

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**Central Executive Committee (CEC)**

25 September – 6 October 2020

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORTS

The CEC 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:-

- President (page 2)
- Deputy Vice President (page 5)
- Vice President Administration (page 8)
- Vice President Community (page 9)
- Vice President Education (page 11)
- Vice President Engagement (page 14)
- Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (page 16)
- Vice President Student Support (page 19)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Wales (page 21)
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- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Business & Law (FBL) (page 24)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Wellbeing, Education & Language Studies (WELS) (page 27)

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Sarah Jones
ROLE	President
QUARTER/YEAR	October 2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1: Involvement in the Virtual Graduation for 2020 Students.

This event was run partly by Students Association reps and ordinary students. It was designed to celebrate those who have graduated this year and have not / will not get the chance to go to a graduation ceremony this year due to Covid. This excellent day celebrated students' achievements. It was a real privilege to be asked to say a few words to congratulate students, especially this year. Some of this event was then picked up by the OU's office that deals with Graduations and some of the video clips and photos were shown as a montage that celebrated the OU's 'Class of 2020' campaign. I was also asked to say a few words for the video that went out on the alumni website, and across social media. From the events that celebrated the Class of 2020 there have been a lot of requests for links to the OU shop. New and older students alike have been looking for merchandise and wanting to have something with OU branding on, this promotes a sense of belonging and of community.

This increases the reach of the Association, increases awareness and improves relevance. It also celebrates student success and student wellbeing.

AREA 2: Establishing myself on groups and committees and introducing myself to people I need to know.

I have spent a lot of time having inductions and building relationships with OU staff. Getting to know my role and the people involved in this. One of my goals has been to build relationships with those that I am going to be working with so that when I have issues I know where to go. Also, when I have good things I know where to share that good news. Due to homeworking it is easier to do these meetings and although not as good as face to face it seems to be working as these meetings are mostly on Teams or Skype. Building good working relationships and strengthening those relationships is paramount **to improving relevance and extending the reach of the association.**

During one of these such occasions Dan Moloney and I have met with people at a distance learning university in Canada with the plan to build up community and share best practice on how to reach and look after students. I have only attended one of these meetings so far and it is really exciting to see that even over a distance we have some of the same struggles and best practice.

AREA 3: 1-2-1's with CEC members

One thing I wanted to do at the start of my term was establish where the CEC were at with their goals and how I could help support those goals. I also wanted to establish what collective training we all needed and what individual training was needed. It has been really exciting to talk to the members of the CEC; I have managed to do this with and see what their goals and vision are. Alongside Nicky from the volunteering team we have got a baseline for all the CEC members to help them in any development that they want to undertake. It has been a great opportunity to start to build relationships with the CEC on a 1-2-1 basis. I am excited to see how they all get on in their job of representing students.

This will help to improve not only **the relevance of the Association but the impact** we can have as the CEC, and as they grow in their roles and are supported with any relevant training

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	~15
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ISSUE 1: *Module Results*

There are a number of students whose marks have been subject to significant standardisation this year due to how the exams' final assessment was taken. I have been feeding into Academic Implications group and to Liz Marr (PVC-Students) all the different information that students have been sharing on social media and other communications. Many of our student reps have been working hard to make sure that these voices have been heard and we have been trying to ensure better outcomes for students. This is a complex issue and we are continuing to hold the University to account on behalf of these students. Progress on some of these matters is confidential due to GDPR on individual cases and some confidentiality components. This matter is being raised by a paper at the CEC meeting for comments and further actions.

This shows the **impact the Association has in academic matters.**

ISSUE 2: *Email backlog*

International student having issues completing registration due to the backlog of the email system. I managed to talk to someone in the Student Support team who have managed to take this on. I have also flagged the issue with Ray Adcock (AAR Europe)

This issue is one of many due to the email backlog but with the phone lines reopening it is hoped that this issue will become smaller as the emails are dealt with. I am being kept informed of the progress.

