

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

8 – 10 October 2021

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORTS

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **receive** the reports
- ii) **note** that unless this paper is started for discussion prior to the meeting, printed copies will not be supplied.

Reports submitted by:-

- President (page 2)
- Deputy President (page 4)
- Vice President Administration (page 7)
- Vice President Community (page 9)
- Vice President Engagement (page 11)
- Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (page 14)
- Vice President Education (page 19)
- Vice President Student Support (page 21)
- Student OU Council Member (page 23)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for England (page 24)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Europe (page 26)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) (page 27)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Business & Law (FBL) (page 29)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Open and Access (page 31)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (page 32)

The positions of Area Association Representative (AAR) for Northern Ireland, Area Association Representative (AAR) for Scotland and Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) are currently vacant and therefore no report is available for this quarter. Due to personal circumstances, there is no report available for Area Association Representative (AAR) for Wales for this quarter.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Sarah Jones
ROLE:	President
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1: Working on the undertaking of a Governance review of the Association

As part of the Governance reform I have been working with the staff team on comms and also with various members of the CEC around the ways we were going to consult. We have ran Focus Groups, had a Student Consultative Forum and we have also had a Survey to give students the chance to have their say. This is an important piece of work and we have valued all the inputs we have been getting. In this I have learnt how to make a video with a transcript using Instagram!!

This has links across all areas of our strategy and comes directly of the Culture review.

AREA 2: Opportunities to share the work the Student Association are doing

I have been sharing my blog on The Hoot and on social media all throughout this quarter. I have been able to shine a light on some of the work that I do and some of the work we do as an Association. I have been asked by quite a few people about various aspects of our work due to this blog. It has been a good way to share also some of the work of the CEC with a wider audience.

This links with the Influence and Transform strand of the Strategy

AREA 3: Sharing a lightening talk at the RAISE Special Interest Group about Student Voice and Collaboration during the pandemic

I have been working with Klaus-Dieter Rossade, Associate Dean Curriculum in the WELS faculty, and Cin McGuigan, Vice-president Education, on a 5-minute lightening talk we gave to a RAISE Special Interest Group. This talk was around the collaboration in Emergency Management team -Academic implementation group that ran throughout the first lockdown and dealt with cancelling of assessment. We raised the difference that was felt after this group finished when it comes to the area of Student Voice in the University. The feeling that now in the OU, with any new emergent issues, student consultation is now no longer an afterthought, we are often first on the list to be asked for our views. The two things that stood out were the willingness to treat students as partners and going to students from the start rather than as an afterthought;

treating students as equals and coming to them first.

Several questions were asked after the presentation which showed the impact and engagement this topic had with the audience.

This links with the Influence and Transform strand of the Strategy it also goes towards our mission of making a positive difference for all 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?

Approx.15

ISSUE 1: Pending Results

There have been more students this year than in many years recently whose results have been pending. Pending can be for many reasons but due to the volume of students pending the dept that deals with it, Assessment, Credit and Qualification, which is part of Academic Services, have been massively under pressure. Several reps have been dealing with this, reassuring students and sign posting them. We have also spoken to this team about the communication of some of the information to students that they are taking on board.

This goes towards our Inform and Support strand of our strategy and our mission of making a positive difference for all students.

ISSUE 2

Working with the Staff LGBT Group – now know as PROUD and OUPride to establish a good working place to share how we can support students. With the issues from both sides around Gender Critical issues it has been useful to have this space where we can address them and find areas we can work on together. We have been able to direct students who need the extra help towards Gender Identity Champions in the Student Support centres as well. Having this knowledge means we can share awareness and therefor support more students.

This goes along with the underlying EDI values that we have as an Association and our mission to make a positive difference for ALL OU students.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Ian Cheyne
ROLE:	Deputy President
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
AREA 1:	
<u>Volunteer Support</u>	
<p>Last quarter I spoke about helping volunteers to understand the commitment required of them, and the potential difficulties they may have to face, before they applied to be volunteers. Now I'm considering the safeguards we are putting in place to ensure that everyone is treated fairly. There are always going to be differences of opinion—the OU after all, is a university, and as such is inevitably filled with both intelligent and intellectual thought. The important thing for all of us as volunteers and especially for newcomers is that we can resolve difficulties in relationships effectively—quickly and without rancour. This is why the emphasis is being placed now on informal resolution, in the first instance. Even with an increasing number of volunteers we remain a relatively small group of individuals when we consider the tens of thousands of students who populate the university. All the more reason then to get things put right as quickly and as amicably as possible. There used to be a security campaign for rail travellers which said (from memory!) 'SEE IT, SAY IT, SORTED'. It's worth bearing this in mind—share the problem and put it right before it festers and becomes insoluble.</p>	
AREA 2:	
<u>Getting closer</u>	
<p>Some time ago I identified THREE developments which I see as significant advances towards 'being where the students are'. The first of these was the agreement on the part of the OU to allow Individual Representation for all students to be undertaken by The Association—this is currently being introduced. Second was the new Association Website—there have been delays in getting this up and running which I understand were caused by discussions over contractual issues—which I'm hopeful will now be with us around the end of November. Regrettably, the last of the three is entirely dependent upon the successful implementation of the OU's new Core Systems Replacement, or at least the early stages of this. I'm referring to 'MYOU' which will provide the direct online interface between student</p>	

and university. CSR has been repeatedly delayed and the availability date of the necessary software is still uncertain.

