2021 – 2.13%
(moderate deterioration)

Deterioration from the usual 2 - 3% pattern, and lower than the rate for the equivalent period in 2020. Highest engagement on tweets about results and highest impressions on formal announcement tweets. President's Twitter achieved an engagement rate of 1.82% with highest impressions on formal announcements and highest engagement on more personal messaging around studies, results, President's work and role.

Metric 8

Annual Membership Survey Questions 15 & 16 - % (median) of service/resource users who would recommend

From 2020 survey: Services users – median 88% Resources users – median 71%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Jan 2022)

Service/Resource Description	Measurement Basis	Measurements Mar 2021	Measurements Jun 2021	Measurements Sept 2021	Change
Societies	As at reporting date	22	23	17	Decrease
Societies members	As at reporting date	7,355	7,677	7,450	Decrease
Shop orders	In quarter prior to reporting date	521	417	468	Increase
Shop average order value	In quarter prior to reporting date	£31.43	£35.71	£28.63	Decrease
Assoc newsletter new sign-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date	391	219	330	Increase
Assoc newsletter open rates	Average for quarter prior to reporting date	32.9%	26.8%	26.3%	Decrease
Assoc newsletter click through rates	Average for quarter prior to reporting date	3.8%	2.6%	3.6%	Increase
YouTube Video Views	In quarter prior to reporting date	2,529	2,118	1,427	Decrease
TOTUM cards	For 12 months prior to reporting date	13,027	12,974	12,226	Decrease
Peer Support Users	For 12 months prior to reporting date	115	125	101	Decrease
Library Support Requests	For 12 months prior to reporting date	70	91	98	Increase
OUSET successful applications – number and % of all apps	Most recent presentation/academic year	2021 E/B 9 (75%)	-	**	-

** 2021 (J/K) OUSET applications still being processed – 49 applications received in total

ENGAGE & INVOLVE

ENGAGEMENT

Metric 9

Election participation – % eligible voters taking part

Main elections:
2020 - 1.13%
2018 - 0.82%

By-elections:
2020 - 0.75%
2019 - 0.76%
2018 - 0.51%

No new elections held since 2020 main election & by-elections

Metric 10

Activities participation - students per activity type

See summary on pg 8

Reduction in number of clubs following recent audit which resulted in the removal of inactive clubs. Continued growth in group membership. Lower online events and meet-ups over the Summer months (usual pattern).

Metric 11
Quarterly volunteering participation - volunteers active in roles and applications

Active in roles – Year on year tracking:
3 months to Aug 2021 – average 294
3 months to Aug 2020 – average 242
(significant improvement)

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Active in roles – month on month tracking:
Aug 2021 – 253
Jul 2021 – 315
Jun 2021 – 316

Applications:
3 months to Aug 2021 – applicants 109 (% new volunteers = 35%)
3 months to May 2021 - applicants 162 (% new volunteers = 89%)

Year-on-year tracking showing good growth due to the introduction of new volunteering roles.
Month-on-month tracking showing a dip in August due to a reduction in some roles (Peer Supporter, Library Support & meet-up hosts) along with some vacancies within the academic representation structure.
The August application period included our mass recruitment process for the new CCR/SRG term where 2/3 of the applications were from current/previous volunteers.

Activity Description	Measurement Basis	Measurements Mar 2021	Measurements June 2021	Measurements Sept 2021	Change
DSG members	As at reporting date	643	674	730	Increase
OU Pride members	As at reporting date	606	641	734	Increase
BAME Group members (excl FaceBook)	As at reporting date	72	86	98	Increase
Clubs	As at reporting date	76	79	75	Decrease
Club members	As at reporting date	11,509	11,587	11,717	Increase
Number of online events & meet-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date	31	51	23	Increase

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REACH

Metric 12

Profiling of election participants

No new elections held since 2020 main election & by-elections

Metric 13

Annual profiling of engaged students

Not yet available

Metric 14

Annual profiling of active volunteers

An anonymised profile was shared in the June 2021 report for all volunteers active in roles during the period January 2020 to March 2021 which showed under-representation of younger students (35 and under), newer students (Level 1) and male students in the total volunteer cohort in comparison to the make-up of the overall OU student body.