This is aligned with the mission of **making a positive difference for all OU students.**

ISSUE 3:

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Ian Cheyne
ROLE	Deputy President
QUARTER/YEAR	September/2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1:

PTFG issues for Scotland-based students

- (a) Negotiated updated reports with the OUIS on problems/progress with funding applications
- (b) This enabled students with complaints (and others) to be kept informed of all issues AND provided reassurances where students were concerned about being able to commence module studies for new term in October
- (c) These actions demonstrated/reinforced the Association's commitment to helping all students in all situations

AREA 2:

Chaired Complaint Panel

- (a) The complaint(s) were competently and objectively assessed
- (b) The actions/conclusions of the Complaint Panel provided reassurances to ALL volunteers that any concerns will be properly addressed
- (c) The Complaint Panel's actions/conclusions will contribute to the Association's fundamental policies of openness and objectivity

AREA 3:

Ongoing familiarisation with all aspects of the Association's activities and interfaces with the OU and external bodies

- (a) As Deputy President it is essential to be aware, and informed, of all areas of the Association's involvement with students, with management and with external resources which provide student-related services

(b) I consider every part of what often seems a disparate structure to be primarily linked by the principles and practice of engagement involvement and representation

(c) In our strategic aims/objectives it's important always to be aware of the bigger picture along with the detail. This awareness can only be of benefit to students to whom we provide an all-round service.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	10
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ISSUE 1:

PTFG for Scotland-based students

(a) Covid-19 unknowns and contingencies created uncertainty over funding applications

(b) OUIS were contacted on several occasions in order to obtain clarification of the situation and to enable the Association to inform the students affected

(c) The Association was able to provide information and reassurances in order to relieve students' concerns. Additionally, the whole process of both handling funding applications and the provision of clear statements about this, will be reviewed once the 'dust has settled'

ISSUE 2:

Catering for OU students with conditions such as autism

(a) The association has been asked by an intending PhD student who has autism for assistance with apparent problems with the OU

(b) Both the VP Equality Diversity and Inclusion, and I are currently investigating the matter

(c) The initial objective is to establish whether or not the OU's commitment to accommodating PGR students with this condition is (1) being fulfilled (2) incapable of being fulfilled owing to insufficient resources or (3) in need of clarification. Information is being gathered from all relevant sources so as to facilitate the investigation and provide as much help as possible to the student

ISSUE 3:

Public vs Private Facebook groups for OU Students

(a) A student has asked whether the existing public access Facebook group for OU Students in Scotland could be made private

(b) I've investigated to what extent Facebook groups which have been created specifically for OU students are either public or private

(c) There are at present groups which are private/restricted, such as the 'Results Issues' one which is ostensibly for students who have been adversely affected by EMA marking issues—in this case the private status does seem to reflect what might be described as a need for secrecy within the group, since for example our president has been 'ejected'.

Regarding the Scotland group, it seems that one student has expressed concerns that 'anybody might read their postings'. This group was set up as I understand it 'with the blessing' of the Association. For this reason, making it private may be considered counter to the Association's practice of inclusion whereby ALL OU students are members of the Association...unless they individually opt out

NAME	Matt Porterfield
ROLE	VP Admin
QUARTER/YEAR	July/Sept 2020



Students
ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key areas:

Make financial and management information more understandable and useful. The chart of accounts has been refreshed and enhanced by Deputy Chief Executive Alison Lunn and now utilises more of the capabilities of the accounting software to analyse how our funds are spent. The impact will be that cost centre managers have more insight over their function and also have better ability to control or adjust particular costs, making them more responsive to changing circumstances. This will lead to more efficient use of our resources, benefiting leadership and the wider student body.

The VP Admin is now engaged with the Finance and Resources team, with regular scheduled updates and a two-way flow of information. The financial reports to both CEC and Trustees will be agreed and have input where required, reducing the technical language and making them more interesting to leadership with less financial background. This should encourage more engagement with the Association's finances as well as enabling the VP Admin to update other volunteers and answer questions without constant recourse to staff resources and the associated delay.

OUSA (Services) Ltd, the subsidiary company which operated the shop has been wound up due to accumulated losses over the last 4 years and the assets transferred into the Association itself. The accounts of the Association for the year ended 31 July 2020, the first full year as a limited company, have been audited and the auditors made a point of complementing the finance team on the whole process. This means that students and the entire leadership team can rest assured that the finances and administration of the Association are in safe and competent hands under Alison Lunn and her team.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

N/A

ISSUE 1:

ISSUE 2:

NAME	Anca Seaton
ROLE	VP Community
QUARTER/YEAR	July-October 2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1:

The AGM of the Societies Committee took place on 25th July online. We had a good attendance from our societies and had two members from the Christian Union Club in attendance as observers. The Committee and I thanked Cinnomen McGuigan for her time as a chair. The Committee voted Nigel Patterson as the Societies Chair for the next year, and we all congratulated Nigel on his appointment and are looking forward to working together.

The main issues discussed were: checking societies' constitutions with regards to what happens with their funds in case of disaffiliation; exploring the idea of a summer event for 2021 involving societies; upcoming Freshers events and the societies' involvement; new Association Online Host volunteering role and the offer to help societies with online events

AREA 2:

Freshers' Fortnight

At the time of writing, the preparations for Freshers' Fortnight are in full swing. So far, we have about 40 sessions booked for this, with hosts from the width and breadth of the Association. We also have a few sessions and guests from the OU. I am really happy with how things are going, and would like to thank Lara Munday, our Community Projects Officer for her help in this huge endeavour.