With two out of three available (more or less) meantime, I can look forward to being able to provide an enhanced service to all students and noticeable improvements in both engagement and involvement. One spin-off from this staggered introduction of the three developments should hopefully be a clearer understanding of 'where the students are', at the moment.

AREA 3:

The AL Contract Saga

By and large I've had good, and very good, tutors. I've also met many ALs whose levels of commitment were commendably high, often exceeding the 'above and beyond the call of duty' requirement.

Consequently the machinations of the implementation of new and full-time contracts for those in the front line of our academic services as students has been a major concern to us all. It has been a genuine roller-coaster of a ride—even see-sawing seemingly quite dramatically during the past couple of days (September 22nd).

Let's hope that the OU negotiators have got it right this time, and, before a new batch of eager students (not forgetting the continuing 'old hands') become subject to the otherwise inevitable disruptions to their studies and their futures.

Let's hope!

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?

2

ISSUE 1:

The Association Governance Review

The consultation results are currently being assessed and there has been some comment on structures, skills required by the Student Leadership Team, AGM details, etc. But we shouldn't forget the fundamental issue which underpins everything—the behaviour of our volunteers and their attitudes towards colleagues and student generally. If actions and values aren't right then no shuffling of the deck chairs will provide a substitute

ISSUE 2:

patience...again

It would be wonderful if everything was perfect—but it isn't—and ultimately compromise will rule the day. It is essential therefore that we don't beat ourselves

up because progress is slow, often painfully slow. We are getting there, and it will take time—more time than we would either like or expect.

ISSUE 3:

New students but the same questions

We should expect the same questions to be asked...again and again with each generation. Reinvention of the wheel is inevitably a rite of passage. What is essential however is that the questions are being asked in the right places and within the context of where every student is at during the various stages of the journey. Some will inevitably ask the Association, and friends and associates, before they ask the OU. This continues to be a major source of problems caused by missing or misinformation. Let's do our best to ensure that the questions can be answered where and of whom they should be asked.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Matt Porterfield
ROLE:	Vice President Admin
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p><i>AREA 1:</i></p> <p>Culture and Governance of the Association Work has been ongoing in these areas to ensure we have a leadership culture and structure that is best placed to deliver our strategic objectives, legal obligations and reporting requirements in an agile and democratic manner. This affects all areas of our organisation from behavioural governance to how and when we hold our elections and conference. We now have a high-level model and are consulting as widely as possible on details to ensure members views are included in our proposals which will then be considered by the leadership before any formal decisions are made.</p>	
<p><i>AREA 2:</i></p> <p>Finance, Resources and Risk A sub-committee of the Board of Trustees has been proposed (in the Governance Review) to focus on these areas and report recommendations to trustee meetings. This is chaired by an external trustee with expertise in this area and includes both trustees and staff members. Final draft Terms of Reference and membership will now go to the full Board for approval. Amongst other responsibilities, the sub-committee will take over from the Investments working group, the monitoring of cashflow forecasts to identify the best use of free funds within our risk appetite.</p>	
<p><i>AREA 3:</i></p> <p>Other activities The OUSET Charity is currently very busy considering applications for grants to help with fees coming from current students who experience financial difficulties, including students in secure environments. The shop working group is seeking another member who is not from the existing leadership to increase diversity in views. Two of us are serving on an OU group which monitored readiness for October starts and is now turning its attention to registrations for next February, providing early identification of issues which may result in adverse student experiences and mitigating wherever possible. The annual external audit of the Association and OUSET is currently underway and no issues are anticipated.</p>	
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?

Direct contact n/a in this role

ISSUE 1:

There is a lot of misunderstanding about the proposals for governance changes, probably due to misinformed posting on social media. Although corrections can be made in official sources or questions answered if they are asked, there is a concern that students who are less engaged are not questioning the rumours by fact-checking.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Anca Seaton
ROLE:	Vice President Community
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<i>AREA 1:</i>	
<p>Freshers Fortnight – September/October 2021 The Freshers Fortnight just started, at the time of writing. There will be over 40 sessions covering a lot of ground, all hosted by Students Association reps and volunteers, plus a number of sessions hosted by university staff and associate lecturers (tutors). In the Welcome session, hosted on Monday, 20th September, we had over 180 participants.</p> <p>The planning and preparation for Freshers took a lot of time and resources, and I was really happy to see a lot of engaged students taking part, talking about our events and telling their OU friends about them. We had many students expressing their excitement to attend events and be part of the great, diverse and supportive students community.</p>	
<i>AREA 2:</i>	
<p>New Area Reps co-opted We had three new area reps co-opted, and they started their term on 1st August. We are working together for the benefits of the OU students, and they all seem very enthusiastic and full of energy. The official regional and national Facebook groups are now revitalised, with new sets of local admins, and we've already seen greater traffic and discussions in those groups.</p>	
<i>AREA 3:</i>	
<p>Clubs and Societies We have two new societies since my last report – Christian Union and Space Society. We wish them well in their endeavours and are really excited to see they already have events as part of Freshers Fortnight and beyond.</p> <p>We had several new clubs being created, the latest one being approved only this morning! According to my count, this will be our 75th club live in the list on our website. Sadly, we had to refuse an application for a club that didn't share our mission, vision and values.</p>	
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?