The next stage of this work - to determine whether different types of roles show differences in demographic characteristics to the student body and volunteer cohort as a whole – is still underway and will be shared when available.

INFLUENCE & TRANSFORM

IMPACT

Metric 15

Annual Membership Survey Question 25 - % of responders agreeing that the Association has a positive impact on their student experience

2020 Roll-out 38.4%
2020 Soft-Launch 32.1%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Jan 2022)

Metric 16

Annual NSS Question 26 - % of responders agreeing that the Association effectively represents students' academic interests

2021 – 43.4%
Ⓡ **2020 - Unpublished**
2019 – 45.0%
(moderate deterioration)

We are unable to publish the 2020 figure (due to the publication threshold not being met), but the movement indicator reflects the change from 2020 to 2021, showing a deterioration.
The NSS Analysis is provided in the separate CEC paper 10/21/15

Metric 17

Annual volunteering feedback – % volunteers identifying positive growth & development

The annual feedback survey is under development but has not yet been introduced.

One of our volunteers has shared their personal story of how volunteering changed their life here.

Metric 18

Biennial Representation/ Service Review – % OU committee staff identifying positive student impact/influence in committees

2019 Review 82.0%
No new data available yet.

INFLUENCE & TRANSFORM

IMPACT

Metric 19

Qualitative Impact Reporting:

CEC Quarterly Impact Reports are provided in the separate CEC paper 10/21/01

Appendix 2 – Volunteer Recognition Event

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

MAINTAIN AN ENABLING ORGANISAITONAL CULTURE

Metric 20

Annual Membership Survey Question 26 – % responders selecting 'agree' options on whether the Association is living its values

Integrity:
2020 survey – 42.3%

Equality & Inclusivity:
2020 survey – 46.1%

Openness:
2020 survey – 44.3%

Collaboration:
2020 survey – 42.7%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available
(anticipated Jan 2022)

SECTION B:
STRATEGY PROJECTS UPDATES

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 1A	**Conduct membership research and analysis**. **Workstream 1A:** Develop and launch the Annual Membership Survey to gain membership feedback. The survey will provide valuable on-going data for strategic KPI tracking, provide inputs for service/activity reviews and help to inform business decision-making.	**Workstream 1A:** The AMS was piloted and then fully launched during 2020. It will be repeated in Autumn each year. This work has now been transitioned into Business-as-Usual activities and sits within the Strategy & Insights Business plan for delivery and reporting for the 2021-22 AY and on-going.
Project 2	**Individual Representation.** **Phase 1:** Identify needs, assess options and develop recommendations and funding requirements. Prepare a full business case for presentation to OU PVC-Students to seek OU funding. **Phase 2 (subject to funding provision):** Develop and implement individual representation resources and services for a fixed pilot programme period. The pilot programme will provide 'proof of concept' for the realisation of the benefits identified in the Phase 1 business case. It will also provide the evidence base for the development of a case to secure additional funding to allow the permanent inclusion of individual representation for students in the Association's services portfolio.	**Phase 1:** A feasibility assessment was carried out during 2020 and a business case for funding was presented to the OU. Funding was agreed for a 15 month pilot programme, commencing at the start of the 2021-22 AY. **Phase 2:** The pilot programme was launched in August 2021 and will run until October 2022.