AREA 3:

Association Online Hosts

We recruited and trained a number of Association Online Hosts. This volunteering role rose from the cancellation of our face to face events in line with the University's actions and guidance, and the need for more varied and non CEC-led events to help with the feelings of isolation and the need to keep in touch with fellow students.

We are encouraging online hosts to think out of the box and organise events to showcase the student community and provide a much needed "support bubble" for all OU students.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

30ish (I have not counted, just guessed)
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ISSUE 1:

Freshers Fortnight – asking whether we have Freshers, whether it was going to be face to face, whether we are going to have freebies.

Action: A discussion around Freshers comms and how to utilise our existing student network for advertising the events (apart from our main channels, obviously)

ISSUE 2:

The need for students to connect with each other and feel part of the Community I've noticed quite a few messages on social media from students (especially new students) wanting to connect with other students and make friends. Although I advertise our Community Drop In sessions every week, I guess the message is not very clear for students about these sessions, what they are, who can take part.

Action: After Freshers, to think of a way of explaining what our community events are, who they are aimed at, who can take part. A more wider advertising campaign to promote our own events using the "personal touch" messages from our volunteers.

ISSUE 3:

I noticed quite a few messages on social media about students wanting to meet other students face to face. Although the Association is not going to have any face to face events until the end of 2020, we can't realistically prohibit students to meet other students.

Action: To think of the right way to put a message out there outlining our present position and advise students to proceed with caution. Apart from the obvious government guidance with regards Covid, there can be issues around privacy and safeguarding.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Cinnomen McGuigan
ROLE	Vice President Education
QUARTER/YEAR	October 2020
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
<p>Key progress areas: Use this section to talk about areas where you have made progress against your manifesto pledges and/or your remit goals - pick/highlight your top 3 areas for the quarter.</p>	
<p>AREA 1: Individual Representation - a key manifesto promise.</p> <p>What outcomes have you achieved/delivered? I have been named CEC lead on the project. I intend to help deliver the updated proposal to CEC and have attended meetings where the funding was applied for and agreed.</p> <p>How do these outcomes benefit the student body? They will benefit the student body when the pilot project is underway. The current climate of SLAS and delays of materials, Module Results Appeals, and others show the need for this to be achieved.</p> <p>How do these outcomes contribute to the delivery of our strategic aims/objectives? Having happy and less stressed students will definitely increase retention and satisfaction.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Increasing the diversity of the academic representation team - a key manifesto pledge</p> <p>What outcomes have you achieved/delivered? In the latest round of appointments - active canvassing in under-represented spaces led to an increase in applications from new students - more access and level 1 students actively engaging is key to achieving those aims.</p> <p>How do these outcomes benefit the student body? Having a representation team that more closely fits the spectrum of students we have makes us more effective at ensuring that we are hearing from under-represented groups.</p> <p>How do these outcomes contribute to the delivery of our strategic aims/objectives? Seeing yourself reflected in the representation team is an ongoing issue for the university and the Association and one where I feel that VP Ed can make a particular impact by actively recruiting in particular spaces.</p>	
<p>AREA 3:</p>	

Bigger university projects like the PQR Review, QME working group, Student Voice Week etc

What outcomes have you achieved/delivered?

I have been actively involved in a number of working groups and projects. Ensuring that the student voice is heard at the very highest points it can be included. I attended the CCR training weekend and also have been running the CCR monthly drop in meetings which have been a huge success.

How do these outcomes benefit the student body?

Ensuring students are considered and engaged at every level is key to students feeling a part of bigger things. Ensuring that we open every door we can to students is key.

How do these outcomes contribute to the delivery of our strategic aims/objectives?

Student satisfaction is higher when they feel they have a voice that is heard and valued. I aim to encourage and support that wherever I am. This leads to better perception of our impact at the Association work as students can see that we are making a difference.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	no clue, I have days where it is 7 and days where it has been 37. Not yet had a day where it was zero.
ISSUE 1: Credit Transfer - many, many complaints about the huge delays to credit transfer crossed my inbox since the start of term. I have tried where possible to collate them and signpost effectively to get the best outcome. Lots of happy-ish students are now in a position to study the required pathways, but there is still work to be done. It isn't over yet.	
ISSUE 2: Delays to the collaborative modules hosted by Dundee - this year's cohort were under the impression that they would receive results in July along with the rest of the university. Unfortunately, this was not the case- they were expected in October, even though students had received their final marks in July. Work with ACQ meant that the conflation period was brought forward twice, first to 7th September and eventually to late August - thus allowing for further study and work plans of students to take place on time. Work has also been done to ensure next year's cohorts are brought in line with the OU conflation periods. So should stop this happening again. Last year they waited till November, so I am really pleased with this outcome for this year's students and future ones.	