32

ISSUE 1:

We are looking into our guidance for the clubs, and setting up ground rules for them. They are more informal, and their members get together on social media and other platforms to chat and share ideas. Clubs are pretty fluid, and we do not want to introduce too many rules and regulations, but a light-touch approach to these can make sure clubs are open and welcoming to all OU students.

ISSUE 2:

Many students, especially new students, queried the Association's approach to face-to-face events. We are following the University's guidance and our Board of Trustees decided not to have any face-to-face events until the end of 2021, with a decision about 2022 being taken shortly before the end of this calendar year. It was the right decision. Whilst the need and willingness of students to meet face-to-face is great, we are looking at protecting our students and volunteers alike. We will have a review of the face-to-face arrangements existing before the pandemic, take into account the major changes happening because of the global pandemic and start planning our future events.

ISSUE 3:

Regional and National Facebook Groups
With the revival of the Students' Association's regional and national Facebook groups, we realised that a new volunteer role can be created for those students who are groups' admins. This decision was made following issues with students in those groups, and the new volunteer role will be coming to the next CEC meeting in December. The new role will offer the postholders the training needed in performing the role, as well as better guidance and accountability of the postholders.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Fanni Zombor
ROLE:	Vice President Engagement
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p><i>AREA 1:</i></p> <p>Raising the awareness of the Association through OU channels</p> <p>A big area of my role is finding ways the OU can contribute to spreading the word about the Association to students. It can often be difficult to agree new channels to use for promotion as the OU has so many departments and messages to share with students, it can be hard to prioritise and favour one over the other to avoid overloading students. Following on from the success of the Association leaflets landing in book packs, I have created a list of other channels where we would like the OU to mention us and started working through this list.</p> <p>I have got agreement from the OU and You newsletter team to guarantee the Association a spot in every single quarterly issue moving forward - this will either be community, student voice or support related so we will always be able to share a different aspect of our work depending on what's going on with over 100k students!! To top it all off, the September issue had a welcome message from Sarah Jones and Liz Marr and the November issue will be entirely Student Voice themed to help us with Student Voice Week engagement and allow us to highlight our student reps and the work we (all of our reps and volunteers) do.</p> <p>Every quarter the OU Senior Team – a group of c80 OU Senior Managers, Directors and Heads of Units meet and receive a 'Senior Team comms cascade pack' – from the next issue onwards we will be now be able to submit an Association update for inclusion which gives us a great opportunity to raise awareness of our work, our achievements, our priorities and up-coming events with a University-wide OU staff audience.</p> <p>We have also got agreement to update our section in the OU Prospectuses that enquirers and prospective students get. Currently there is one sentence about us, and it has our old website link in it. In the new issue (launching early next year) we will have half a page, with our logo, and 250 words about the Association.</p> <p>As a Students Association operating entirely at a distance, we often have to rely on new and continuing students coming across us by chance, so opportunities like this really help us boost how many students are aware of our existence. Without</p>	

being known to the student body, we can't provide the community and support we wish every OU student could experience and hopefully we will see an increased engagement in the coming months from these achievements.

AREA 2:

Governance review consultation

As the Association carries on going through its governance review, it was time in this quarter to take the consultancy's recommendations to the student body, so a wide pool of students could provide feedback and have a say in the future of the Association. Together with a working group, I was able to bring my expertise in student engagement to the table and we worked out a series of different consultation types, accounting for students with different amounts of time available to engage in this work. We also paid particular attention to engaging student groups we otherwise struggle to engage with (young students, BAME students and students with extreme time pressures). Hundreds of students got involved over the consultation period and I really look forward to figuring out how this feedback will shape our next steps.

The consultative work (and making sure we made it as widely available as possible through different channels) has an impact on making sure that the Association does what students want it to do and in a way that works and is accessible for them. Being able to be part of this work is what we were elected to focus on, so I'm incredibly pleased to have supported the student voice being listened to.

AREA 3:

Delivering the Association's comms strategy

The Association's Communications Strategy was finalised with the support of various staff, after some time, to give us steer on how to approach our communications moving forward. It will enable us to finish other critical pieces of work in our strategy projects like a communications matrix, a forward planning calendar and support us in being able to deliver projects with consistent comms support.

This piece of work underlines how everything the Association and all the reps do is communicated. It's important not only that students are aware of us, but that things we share with them are relevant and interesting to them at the right times. Effective communication is one of our only ways to show students that we are relevant to them and to encourage them to continue to want to engage with us.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this month to ask for support on a specific issue?

150+

ISSUE 1:

Alternative format delays

As in recent years, delays with alternative formats carries on being an issue (although its decreasing year on year) so students have been looking for pre-assurances that it will be different this year and where they can turn to for help and support if they have issues.

ISSUE 2:

Freshers/ new student excitement

I end up being contacted in particular by our younger cohort of students looking for community and ways to get involved with the Association. New students are keen to find out ahead of time what will be coming up for them in terms of community events too, it's so exciting for them that Freshers is always top of my list this time of the year.