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 4	**Scope of work**: Map the student journey from registration through to graduation, identifying comms and engagement touchpoints where the Association can meet student needs and expectations at key stages of their journey. **Project Required Outcome:** This work will contribute to the aim of creating meaningful on-going connections and communications with OU students at all key stages in their student journey.	This work was completed during June 2021 and delivered comprehensive engagement and comms recommendations for six key stages in the student journey: pre-study; initial engagement; learning; end of module; results; and after study. These recommendations will be incorporated into future marcomms plans, commencing with the 2021-22 marcomms plan (Strategy Project #15).
Project 8	**Stakeholder mapping & analysis:** **Workstream 8A:** Stakeholder mapping exercise – identify all internal and external stakeholder groups, develop an understanding of the importance, contributions and potential impacts of each group. **Workstream 8B:** Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan. The plan will include the objectives and aims of any engagement/comms with each of the stakeholder groups and will be used to inform decisions on the choice of engagement/comms channels, comms content, timings and priorities.	The stakeholder mapping exercise (Workstream 8A) was completed in the Spring of 2021. Three maps were created: one for the OU Students Association; one for the OU; and one for the external stakeholder environment. On-going maintenance of the stakeholder maps has been passed across into Business-as-Usual activities. The work to complete initial stakeholder engagement plans (Workstream 8B) was completed during early Summer 2021. The implementation of these plans has been consolidated into the development of the 2021-22 marcomms plan (Strategy Project #15).

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 14	Develop and implement an action plan to further the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout all Association policies, activities and ways of working.	The Equalities Action Plan was completed in Quarter 1, 2021. The requirements of the plan are being taken forward by the EDI Working Group under Business-as-Usual processes as part of a broad scope of work to advance our EDI agenda. This will also include the development of an EDI sub-strategy. The Working Group delivers quarterly updates on progress to the CEC and the BoT.

SECTION B2:
PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 1B	GREEN	**Overall Scope:** Improve our understanding of student needs, expectations and motivations and conduct a regular review of our services, engagement activities and communications. **Workstream 1B: Service & Activity Reviews**. Create the process for an annual service and activity review and facilitate the first such review before transitioning the process into BAU. The annual reviews will enable us to assess, on an on-going basis, the effectiveness and impact of our work and enable infirmed decision-making on resource allocation/prioritisation.	**Workstream 1B:** The CEC approved a proposal to delay the first annual service/ activity review until the results of the AMS roll-out were available. These results were shared with the CEC at its July meeting and further work is now underway to carry out a 'deep dive' on the results at a business area level. It is anticipated that the first annual service review will commence in February 2022. During Quarter 4 2021 the scope of the review, the approach and the process will be developed.

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 7A	AMBER	**Workstream 7A – WORK IN PROGRESS:** Create new communities where students can benefit from social interaction and informal mutual support. **Workstream 7B: - WORK NOT YET STARTED** Create more opportunities for students to support other students though volunteering roles that are effective and adaptable to student needs.	**Workstream 7A** was initiated in March 2021. **Completed:** Phase 1 of the Test and Learn project is complete. The work included: user needs mapping; persona creation; feature analysis; and market research. A potential overlap with work ongoing within the Digital Student Experience (DSE) programme which will deliver "MyOU" and is linked to the Core Systems Replacement (CSR) was highlighted at the phase 1 wrap up. Key stakeholders from the Association have met and agreed that it is best to work with the University on this whilst also keeping alternatives in mind – acknowledging the benefits being part of something like MyOU might bring to the Association whilst not ignoring the risks this presents in terms of schedule and delivery. **Key actions and next steps:** We are meeting with the DSE team on 22nd September to discuss the way forward, before going back to the OU's Digital Strategy Steering Group to seek approval to initiate phase 2. We continue to explore other options and expect a demonstration of an alternative "off the shelf" product in the coming weeks. Status AMBER due to delays in arranging the meeting to initiate Phase 2 and due to potential delays to CSR which, should we decide to proceed with the Association App being part of the MyOU project, could make for significant delays to any progress with this project.