ISSUE 3: Various random smaller scale issues, such as resi school requirement; they have now moved online, and results of modules, issues around bullying and complaints, and the like.

I just plod along and help where I can, signpost where I can't and continue to push for individual representation going forward.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Fanni Zombor
ROLE	Vice President Engagement
QUARTER/YEAR	1 st August-22 nd September 2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Introduction

Going into my 2nd term as a CEC member came with additional challenges that we were not faced with in 2018 when I started as a VP. I can quite confidently say that the last 2 months have been the busiest I have ever been with Association duties, and I am not complaining. Sure, I wish we weren't going through a global pandemic and Brexit, but from a Student Voice perspective our roles have never been more important.

Key progress areas:

Website development project

My number one priority during the start of this term, carries on being the website development project. After securing support from CEC and BoT to do this, we are now in the process of consulting with students, staff and wider stakeholders about their needs in an Association website. Most of the consultation has been concluded now, so we are moving to the next phase. Analysing the consultation feedback received with the support of the Research team. The consultation and various other pieces of information will inform us in writing a website specification throughout October and November.

Student Voice Week

With Student Voice Week happening in November, I am co-leading a group with Rachel Garnham to develop a partnership event between the OU and the Association for students. The hope is that various OU departments will provide opportunities for students to get their voices heard. As part of this event, in a separate group, I am also part of organising a staff Student Voice day to help staff learn more about and share best practices around student voice.

Communications about referencing changes

Throughout July and August, I worked with the Library team to establish ways to better communicate Cite Them Right referencing being rolled out through the OU. This resulted in a help centre update, a Hoot article and a video project explaining what changes are going to mean to students.

Online event hosts

Throughout August, I worked with VP Community and the Community team to recruit online event hosts for the Association. During last term, the coordination of the online events created in response to the pandemic fell on my shoulders largely, but this is an effort to integrate this into business as usual, so this can be supported by staff.

Access and Open Faculty Rep covering

I am currently covering the role of open and access faculty rep, until a by-election is concluded in November. I have had various conversations with the OU staff

responsible for these areas and together we have identified key areas of working together as well as initiating projects, as there is currently a gap. The hope is that this can lay down some of the foundations for a faculty rep to come into, as open and access haven't had a faculty rep for the past 4 years, whereas other faculties are at an advantage.

BREXIT, COVID-19 and international students

Throughout September Area Association Representative with myself have looked through past interactions about international students and drafted an FAQ document in relation to COVID-19 and Brexit affecting international students. We attended 2 meetings with Academic Services, Association President and CEO. These issues are now going to form part of an ongoing project, where I am providing support as a non-UK national living in the UK.

In order to carry out my new role effectively, it should be one of my priorities to build further relationships across the OU, in order to be able to deliver on my pledges and help student voice as well as developing my own skills further. As part of this I had the following meetings:

- Support/ development meeting with Association volunteer team
- Induction with Director of MarComms
- Developing ways of working with PVC-Students office
- Induction with Student Support Leadership Team

Other business as usual commitments:

- Regular meetings with other CEC members and staff team
- Student Consultation Management Group and one of its sub-groups
- Student Voice Steering group
- Athena Swan student feedback
- Upcoming involvement in 2 Student Hub Live sessions
- Involvement in various FBL initiatives such as SCiLAB Student Panel, EQUIS and AACSB
- Student Voice volunteer training weekend
- CEC induction and training events
- Early involvement in Open Real project

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek signposting/ask a question/flag an issue?	100+
ISSUE 1: Sharing information and signposting around module registrations, SST response times and all the queries around studying in October	
ISSUE 2: Sharing information and explaining the impact of the changes on how module results were awarded this summer.	
ISSUE 3: Although not directly in my remit, as a Business student I spent significant amounts of time helping Business students in module choices, pathway options etc	
ISSUE 4: Sharing information and signposting regarding the delayed alternative formats.	
ISSUE 5: Sharing information and signposting about face 2 face tutorials/ events and graduation ceremonies	

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Patrice Belton
ROLE	Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (V P E D I)
QUARTER/YEAR	1 st Quarter (October) 2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1:

Representation:

(Aim - Influence and Transform & Openness):

1. Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (B A M E) Students:

- Working with the Black and Minority Ethnic (B M E) Staff network, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Students Team and Association Project's Officer, I was able to help steer this year's Black History Month (B H M) proceedings; by putting forward a theme '*Let's Talk about Race*', which outlines 4 Pillars of reflection (*'What we know(?)*, *What we do not know(?)*, *What we should know(?)* and *What to do next (i.e. Positive Action)(?)*'). These aim to question the culture, practices and research (here at the Open University (OU)) and how we can all take positive action towards becoming a more inclusive community for all B A M E Staff and Students.