ISSUE 3:

Pending results

Unfortunately, there is very little any student rep can do on an individual level to help students waiting for pending results. Other Student Leadership Members involved in meetings around this carry on raising the urgency of releasing results, and we continue to keep an eye on the situation.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Patrice Belton
ROLE:	Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (VPEDI)
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p><i>This quarter was focused on Equality Diversity and Inclusion and building foundations for voice - focusing on the representation and integration of support and inclusion for our EDI Groups and students in the (wider) OU and Association Communities.</i></p> <p>AREA 1 – Embedding Students’ Gender Equality (at the OU):</p> <p>As Vice President for Equality Diversity and Inclusion (V P E D I), I was invited to join the 'Athena Swan - Self Assessment Team' (last year at the start of my role). This was a working group at the OU that disbanded (last November) to their (original) Gender Equality Steering Group (G E S G) and, they oversee all matters of Gender Equality alongside the OU’s E D I Steering Group (<i>who have now, this week, restructured to the OU’s E D I Committee, to sit under OU Governance</i>). I attend these meetings, as a student representative and critical friend, to inform and assess matters around gender equality and support including the OU’s Stonewall affiliation (which had been mainly staff focused).</p> <p>In July 2021, after reflecting on the impact the launch of the OU’s Gender Critical Research Network (G R C N) had had on the Associations OU Pride (LGBT+) Students (<i>and particularly our, Trans, Non-Binary and Gender-nonconforming cohorts</i>), I felt it necessary, in my position, to question (the G E S G) why those meetings and the (broader) Open University ethos, had not been sufficiently considerate of students’ needs, nor their gender ratios; (whilst the Association are tasked to contribute to the OU’s Athena Swan submissions).</p> <p>I approached the Chair of the G E S G and the E D I Representative for the Pro-Vice-Chancellor-Students’ (P V C-S) office to call for more input from and, support for students (in these meetings and around gender matters). I was reassured, that they will be allocating regular agenda slots, to reflect on student (specific) challenges and, was also offered pre-meeting briefings to support and ensure students (including Postgraduate) can have some input and scope before meetings.</p> <p>Outcome:</p> <p>I was approached by the G E S G Team in (mid) September 2021, to express that at the next group meeting, the Chair will be introducing a (formal) agenda item on student gender equality and explaining why the</p>	

group (now) wants to have this **as a standing item, for members to raise anything they need to.** *I will be putting a call out to the OU Pride Group for input shortly.*

Just as a final nod from me; I must express, that the G E S G membership includes members from the OU's Trans Network, Proud-Staff Network (LGBT+) and Women-at-the-OU Network, which for me signifies platform to constructively inform discussions around the gender equality, and to help students and the (wider) E D I, OU and Students Communities.)

(Strategy Links: Shared Values – Equality and Inclusivity / Openness / Collaboration Aim - All)

AREA 2: Update on Module Resource & (some) Guidance for Students
(accurate up to 23/09/2021):

1. Illegible Module Materials in WELS:

I have some positive news for those of you in the WELS (Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies), who had mentioned receiving illegible Mailings (or Module Materials) **for Modules K318 and K322 (or even last year's K210).** This matter was (as many of you guessed) a quality checking issue at the Distribution Centre (DC), including badly printed batches of resources. These have now been located and **SHREDDDED** (thank goodness). Therefore, those of you who came across this issue (I was advised 17 students (in total) affected by this), please refer to the DC asap to request replacement copies, if you have not received an email update (from the OU) to advise you will now be receiving new module resources asap.

2. Mailings Delays:

I know many of you have also mentioned that you are **still waiting for your Mailings** to be delivered or have been informed (via email) that your Mailings will be delayed. Alison Kingan – Vice President Student Support (VP SS) and I have referred to the Director for Students Support (on 20/09/2021), to have an update around this issue for **this new study year:**

- Sadly, there will be some delayed Mailings (both) in 'Standard Print Formats' (this goes out to all students) and some 'Alternative Formats' (e.g. Comb-Bound etc. which goes out to students with Disabilities who have declared and requested for adapted versions.) However, the numbers of modules impacted are far fewer (again hopeful) than in previous years and most cases (not all) are based in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Faculty. Also **a large proportion, are due to have theirs ahead of starting their studies in October**, so please keep watch over the next fortnight.
- For transparency and clarity; some modules resources within these Faculties; 'STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), WELS and FASS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences)' will be delayed up to 2 weeks after study starts in October, although roughly 18 (figure quoted on 20/09/2021). This, although still a work in progress and (perhaps) a bothersome thought, is a huge improvement from last year, which (in hindsight) were significantly higher.
- Positively, **communications** appear to be **more effective and clearer**, so, impacted students are being communicated to at the earliest convenience (via email), which should include instructions to help get started whilst they wait. I therefore propose to ALL students (and particularly, those who have been notified that their resources are due to be delayed), who would prefer to work ahead and/or

are keen to get started; to please follow the interim instructions being offered (and where possible) to help yourselves prepare ahead; with thoughts that your modules may be one in the delayed group. Sadly, I don't have access to details on which modules are in either delayed category; so, although, I wish I had powers, to magic these over to yourselves, I cannot; so, you will have to take some onus on making interim preparations for yourselves and, this includes reaching out to the OU directly.