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 9	AMBER	**Revised Overall Scope:** To develop a Representation Action Plan to support the shared goals of the Association and Open University to ensure Student Voice is effectively heard at all levels of the University to improve outcomes for students. This work will aim to remove barriers to inclusion, increase engagement. **The action plan will:** Develop, in conjunction with the OU, a shared Code of Practice for academic representation with the aim of improving the effectiveness of student voice within OU governance. Support the University's own Student Voice Action Plan. Develop shared principles for best practise for Student Engagement, working with key OU stakeholders to promote the standards and embed student engagement in OU activities and projects.	An action plan has been drafted which details the work being carried out by two OU/Association groups which will feed into the development of the code of practice: **The Institutional Framework Task and Finish Group**. The group's work has come to an end and the final report is available. The Student Voice Hub now hosts some guidance within a tool kit which includes involving students in meetings, online, in curriculum design, recognising student participation, Student voice activities evaluation checklist and student expenses principles and standard form. Information relevant to the development of the Code of Practice will be extracted. **Supporting and Improving Academic Representation Task and Finish Group (TFG).** The aim of this TFG is to support the recruitment, engagement and effectiveness of a diverse group of student representatives from the OU Students Association to take part in the OU decision making bodies. One of the objectives is a consideration to develop a code of practice for academic representation. Initial meetings have also taken place to discuss principles for best practice for student engagement, looking to utilise some of the earlier work undertaken by the Association in developing a prototype Student Engagement Standard. Status AMBER due to potential resourcing risks within the Volunteering & Representation Team.

Project Number	Project	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 11	GREEN	To commission an external review of the OU Student Association governance structures and mechanisms that will result in clear and achievable recommendations for change that can lead to improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.	Separate CEC papers provide updates on the Governance Review: • Governance Review Implementation Proposals – paper 10/21/14 • Culture & Behavioural Governance – paper 10/21/18
Project 12	AMBER	Identify a model of 'One Team' working and produce a 'protocol' for student representatives and staff members identifying clear expectations. Communicate a 'One Team' message and intent, devising a 'One Team' action plan and designing/leading 'One Team' sessions and activities.	The 'One Team' initiative was introduced, but stalled due to the pausing of work by the Culture Review Working Group. This is being reinitiated as part of the work to implement the Behavioural Governance recommendations. Status AMBER due to Culture Review Working Group being paused.
Project 13	AMBER	Devise an agenda that highlights, encourages and celebrates our stated values.	It is anticipated that this work will also be incorporated into the work to implement the Behavioural Governance recommendations. Status AMBER due to non-commencement of work as yet.

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 15 (additionally incorporating Projects 5 & 6)	AMBER	**Overall Scope: Develop Comms Strategy and Marcomms Plan.** **Part 1: Develop Association Communications Strategy** in same format as other enabling strategies (Volunteering & Research) incorporating aims (linked to strategic aims), objectives and measures of success. **Part 2: Develop Marcomms Planning Tool** by merging comms matrix work to date with stakeholder engagement outputs from Project #8. Planning tool to identify external/OU/membership audiences, audience comms objectives, audience messaging themes and channels/timing considerations. **Part 3: Develop Association Marcomms Plan for 2021-22 AY** with clearly identified actions, responsibilities/accountabilities and monitoring/evaluation mechanisms. This project incorporates the two further strategy projects that were initially separately scoped: **Project #5** (the development of a Student Engagement Value Statement) and **Project #6** (working with OU principal stakeholders to promote, sign-post and support the Association.)	**Part 1:** The Association Communications Strategy has been drafted and is being shared with the CEC for comments in paper 10/21/10. **Part 2:** The Planning tool is drafted and will be finalised following feedback from the CEC and staff working groups who are meeting w/c 13th Sept 2021. **Part 3:** The format and content for the Marcomms plan is under development and is expected to be completed by the end of September 2021. Status AMBER due to resourcing risks to end delivery date.

SECTION B3:
PROJECTS NOT YET STARTED

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Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Notes
Project 3	**Scope:** Implement a student support resource library. Explore opportunities to expand our student support services through partnerships with external service providers, support agencies and societies.	Project not yet formally initiated. Within Business-as-Usual activities two mini-hubs have been created - one for EDI resources and one for individual representation resources – and scoping work has been carried out on the development of a broader Association-wide resources hub for use by students, volunteers and staff. It is anticipated that the development of a full resources library/hub will be considered as part of the new website design and implementation.
Project 10	Establish a process for authorising, funding, supporting and running campaigns. Produce a manifesto for life-long learning.	Currently no specified start date. Work has been carried out independently of the strategy projects portfolio to develop nations manifestos as part of the Policy & Public Affairs agenda and to look at mobilisation campaigns. The viability of this work remaining as a discrete project will be assessed.