AREA 2:

Community:

(Aim - Engage and Involve/Integrity):

1. B A M E Students:

- As part of the B H M proceedings; I partnered with the OUs Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, to set up and facilitate a series of three 'B A M E Students Focus Groups', around the theme '*Let's about Race*'; to gauge how students can themselves be a part of the OU community; in terms of Value, Belonging and Representation, to understand what positive actions we could (all) take to help the wider OU community better their practices and support for B A M E Students (now and) in future. The findings will be fed back to all at this year's Black History Months (October 15th) Event.

AREA 3:

Student Voice:

(Aim - Engage and Involve/Collaboration):

1. Freshers:

- Will be participating in this year's September - October, Student Hub Live, Freshers' Event, as VP E D I to help launch the new student charter along with the Association's President and a member of the Pro-Vice-chancellor Students Team, which was designed and developed by the Association and OU collectively, to ensure the voice of all students will be represented in its objectives. I will also attend as 1 of 2 student representatives, to address matters of 'feeling nervous at the start of study' to help raise awareness (which would help to signpost, offer a helping hand and set positive foundations towards promoting good mental wellbeing and to stand against study-related pressures, which students may experience).

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

- 25+ (estimate - via Social Media)
- 2 (via Email)
- 0 (via Forums)

ISSUE 1:

Reasonable adjustments (e.g. delayed alternative formats, evidence provision for alternative formats, communications)

(Aim - Equality and Inclusivity/Integrity):

1. Disabled Students:

- Have been raising queries around not receiving their modules materials according to dates outlined on their Studenthome page (and OU guidelines); in addition, to having discrepancies in the support and communications that they have been receiving (with some students receiving a series of 2 or 3 emails all stating different actions to take whilst, others were receiving vague or unclear emails), they also been having difficulties with contacting the OU, due to phone queues and call back delays and, some students whose resources were going to be significantly late, could not access PDF alternatives on module sites or apply for study-related-funds to cover (due to 'household income under £25000' cap/wording). As a result, Students have disclosed feelings of apprehension, anger, and frustration, with some Disabled students taking steps to defer and complain as they feel the OU's adjustments have not been reasonable or helpful, but instead are limiting, discriminating and not inclusive.
- Some actions taken; to help support these students, were to liaise and collaborate with the VP S S T (thank you Alison), to find alternative means for students to contact the OU (e.g. signposting them to Student Support Forums or resources relating to their queries) but also, to refer their queries (collective or complexed) to key Staff from respective OU teams and to champion or suggest solutions to help improve present strategies (which have not been effective, based on student feedback) to help hold the OU to their value for inclusivity. Some helpful (although not overarching) outcomes were, seeing emails moving away from vague circulars to (now) include links for signposting and, seeing the wording around study-related-funding being changed to highlight '*all students can now apply regardless of their household income (from a cap of under £25000)*'. These matters are ongoing and in discussion with Students, the OU and the Association.

ISSUE 2:

Discrimination and microaggression (rhetoric in student body, re: BAME targeted Bursaries):

(Aim - Equality and Inclusivity/Openness):

1. B A M E Students:

- Have been reaching out and raising concerns about racially charged discussions in the student body (i.e. on various Social media groups) due to non-B A M E (this reflects White or Others, who do not identify as B A M E) members making strong and (at times) offensive slurs towards B A M E students (or others coming to their defence), around feelings of being unfairly treated and the OU being racially discriminating towards non-B A M E students. The nature and tone of these conversations were not isolated

(as they reflected similar discussions during the June, Black Lives Matter, campaigns) and so, B A M E students shared their distresses of feeling targeted, belittled and discriminated against, at the OU, which they feel should represent openness and inclusivity.