This said, you should (ALL) have access to PDF (and other adapted versions) of module resources (online) on the module website. These will be located under the RESOURCES tab; for anyone struggling to find them, there is a HELP tab to support you, on the menu (at top of the page). These online resources can be downloaded or printed if you prefer to work offline. If unsure, you can refer to your Student Support Teams for guidance or signposting to other OU departments; they are available by email, over the phone, on the OU's forums and via webchat and, on the Studenthome menu under contact.

For those experiencing financial difficulties or if you require financial support to cover print related costs, you can make a claim for reimbursement. Full details of what you need to do and the criteria for eligibility can all be located on the OU's Help-Centre, you can find this on your Studenthome page. However, if you are stuck, you can refer to the HELP tab or refer to your SSTs.

To close, I must stress that I am genuinely apologetic for the continued challenges with (some) students obtaining their modules resources later than expected, but I assure you; myself, the VP SS, the DSG Committee and the (wider) Student Leadership Team will continue to push the agenda for these to be eradicated entirely, and although we are not there yet, progress is being made. So, we urge you to reach out and share your concerns (where necessary) to help us continue to hold the University to account and to champion change for this student cohort.

Strategy Link: Shared Values - All; Aim – All

AREA 3: Embedding 'EDI as Practice':

The last year as Vice President Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (VP EDI) has been challenging and, at the forefront were the many challenges and disadvantages I have had to resolve or relay on behalf of students; highlighting the dire need for EDI (as Practice) to become embedded (both) at the OU and Association. This, being felt across the Associations' Governance, Structures and Body (including our (recent) Governance Review), means **We** (myself, the EDI Working Group and (the wider) Association collective, are working to actively integrate and implement changes to strengthen our internal and external EDI practices and accountability. Thus, we have introduced a (new) EDI Project's Officer (Staff-role) to support our EDI Groups and (wider) Student community, and we will be hosting EDI-specific Events and Consultations (open to all our students and volunteers) at Freshers (September) and Student Voice Week (November) 2021; providing a platform for students to share their stories with us; whilst enabling us to listen (more deeply) to and learn from them, how we might better meet their differing and diverse needs.

(Strategy Link: Shared Values - All; Aim – All)

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

100+ (via Facebook, Forum, Email, Messenger, VP EDI's Facebook Page)

Student Contacts and Key Issues

Key Issues:

- **EMA Postponements:** miscommunication between a student and the OU, resulting in a failed module result, which required me to compose them with pastoral support, and refer them to SST for a resolve.
- **Student Assistance Funding:** helping a student with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), to decode the OU's email response, before signposting them back to the SST for further support.
- **Safeguarding and Financial Support:** to support a student/parent, experiencing socioeconomic challenges, with pastoral support, signposts to and referring them to the OU's Safeguarding team and SST for help.
- **Module Results:** Mostly students I had helped across the year, wanting to share their 'Pass' results and to say thank you.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** to signpost and offer pastoral support to a Disabled student, who is looking to reduce their hours of study but felt they had not been heard by the SST advisors.
- **Representation, Discrimination and Support:** international (BAME) Students who live and study in different time zones, negatively impacted by the generic UK/EU-centric Tutorial times and Tutor support.
- **GCRN (Gender Critical Research Network)** – students from both sides still feel challenged by this subject, particularly, the LGBTQ+ cohort and OU Pride Committee (who remain vocal), as they feel enough isn't being done to represent or defend their rights (although myself, the President and (respective) Association Staff have been working collectively (with the OU) and ALL LGBTQ+ (Student and Staff Groups), to find a fair resolve). This has been relayed to the OU Pride Committee and an updated statement to justify the Association's position has been published following legal advice. The OU has since granted the Group affiliation, whilst (some) Trans, Non-Binary and Gender-nonconforming students, feel disadvantaged unheard and not valued in the midst.

Incorrect Mailings Documents: Some DSG students received more documents than they should have, in their first mailings; following up with the Vice President Student Support (VP SS) and the Director of Student Support Team (SST), we referred to the Director of the University Secretary's Office (USO) and the matter was found to be a human error and quickly resolved, with little to no fallout. I followed with a statement to DSG students from the Director, USO (who also informed they will be happy to speak to students (via the DSG Committee) directly, should things change around Alternative format deliveries (which the Head of EDI and Student Welfare, has informed and relayed to the DSG Committee), and to date materials deliveries are go.