SECTION C:
BUSINESS PLANS UPDATES

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Chief Executive	We have successfully recruited our Conference and 50th Anniversary Project Manager, Reiss Miller. Reiss is in post and underway with the planning of Conference which will start across the staff team from mid-September.	The delivery of the recommendations from the Governance Review and the associated organisation of Conference will dominate the staff team's workloads for the next 4-5 months. We are experiencing some challenges with staff recruitment for vacancies at present, in keeping with the job market situation across the charity sector. Work is ongoing to try and resolve the issues we're having with SuccessFactors. We are continuing to consult and engage staff on the next stage of our recovery from the pandemic and trialling new ways of working.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Director of Membership Services	A lot of work has gone into the Elections review and the current work on our behavioural governance. A huge thank you to Ian Cheyne for his contributions and support, we are optimistic that the changes will be a huge positive step for us; including improving support for complainants, introducing a more effective stepped process, and clarifying our behavioural expectations, with one values and behaviour policy to replace a number of existing policies (to reduce repetition and confusion).	Work continues on the behavioural governance and culture project, we are experiencing issues with a high number of complaints and incidences at this time which reduces capacity for other work. We are currently still on track to complete to time.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Director of Engagement	Work on Strategy Project 15 has delivered a new comms strategy that will provide the basis for the Association's approach to comms moving forward. Through building the relationship with Athabasca University Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association, I have identified specific areas of work where partnership working could be mutually beneficial and brought individuals from the staff and CEC together with staff and student leaders in Athabasca to explore opportunities around elections and research collaboration and support. I hope to identify further opportunities to bring student leaders from both institutions together to share best practice. Furthermore, I have been providing ongoing support for the Governance Reforms, working with our DPO to build my knowledge in the area of GDPR and supporting the process of contract negotiations for the new website provider.	The main issue at the current time is that we were unable to recruit a Head of P&PA from the applications received, meaning that I am still stretching myself across both remits. This is mainly an exercise of managing expectations. However, there is a risk that we miss opportunities to engage with policy discussion and debate that could have an impact. I have been working with the OU's GEA team and policy teams in the nations to try to mitigate this risk, and hopefully we will have a Head of P&PA in post by the end of the year.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Community	We're thrilled to have welcomed the new Area Reps to their roles, and we are very much looking forward to working with them over the coming year. We were pleased to hear wonderful feedback from the recent Exam results event from volunteer organisers and attendees and we're excited about future events from the team. Alongside this, we have been working on a review of meet-ups and have completed the Equality Impact Assessment as part of this. We have been working with volunteers to review and update our "Online Events Code of Conduct" to make it more inclusive. September 2021 Freshers is on the horizon and we are very excited about welcoming new students to the community with a fantastic array of events once again.	We are in the midst of an audit of our clubs and societies we anticipate that we will lose several clubs and a small number of societies as part of that process. Thanks to Anca and the micro volunteers for their help with this process.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Digital Comms	We were pleased to have our business case accepted for additional capacity within the team. We have recruited three new starters in recent weeks and we look forward to them joining us. In the meantime, both Officers have stepped up considerably to fill the gap left by the vacant Admin post. After months of negotiations, we are on the cusp of getting the agreement for the new website signed with our new providers MSL which will trigger the kick-off meeting which means that the set-up process can begin. In the meantime, we have been meeting with teams to review their requirements. We have also held meetings with both the website steering committee and the website working group and we're currently receiving advice from external consultants, the Charity IT Association. The Association leaflet began appearing on students' social posts, indicating that it had been delivered alongside study materials. We are seeing an increased level of interest in our events and activities but the impact is yet to be fully evaluated.	The team have an incredibly busy time ahead, as unfortunately a number of heavy weight commitments coincide. The initial coordination of the website project and the induction of new staff will pose an additional capacity challenge. The head of the team is also due to take maternity leave at the end of September. Support options from within the wider team are being explored and more broadly, plans are being formed to help empower teams to deliver comms efforts with less reliance on the Digital Communications Team. Additional support is required from the team in terms of the Governance Review and run-up to the Conference. Additional staff will prove useful with the latter. MSL have been hesitant to divulge what preparations they expect us to have in place by the kick-off stage of the website project, which has made getting ready rather difficult in terms of scoping out what is needed from us and other teams.