- Some actions taken; (via social media) I signposted students (B A M E specifically, as no non-B A M E students approached me on the matter) to the bullying and harassment resources on the OU Help Centre and the complaints procedure in the OU Dignity and Respect policies so, that students may choose whether they wish to lodge formal complaints, and via email I having been acknowledging student's concerns and, have taken these forward to members of the OU (namely those who look at Student Mental health, and matters of E D I so, that I may first understand what safety measures are in place for students, in such events, and to help shape the plans and strategies being made by the OU, to ensure better support, representation, safeguarding and inclusivity. This matter is ongoing and in discussion with the OU and the Association.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Alison Kingan	
ROLE	Vice President Student Support	
QUARTER/YEAR	October 2020 CEC Meeting	
QUARTERLY SUMMARY		
Key progress areas:		
<p>As Vice President Student Support my main areas of concern are the Peer Support Service and OUSET (OU Students Educational Trust) charity. There are details of these and other support, here. This report covers activities I have undertaken from July 1st to September 21st. Until July 31st I was standing in for some of Vice President Equality and Diversity's duties. During the most recent Inclusion Meeting (which discusses issues affecting students with protected characteristics) we were told that all modules must have an accessibility statement. These include areas that might be problematic and can be found under the Study Materials Tab on each module description.</p>		
<p>At the recent Service Review Meeting where we discuss issues relating to Academic Services and IT, we learnt more about the OU Study App which is similar to the OU Anywhere App. Although OU Study App does not currently have the full range of modules, more are being added. OU Study App has advantages over OU Anywhere, including more functionality and working better on various devices and with alternative formats. There is more information here.</p>		
<p>We have some shiny new Peer Supporters about to join the Peer Support Service. They have taken part in various training and are looking forward to being able to help students with one off queries or longer one to one support throughout your modules. There are various ways to contact them and more information can be found on our website. There is more exciting news, Supporters will be available on Tuesday October 6th, 7 - 8pm to answer queries Live! More information about that is here</p>		
Student contacts and key issues:		
<p>Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?</p>		<p>I have no idea</p>
<p>Recently a number of students needing print packs of online materials received emails telling them the news they had been dreading, their material would be arriving late. Affected Students are being encouraged to contact their Student Support Teams, including via the call back function available in that email, so a member of staff can discuss options. Updates were required after that email was sent. One was amending a link to enable students in Scotland to access information about how to claim for additional costs they will incur. Clearer information is now available about the funding, so household income can be ignored when claiming funds for delayed print packs. In addition, students are being asked to contact the OU if the printing and stationary limits causes problems. More details here.</p>		

Some students are reporting they will not get their student fee loan in place by the time their modules starts. The response has been to keep the OU updated because provided they are informed, they are less likely to deregister students from their module

Wonderful news is that work I have been involved with regarding the creation and implementation of recording online tutorials have resulted in a policy which generally means there will be at least one recorded and one unrecorded tutorial in the list you can attend. In most cases all online tutorials will be labelled recorded or unrecorded at the time students are booking our tutorials. There is more information here. Following contact from a student I realised there might be an issue, so if there is not a choice of at least one unrecorded tutorial, please ask on your module website or talk to your Student Support Team.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Lorena Fontan Grana
ROLE	Area Association Rep Wales
QUARTER/YEAR	Q3 2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1: Building a Welsh community.

Actions taken:

1. Social media engagement through the OU Association in Wales Facebook page. In the last couple of months over 100 new members had joined in. Further interaction is being made through my personal Twitter account. The OU in Wales has been keen to retweet my news. The forums remain a quiet space even after a few attempts to initiate conversations.
2. Set up of a Welsh online monthly meet up 'Clwb Cymru' to promote student engagement and to be able to build-up of a Welsh community. The first session is set up for the 14th October where a member of the OU in Wales from student support will be making a presentation and answering student's enquiries.
3. I have managed to secure the use of a space/room at the OU in Wales building for future 'face-to-face' meet ups that will be happening once a month on a Saturday.
4. Early plans to bring the Association to students in the north of Wales by taking the Association 'on a tour'. This will need much planning and with the current COVID-19 situation is has being put on hold.
5. Draft of a quarterly newsletter from me to Welsh students. The aim being to keep students informed of latest news and events and to be able to reach those students that are not on social media. October's newsletter was sent to MK office and the latest news is that 'it is looking very positive'. I am waiting to hear if they are going to take the project forward.
6. Welsh Fresher's is all set up and ready to go. We will be doing a Welsh Quiz and a student chat afterwards. I am hoping to engage as many Welsh students as possible and to get them to return to the monthly meet ups.

AREA 2: Establishing strong relationships with the OU in Wales and the Welsh students.