Strategy Link - Shared Values: All; Aim – Influence & Transform, Inform and Support

Strategy Key:

Shared Values: *Integrity, Equality & Inclusivity, Openness and Collaboration*

Strands: *Inform & Support, Engage and Involve and Influence and Transform*



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Cinnomen McGuigan
ROLE:	Vice President Education
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p><i>AREA 1:</i></p> <p>Support</p> <p>Launching the Individual Representation Service.</p> <p>I stood on a platform to get this delivered if possible, so being able to launch in August was a definite highlight for me. We will be helping engage with students at their most vulnerable and most in need of support. Which is exactly what an Association should be doing, being there when needed. The complaints process is hard enough without feeling isolated and alone, so having a key support through the process will help many students navigate this much more successfully.</p>	
<p><i>AREA 2:</i></p> <p>Representation</p> <p>We have recently undergone a recruitment cycle for Central Committee Reps and Senate Reference Group members and delivered their training. Since that cycle coincided with exams and EMAs it means we still have a number of roles to fill – recruitment is currently open for the next cycle and can be found at oustudents.com/volunteering (LINK)</p> <p>Please consider getting involved with academic governance committees with us. It is a great way to engage.</p>	
<p><i>AREA 3:</i></p> <p>Community</p> <p>I have been working hard over Freshers to help engage students across the wider community. I already host a number of community building events both aimed at Reps – like my monthly rep drop-in session, and others aimed at staff and students, like at Freshers and at the upcoming Student Voice Week. And am always happy to lend support to students who want to engage further. Sharing that love of student community and helping student feel less lonely is a key consideration for many reps, and I am not different.</p>	

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?

In the hundreds

ISSUE 1:

Pendings – the OU has a huge backlog of pending results that are having a massive impact on the student journey of those affected. I have spoken to many of them since this started in July. Fingers crossed we are near the final results being posted.

ISSUE 2:

Complaints – since we launched the Individual Rep service I have found myself dealing with many more students caught in the complaints process. They know I am involved because I signpost a lot of people that way, and sometimes they just want to talk over what's on offer.

ISSUE 3:

Academic Governance Review for the Association. Have had a number of students reach out over concerns, accessibility of surveys and the lack of opportunities to engage meaningfully. We need to be careful not to present this all as a done deal, cos that is how some students are seeing it.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Alison Kingan
ROLE:	Vice President Student Support
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<i>AREA 1:</i>	
<p>In various meetings I was told that many changes brought in because of COVID will soon no longer be available. I made sure that any alterations will be fully explained to students and not be referred to as 'going back to normal'. Therefore, it is important that we all double check what current policy or procedure is in place rather than assume that everything is the way it has been since March 2020.</p> <p>This is part of the Inform and Support area of the Strategy.</p>	
<i>AREA 2:</i>	
<p>Study Tips. I spent some time requesting study tips and putting them in a format so they could be collected into a PDF which students can download. There were far more tips than I expected. The initial PDF can only include a certain number of these and the other tips will be used in various ways. This was a lovely example of teamwork which included staff from the Digital Communications Team; Volunteer and Representation Team; and EDI and Student Welfare Team. There would be nothing to share without input from a large number of students responding to requests for tips posted across social media for which I'm extremely grateful. A special thanks to those who belong to OU Pride and a huge thank you to everyone who contributed. Hopefully, by the time this report is published the Study Tips PDF will be available on our website and you might see other tips popping up across social media.</p> <p>This is connected to the Inform and Support Strategy section.</p>	
<i>AREA 3:</i>	
<p>Student Recruitment and Support Centre / Student Support Team and Students Association Teams Space. Following work between some of our Faculty Association Reps and OU Staff a joint space has been created and recently launched so OU staff and Association reps have a joint space to communicate. It enables those with access to contact OU staff about general issues affecting students. It can also be used to keep each other informed about upcoming events and we can keep OU staff up to date about services we offer. Student facing staff can pass on details about the Association to students who contact them.</p>	

This is an example of supporting the Influence and Transform area of the Strategy as well as Engagement if more students become aware of our activities, Groups, Clubs, Societies, and the Peer Support 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?

-

ISSUE 1:

There were a few issues around exam results that students raised. This includes that a number of students are still waiting for their results, so have a pending instead. I appreciate this can be an anxious time for students. Cin (VP Education) and I have talked to the OU about improving information and support to students during this time.

ISSUE 2:

Students concerned about not getting their books or their alternative formats, plus alternative formats being unreadable. Also had questions around when students can request alternative formats and how to make those requests. The earlier students let the OU know the better but if something happens midway through a module, additional requirements can still be discussed with the OU. I've also been able to direct students to where they can find possible means to pay for their diagnostic assessment, such as to see whether they have dyslexia and to get the evidence they need to request additional assistance.

ISSUE 3:

The Association has currently ceased being affiliated to Nightline. The OU has various ways that students can access support. Together all being one. There's also a range of support available on the Association's website, under the Support Tab. The Peer Support Service is still available for students who need a listening ear. I get contacted by students wanting to learn more about contacting the Peer Support service as well as those who want to become a Peer Supporter. We will soon be advertising for more Peer Supporters, though probably not until November. Anyone interesting in joining, please keep looking at the Volunteer section of the Students website.