OU Students ASSOCIATION

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
EDI & Student Welfare	The Student Support Team have become the 'Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Student Welfare Team' to better reflect the work that falls within our remits. We are also delighted to not only have welcomed back Sammi (now our Student Welfare and Support Officer) from maternity leave but we will soon be welcoming Linda Aradi to the team as our new EDI Projects Officer. Linda will be working closely with our Groups and the EDI Working Group. The EDI Working Group have also been busy and are working on a new Strategy to help bring focus to the Group's work. In our recent round of recruitment for the Library Study Volunteers we received over 60 applications (even though we closed early!) but were only able to take 20 volunteers on. This continues to be our most popular volunteer role.	We are still working under capacity and are struggling to start many new projects but we expect this to change as soon as our new starter joins us. We are looking into volunteer retention as we are continuing to see volunteers, particularly Peer Supporters, resign. OU Pride are continuing to struggle with dealing with students who have been negatively impacted by the launch of the Gender Critical Research Network.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Executive Support & Staff Welfare	The last quarter has been a busy one, particularly with various ongoing recruitments. Over the last month we have interviewed for four roles. We have two more upcoming interviews for the roles of Head of Policy and Public Affairs and Projects Officer (Student Community). The appointed candidates so far are: • Digital Communications Officer: *Gabby Willis* • Volunteering and Representation Officer: *Danielle Cafearo* • Digital Communications Media/Admin Assistant: *Ciara Linehan* • Projects Officer (EDI): *Linda Aradi* • Events and Projects Officer: *Emily Cox* The July CEC ran well, as despite a quiet agenda we were able to put on some fantastic sessions and have some great speakers attend. We had four observers observe this CEC and after previous struggles, we were able to provide them with access to participate in the online forum meeting. Preparations for wellbeing week have been ongoing and we look forward to getting involved in it on the week commencing 6 September.	Unsurprisingly, success factors continue to cause some issues as admin rights are still to be obtained. A member of OU People Services was helping us to resolve this issue but has recently resigned and this halted discussions even further. However, we have a meeting with our new OU contact next week so we're hoping to get this back off the ground. We have also faced low application turnout for all of our roles. Our applications during covid were around 50-100 applications per post, but most recently we have been seeing 5-15 applications. This trend is not too dissimilar from other organisations though, as vacancies topped over a million in the UK in July, and this could help explain our low application turnout.