Actions taken:

1. Regular communications, mainly through email with Alayla and Ceri from the OU in Wales.
2. Monthly catch ups on Teams.
3. Starting in October/November 2020 I will be the part time student/adult mature learner at The HEFCW'S Student Opportunity and Achievement Committee. This

is an advisory body made of 20 members (Louisa Casella, the President of the OU in Wales is one of them) that deal with all matters relating to student opportunity and achievement in higher education, including Welsh medium, widening access, equality and diversity, skills and employability. The aim of the committee is to ensure that Welsh higher education meets the needs and expectations of learners. This opportunity will also provide a way to engage and work with NUS in Wales.

4. Early plans to have regular catch ups with the Nations. To be set up by Alayla (OU Wales)

AREA 3: Community, student engagement and participation and building relationships between the OU in Wales and the office at MK.

1. The Welsh Panel has met twice since the elections. Most of its members are active and experienced volunteers at the OU Association. We have a few brand-new volunteers that had brought enthusiasm and new ideas to the Panel. This pilot programme is proving to be a space where all student's opinions and voices are heard and taken into account. There has been a lot of discussions around Fresher's and how to further get involved with students.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

I haven't had any direct contact or direct enquiries as such but I have been sign posting and answering questions to students nearly daily on social media.

ISSUE 1: Meet ups. Where and when?

ISSUE 2: There has been a lot of issues with finance this year because of staff shortages due to COVID-19 that have made a big impact on students that are waiting for payment.

ISSUE 3: There has been many complaints regarding Yodel and the posting of books for the new modules. Seems to be a recurring issue as Yodel seems to be very unreliable and there were cases when books were left outside in the rain, were never delivered or left in unsafe places.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Ray Adcock
ROLE	AAR Europe
QUARTER/YEAR	Q3 2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1: Enhance the feeling of community amongst International Students.

3 International Students 'meet ups' attended and profile established.
Given the lack of 'traffic' on some Facebook groups, discussions regarding the rationalisation of Facebook groups held with the aim of consolidating 'OU Students Northern Europe', 'OU students Southern Europe' and 'OU International Students' into one 'International Students forum'.

AREA 2:

AREA 3:

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	20
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ISSUE 1: Difficulty in obtaining accreditation in Greece for OU qualifications.

Meeting held online on 20 August with 10 Greek existing/recent OU students to establish the issues. E mail sent to Greek Erasmus office (21 August) to establish if similar problems experienced across UK HE institutions (no reply). E mail sent to UK Erasmus office (17 September) in a similar vein (reply awaited). Further online meetings planned with Greek students.

ISSUE 2: Difficulty for international students in obtaining accurate information on eligibility to register/how to register with OU on courses within the WELS Faculty, specifically Education.

Queries mainly focussed upon whether 'placements' would be valid and inability to obtain clear advice. Research carried out with others who have taken similar courses, to reassure students that all relevant modules would be available to international students. Students advised to request 'call back' to avoid excessively long queuing times via telephone. Issues resolved.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Gareth Jones
ROLE	Faculty Association Representative – Business and Law
QUARTER/YEAR	1 st Aug – 2 nd October 2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1: Agreement from Faculty to Trial Observers at Faculty Assembly

As part of my manifesto, I wanted to increase both the volume and variety of the student voices taking part in meetings with the faculty. This is also in keeping with the Association strategy by improving our engagement, reach, awareness, and impact. My first attempt at this was to try and get the faculty to agree to allowing observers to attend the Faculty Assembly, like other faculties have previously allowed.

As part of my proposal to the faculty, I highlighted how this had worked previously, and how given that meetings are currently online, this was the most opportune time to try it, with an aim to commit to this longer term. I highlighted the benefits of having a larger more diverse range of opinions to both the faculty and the Association.

To my delight, this proposal was accepted, and I am currently in the process of recruiting 5 observers to attend the meeting at the end of October, after which I will be gathering feedback and trying to convince to make this change permanent. At the time of writing this report, expressions of interest to take a spot had reached over 20, showing a demand exists. I will begin looking at ways that we can maintain this interest, even for those who are unable to attend this time and will hold discussions with staff team about this in due course.

AREA 2: Participation in the recruitment process for the new Head of Business School

Throughout August and at the beginning of September, I was part of panel which set out to appoint a new Head of Business School. Through this process, my opinions were highly valued, and I felt like an equal member of the team, despite being new in the role and joined by those from quite senior positions at the OU.

As can be expected, I paid particular attention to what the applicants said on matters which would directly affect students, and during the interview process, I raised a few questions on how they would address certain issues. With the successful candidate selected, but not yet announced, I will not say anymore on the process at this stage, but by doing this, I ensured that the Student Voice was an important consideration through the process, and hopefully the impact will be felt for a long time to come.