Irrespective of whether it is part of the Strategy or not, it is fundamental to this role that I support and inform students.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Danielle Smith
ROLE:	Student Member of Council
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
<p><i>Personal note: I have been largely unavailable during this last quarter, due to stepping back from my role for approximately 6 weeks. This has been as a result of increased workload pressure in my job (NHS) due to the continuing effects of the Covid19 pandemic.</i></p>	
Key progress areas:	
<p><i>AREA 1:</i></p> <p><i>OU Strategy Development</i></p> <p>The OU continues to develop its new strategy and students have been involved at every stage. The Spring student consultation events asked for student input from those attending and valuable feedback was provided. Additionally, the strategy team have met with student representatives to discuss the strategy and gain further feedback. The six student members of Senate (of which I am one) have also had the opportunity to participate in two strategy workshops, where we were able to review some of the draft objectives and provide our thoughts. The Council will be reviewing the final draft strategy document at our November meeting which will be presented for approval. Ahead of that, I'm really proud to say that student views have really been taken on board throughout this process, and I am looking forward to seeing launch of the new strategy early next year once approved.</p>	
<p><i>AREA 2:</i></p> <p><i>OU Students Association Strategy Implementation</i></p> <p>The work continues to deliver on the strategic aims outlined in our own Association strategy, launched in 2020. I have joined a small project group which has been tasked with developing a new communications strategy and marcomms (marketing communications) plan for the Association. At the time of writing, the group has had an initial meeting to discuss the work to be done and is beginning to feed into the different strands of the project.</p>	
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?	0



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Leanne White		
ROLE:	Area Representative in England		
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021		
QUARTERLY SUMMARY			
Key progress areas:			
<i>AREA 1:</i>			
Forging relationships and settling into the role.			
<p>Since officially starting in the role on the 1st of August I have spent time settling in, building working relationships with other members of the CEC and people from the University. I've also introduced myself in multiple student spaces and ensured that students know what I can do for them and how to contact me.</p>			
<i>AREA 2:</i>			
Community			
<p>I have spent a lot of time working towards creating a vibrant student community. I have spent time updating all of the OU Student's Association English regional Facebook groups, recruiting new admins, updating information and signposting students, making them more uniform so it's easier to recognise them as official spaces. I'm currently in the process of helping to expand the regional online meet-ups with the recruitment of new meet-up hosts so we can have regular/semi regular meet-ups for every region.</p> <p>I also consulted with the community team to give feedback and insight about the new Code of Conduct for online events to make it more inclusive.</p>			
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 (most contact me during online meet ups)
<i>ISSUE 1:</i>			
Return to Face to Face			
<p>Students are wondering why the Association is still not supporting Face to Face events and when they can expect this policy to change. I have referred students to the statement on the OU Students Association website from the board of trustees and assured them that I will keep them updated about any changes.</p>			
<i>ISSUE 2:</i>			

Studying and Benefits

I have been contacted by a few students who are concerned about how studying with the OU will affect their Universal Credit. After looking in to it I have referred students to information on the gov.uk website and reassured them that many students are able to study part time without having benefits penalised. I have advised students to contact the DWP directly to get up to date advice.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Kate Wells
ROLE:	Area Representative in Europe
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p><i>AREA 1:</i></p> <p>I have made progress in understanding my role, and getting to grips with the different means of communicating with students. Not much to report this quarter as it's only been six weeks since I was co-opted. Looking forward to Freshers this fortnight.</p>	
<p><i>AREA 2:</i></p> <p>I will be working with Tala and Isabelle to host online events for all International students over the coming weeks (not including Freshers). My official remit may only be as Association Area Rep. for Continental Europe but this leaves many students out in the cold (i.e. unrepresented to the CEC), which is not part of the "inclusive" nature of the Students Association mission.</p>	
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?	0



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Bev Smith
ROLE:	FASS FAR
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<i>AREA 1:</i>	
<p>The OUSA/SRSC teams space is now fully functional. This allows communication between Student Support Staff and Association Reps, which in turn allows us as reps to signpost issues that are raised, and for student Support to do the same. There is also space for OUSA to post any events and anything else that Student Support can pass onto students. EG new open learn courses, Student Voice etc. This will help with student satisfaction as some queries can be dealt with by reps/volunteers without needing to signpost the student to Student Support.</p>	
<i>AREA 2:</i>	
<p>The Faculty is planning to hold several events throughout the year to celebrate Black History Month. These will include talks from post graduate students, and talks on global issues etc. Students will be invited and OUPen Book Club is holding an event during Student Voice week, celebrating a BAME author(yet to be chosen). Cin, is also contacting several BAME writers in the hope that we can organise an event where these writers can read from their work with a Q & A session. These events should illustrate that we are an inclusive faculty.</p>	
<i>AREA 3:</i>	
<p>Two BAME students from the faculty have been chosen to accept The Lenny Henry and Joan Armatrading awards during faculty Assembly. There was a good response from students with many putting themselves forward. One student will receive the award for outstanding achievement and the other for overcoming adversity. It is hoped that both celebrities will attend virtually. It is to hope that these awards will help with student retention, satisfaction and inclusion.</p>	
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?	12
<i>ISSUE 1:</i>	
<p>Pending results. Many students are angry that they are still waiting results. I have raised the issue is several committees. Since the statement was issued I have signposted students to that but many of them are still quite angry.</p>	

ISSUE 2:

