Vice President Education Report – October 2018

It has been a busy nine weeks since taking up office as Vice President Education as the University gears up for a new academic year and starts to approach the post-critical review era. The implementation of both the Academic Strategy and the Curriculum Plan agreed at Senate earlier this year has commenced which will also lead to changes. Changes and opportunities for student involvement in helping to shape the University.

Parallel to this there are Association initiatives in progress. I will be conducting a full review of student representation which will occupy a large part of the next eighteen months. I will also be working with the VP Student Voice and the rest of the team to implement those elements of the Association’s 2018-20 Strategy over the next two years. As part of this the Student Voice team is working on a project alongside the University to provide a quality standard for student engagement in University projects affecting students. One part of this involved a ‘task and finish’ day in which a group of students identified what constituted good and bad student engagement and how to recognise it.

I am part of various committees including the Academic Strategy Steering Group and the Curriculum Forum which monitors the implementation of the Academic Strategy and Curriculum Plan. I am also the student member of the working group preparing for accreditation by the Mid States Commission of Higher Education due in 2019. The criteria for this includes showing evidence of student engagement in learning and teaching and as well as my involvement a wider consultation with the Association is planned. I have also been involved, along with the President and Student Member of Council, in early discussions regarding possible OU involvement in the 2019 Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).

As well as Committee work there are other areas which occupy time and examples of these include following up my predecessor’s work on ‘pending’ exam results. Also student representative attendance at meetings where the President and I both made representations against a plan that might have led to online attendance at some committees the default option. I have also arranged a meeting to discuss the process for Association comments on withdrawals and changes to qualifications. In particular, to reinforce the idea that this should be done before these go into governance and not, as often happens, afterwards (if at all).

The Appointments Committee was assembled in early August and is currently finalising the appointment of new student members to Committees and has appointed five student volunteers to the Senate Reference Group (S R G). We are now in the good position that with the exception of the Access Board of Studies all committees have student representatives and many have a full complement.

Read more about Academic Representation on oustudents.com