QU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Finance & Resources	The 2021-22 budget plan was approved by Trustees in July after much work to identify resourcing needs and allocate funds to support the next phase of delivery of our strategic plan. Alongside, preparations were being made for year end and I am grateful to members of the Operations and Resources team for attending the warehouse in Wellingborough to carry out a thorough stock take, working within Covid restrictions to protect themselves and colleagues. Throughout July and August, our primary focus has been year end to ensure draft trial balances, reconciliations and notes to the accounts were ready ahead of audit week. We have also supported a heavy period of staff recruitment, started on drafting terms of reference for a Finance Resources and Risk committee, as part of the governance reforms, and liaised with IT to refurbish a further laptop for loan to volunteers as part of our on-going efforts to support those experiencing short term equipment challenges.	Although the ruinous pension contribution increases proposed by USS appear to have been avoided, the impact on the deficit recovery period and the size of provision we need to include in our accounts is still unknown. This poses a risk to our available reserves, a significant proportion of which is "earmarked" as our share of recovering from the pension deficit. Budget planning was impeded by uncertainty over the post Covid landscape and implications for our ways of working. To some extent, this has been mitigated with the inclusion of a contingency within the overall budget plan but it remains to be seen to what extent this will be called upon. There is more work to do to improve and regularly test the effectiveness of internal controls and so our next step is to log our contracts and regular payments. This will enable our team to flag and support timely review processes and help to ensure we secure best value for money.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Operations	Successful financial outcomes in 20/21 financial year resulting in healthy incomes levels and profits Successful completion of the annual stocktake resulting in stock valuation, stock accountability, removal of old/obsolete stock to help with the completion of the annual audit processes. Preparation and finalisation of the recruitment process for the OU Students Shop Working Group student role vacancy. Successful roll-out of the new OUSET applications since May 2021 and final preparation for the introduction of the new funding criteria.	Low stock levels caused by the year-end preparation and stocktake. Delay to the final decision-making regarding the move of the webstore to the new provider caused by the delay in the final contact sign-off for the Association website. Uncertainty associated with the return of the face-to-face graduation ceremonies in 2022. Unknown financial and operational impact on service.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Policy & Public Affairs	I have focused the limited resource I have for P&PA activity on building on the momentum achieved through the publishing of manifestos for the Welsh and Scottish elections. This has involved following up with elected politicians to invite engagement with our agenda, and has led to meetings and relationship-building opportunities with opposition politicians in Scotland. There are concerns about the UK government potentially introducing legislation that will implement Minimum Entry Requirements for accessing HE courses, which would obviously have a major impact on the OU (and our members). Therefore, we are working with the OU's GEA team to prepare for this and plan for possible responses that we may need to deliver.	As the Head of Policy and Public Affairs role has not yet been filled, there has been very limited capacity to focus on policy and public affairs activity. The recruitment will hopefully be completed by mid-October, with the new post-holder starting before the end of the year. The vacant AAR roles in Ireland and Scotland also mean that building relationships with the OUiI and OUiS is slightly more difficult. Their offices are very keen to engage regularly with the Association and so it would be great to have Reps to build those relationships and opportunities to work in partnership.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Strategy & Insights	Our Strategy Projects portfolio is in very healthy shape with several projects now complete (including our student journey mapping and stakeholder engagement mapping) and the majority of projects now at least partially in progress. We were pleased to be able to deliver an update on our strategic performance to date to the OU's Council at its July meeting with many positive gains to report on our awareness, engagement and reach levels since the start of the strategy period. We were also delighted to be able to share the full analysis for our 2020 Annual Membership Survey with the CEC at its July meeting – this provides valuable insights to help inform our future focus areas. A major focus of our work this period has been in supporting the development of the Governance Review Implementation Plan alongside planning and delivering the governance reform student consultation activities.	The prioritisation of the Governance Review implementation planning along with developing and delivering the governance reforms consultation activities, which have also fallen at the same time as annual holiday absences, has caused us to have to pause other research and insights work for a short period.

QU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Volunteering & Representation	The volunteer recognition event went well and many of the attendees were appreciative of the event and enjoyed the sessions that included a speaker whose session focused on the power of volunteering. Concluded the first round of the Central Committee Representatives recruitment and appointment. This was followed by training which took place on the weekend of 16th to 18th July. Many of the new reps were able to attend the training. There was appreciation of the content and delivery of the training sessions which we believe will put the reps in good stead to take on their roles.	There was a low turnout of applications in the last rep recruitment round. There are spaces within the Senate Reference Group committee which will need to be filled. Equally there are a few committees within the governance structure that have no student reps. We are looking at how we can promote and increase awareness of the opportunities before opening for second round of recruitment. The reps training and induction weekend went well however there were number of hiccups that affected the appointment process and procedures leading to delays in communication with successful applicants. The appointments committee together with the Volunteering and Representation team are looking at lessons learned and how best to improve the appointment process before opening the next round of recruitments.

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