Face to Face Meet Ups

Quite a few students have contacted me in the hope that we can organise face to face meet ups. I have sign posted them to the OU policy but quite a few of them are contesting this as they are now back in the office, commuting and socialising. They are also questioning if this is an excuse to cancel face to face events in the future including tutorials.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Gareth Jones
ROLE:	FAR FBL
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<i>AREA 1:</i>	
<p>Inform more students about the OU Students Association</p> <p>By making use of the leaflet designed to be given to students with their module materials, students who would not receive module materials within FBL will still receive a PDF version via their AL's following agreement with all Teaching Directors and Student Experience Managers to cascade this internally.</p> <p>In addition to this, I have received agreement from the faculty to update the comms contained within the StudyHome pages so that they are all uniform, up-to-date and reflective of the brand. This was with the assistance of Heather in the DigiComms team.</p>	
<i>AREA 2:</i>	
<p>Provide more opportunities for engagement with the faculty.</p> <p>One of the most important projects that I have been involved with is the design and provision of the logistics for the upcoming FBL AL Student Conference on the 11th and 12th October. This has involved being the driving force of the steering group set up to put on the group, helping to co-ordinate the schedule and arranging the keynote speakers. Additionally, I have put together all the logistics to make this event happen.</p> <p>One of the projects that I started last year was the involvement of observers at Faculty Assemblies. Initially, this was a trial project that took advantage of the meetings being an online-only, providing the opportunity to demonstrate the benefit of this project. Consequently, I was able to provide the feedback to the Executive Dean of FBL and gain his approval for the project to become a permanent feature, including when the Assemblies have face-to-face meetings.</p>	
<i>AREA 3:</i>	
<p>Expand opportunities for other Reps to be involved in projects.</p> <p>One of my key ambitions when starting this role was to ensure that the wider pool of reps within the faculty are utilised for varying projects. This was to reduce reliance on one person for every opportunity, allowing reps to be involved in more</p>	

areas. I have had some more success in this area in this quarter, with 5 reps now agreeing to be part of the FBL Scholarship (SCiLAB) Student Advisory panel.

I have been able to provide more opportunities by including student facilitators as part of the FBL Conference, my taking different students to induction events, through the passing of opportunities to reps better placed and the continued use of Student Huddles. Additionally, the upcoming Freshers, Conference and Student Voice Week provides further opportunities in this area.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this month to ask for support on a specific issue?	100+
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ISSUE 1:

Issues surrounding results

This has included issues to do with:

- Pending Results
- Missing Results
- Incorrect Qualifications
- Milestone Qualifications

Resit Questions

ISSUE 2:

Registration Issues

This has included issues to do with:

- Fee questions – including change of residency questions
- Questions around Student Finance – Particularly around seasonal academic years
- Issues registering – Particular issue for graduate entries and credit transfer

Issue around Scotland Registrations

ISSUE 3:

Starting Study

This has included:

- Induction related questions – how to start, what to do
- Questions around tutor allocations
- Material dispatch dates
- VLE issues after module websites opened
- Print on Demand availability

Changes to referencing in the Law School

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Lucy Richardson
ROLE:	FAR OAA
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2021
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<i>AREA 1:</i>	
Submitted a proposal for a workshop for the student voice week for access and open students to get hard to reach students such as vocational and access involved in association matters, as well as raising the profile of the support functions of the university and the association.	
<i>AREA 2:</i>	
Over this period was involved in the reinforcing and enhancing of the associations embedded role in the open and access programme for future students as well as those currently involved in the programme.	
<i>AREA 3:</i>	
Continuing the ongoing efforts for greater recognition of the student association during access induction and freshers periods.	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this month to ask for support on a specific issue?	0
<i>ISSUE 1:</i>	
Full modules – raising the potential issues based on prior experience for students taking full modules after access modules being possibly unable to enter oversubscribed modules due to course dependencies meaning that students are unable to access less subscribed courses due to the limited places being assigned to named degrees over open students.	

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Nichola Connolly
ROLE:	FAR WELS
QUARTER / YEAR:	October 2020
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<i>AREA 1:</i>	
<p>Being relatively new to the role I have been finding my feet and having various meet and greet meetings with various members of staff within the faculty. I have also been put on the culture change working group and had my first meeting as well as the academic representation task and finish group whereby I have had my initial meeting.</p>	
<i>AREA 2:</i>	
<p>I have been focused on arranging sessions for fresher's fortnight whereby I have arranged a WELS drop-in session. I will be co-hosting several other sessions throughout the fortnight.</p>	
<i>AREA 3:</i>	
<p>I have had initial meetings for Student Voice Week that will be taking place the middle of November.</p>	
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?	30
<i>ISSUE 1:</i>	
<p>I have been contacted by several students about pending results and how this will affect them starting their next modules in October 21. I have forwarded these to Cinnomen McGuigan Vice President Education to follow up on. Have advised students affected that this has been done and that they will be contacted directly with the outcome.</p>	
<i>ISSUE 2:</i>	
<p>I have been contacted by students over the last week about delays with alternative formats on two specific modules. They have been advised that they may not receive these until the middle of October, or they have received normal books instead of comb bound books. I have forwarded these to Patrice Belton Vice President Equality Inclusion and Diversity to follow up on and who has a meeting to discuss this later this week.</p>	
<i>ISSUE 3:</i>	

Students are enquiring when it will be possible to be able to get back to face to face events and tutorials. I have signposted students to the statement on The Students Association page about the policy on this.