AREA 3: Co-Hosting a Diversity and Inclusion Event with Three Barristers

Near the start of my term, I was approached, alongside the OU Law Society, by a law student who was interested in producing an event on theme of Diversity and Inclusion at the Bar. This theme eventually developed into the impact that Covid-19 has/will have on Diversity and Inclusion.

This event involved collaboration between me, on behalf of the Students Association, the OU Law Society, the OU Law School, the mentioned Student, and the external guests. The event was well attended, and the response was very positive, and by doing this, we provided the student body the chance to engage with us, as well as becoming more aware of us and our events.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	100+
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Considering the time of year, and the ongoing challenges being faced due the current circumstances, the actual number would be very difficult to count. On some days, I will have contacted with dozens of students. Below I will focus on the issues that have been raised that are more specific to the faculty and my remit, and these are in addition to the more general issues that are facing the wider student body at present.

ISSUE 1: Q80 (Graduate Entrant Law) Students unable to enrol

Throughout August, numerous students got in touch stating they were unable to enrol on their next modules. This was because the online system does not allow them to enrol, and they would normally need to contact the Student Recruitment Team via phone call. As the phone lines were unavailable, emails going unanswered, and the webchat facility not able to process enrolments, these students were left with no way to enrol.

These issues were largely resolved following the reinstatement of the phone lines, but prior to this, I raised the issue with the OU directly, and was able to obtain a contact who was willing to contact the students directly and process their involvement. This meant quite a bit of work passing the information on, but it did help to resolve the issue.

ISSUE 2: Issues on B872

I received contact from a student regarding multiple issues that the cohort studying B872 were facing, and at this point some affected students were considering escalating the complaints externally due their dissatisfaction in the handling of the problems

After making contact with the Student Experience Manager for Business, and attempting to make contact with the Teaching Director and Module Team chair who were both on leave, I was able to learn what measures are currently happening, including the escalation of the complaint to the Executive Dean. At this stage, there is renewed dialogue taking place between the faculty and the students, so no further intervention is warranted at this stage, though I am being kept informed of all developments, and have made the VP Education aware of the issue, as well as the respective CCR's who sit on the committee in this area.

Further activities and meetings from within this period:

During this period, I have been involved in:

- Arranging the FBL element of Freshers
- Building relationships with the faculty, OU Law Society, and OU Business Associate Society
- Arranging the student involvement of the OU Business School reaccreditation process.
- The W101 mentoring programme
- Giving a presentation to the law school regarding the motivation and concerns of students
- Giving a presentation to the law school regarding the needs of younger students transitioning to the OU
- the Local Wales Volunteer Panel
- the creation of a channel where student representatives covering the FBL faculty can informally interact, helping to build a better, more cohesive relationship
- the Student Voice Training weekend, giving a presentation (with another rep) on Board of Studies.

These events have been in addition to some ad hoc events throughout.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Verity Saunders
ROLE	WELS FAR
QUARTER/YEAR	Autumn 2020

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1:

I wish to make sure that WELS student voice is heard and acted upon if possible...

Since starting my role on the 1st of August I have been promoting myself to students and staff and have also been making sure that student voice is heard in meetings. I attended a meeting with Sarah Jones about student voice and wellbeing in ECYS and they were delighted to accept my idea about there being a student co-chair in the working group. As a new working group I knew it was important for there to be a student focused present in the working group from the beginning and it was very interesting to go through the terms of reference with Sarah to make sure they met our expectations. I also introduced myself to staff at faculty assembly so staff know I am the new OUSA rep for WELS which will hopefully help with student voice being heard in more communities. I also did Student Hub Live which is focused at mainly freshers but others will listen too, and I introduced myself and said I was the Faculty Association Representative and I also promoted the students association as well.

AREA 2:

I wish for there to be an open door for WELS students so they know they can come to me with issues that they may need sorting and I'm also happy to hear feedback as well.

I have been active in several groups on Facebook and have also created a Twitter account recently to try and reach more students. I will be doing two drop in sessions during freshers fortnight to try and promote myself for WELS students. I have made myself available and have also been available when students have contacted me on various platforms. Something I wish to work on is making sure more students know I am around for help if they need it. I am also aware that I need to work on making the open door more open but I think that will come with time as I am still very new to my role and I know I still have lots of time left of my term to achieve this.

AREA 3:

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

5 ish

ISSUE 1:

Alternative formats

Alternative formats is the only major issue that I have come across currently. It is something that is hopefully being worked on so it can be resolved however I am sign posting people to the Disabled Students Group for social support around this (for example – to talk to other students in the same situation so they know that they are not the only person to be dealing with this issue) and to Alison and Patrice for support with getting this sorted with the OU.

ISSUE 2:

ISSUE 3: