Jodie Hi everyone thank you for tuning in today at the OU Students Association page. My name is Jodie and with me is Steph Stubbins who is our Vice President Community here at the Students Association. So Steph could you introduce yourself and tell us a bit about your role?

Steph Well I'm Steph and in my role I look after a lot of the community-based activities that we do, specifically residential schools, Freshers, meet-ups and we do a live community drop in session as well for students.

Jodie There's loads of different bits and pieces that we do in the community team do you have some favourites that you've done in the past?

Steph I think the society’s event which was last year was one of my favourites because I attended the first ever one when I was a brand new student so it was really exciting to be involved with the second one which I was actually helping to plan and I think setting up the big meet-ups because meet-ups have been ongoing for many years but to get one that's actually coordinated with all the other meet-ups that are happening all over the UK and beyond it’s just a really exciting feeling.

Jodie Definitely because we've got our next Big Meet-ups in February as well haven't we?

Steph February 24th.

Jodie The 24th, so that's super exciting coming up. And what about some upcoming projects? We've got that Big Meet-up but anything else that's coming up?

Steph Well we've got Conference coming up this year so as part of my remit I'm ex-officio on the Conference steering group. So we had our first meeting last weekend, yes it was. So we’re just starting the planning for that so 400 students get to come to campus and join in with the business side of the association and also some of the fun activities and get to see campus.

Jodie Yes definitely and I think also next week we’ve got our Freshers fortnight starting.

Steph We have that's the main thing we’re working on at the moment. So that will be two weeks dedicated activities and information passed out to students. We’ve got online activities such as chats, student support societies, a
community chat. There's also a lot happening on the two weeks whilst Freshers is going on so it's a chance for us to showcase what the Association does. So things like the Senate Reference Group. There's a Student Symposium. There's volunteering archiving, looking back into the Association's past. There's lots of things that are happening at the moment so you can find out more through the Association page or on our website.

Jodie Yeah and that website of course is oustudents.com and the Freshers part in particular is just /freshers at the end. So can you tell us a bit about how freshers would be useful for both new and returning students?

Steph So for returning students it's a good way to touch base with other students that are starting the same module as yourself and also to find out how other students have done on previous modules to tighten up your study skills. A lot of the time students share how they do their studies. It's also a good way to find out about careers and library and of course you've got the student support sessions so if you've got any specific needs that you might need help with you can get signposted to the right areas.

Jodie That's brilliant. So do you have any activities in particular your looking forward to over Freshers?

Steph I'm looking forward to Student Hub Live. So I'm going to be doing a session with Anca Seaton who's the Area Association Representative for England. And we'll be doing that on the 30th January at 11 a.m. and that's followed the next day by a slot of student hub life for the disabled students’ group with Sheila Cameron and Plexus with Graham Rimmer and they'll be doing that at 1 o'clock on the 31st January.*

*(Note from Steph: Just to let you know I was between meetings when I did this interview and realised I gave the wrong dates for Student Hub Live. Association slot is 11am on 31 January (with myself and Anca Seaton our Area Association Representative from England will be interviewed). Disabled Students Group/PLEXUS slot is 1pm on 1 February. Sheila Cameron who is Disabled Students Group Chair will be representing Disabled Students Group and Becky who is PLEXUS campaign officer will be representing PLEXUS (not Graham as mentioned above).

Hope to see some of you there in Student Hub Live Chat!)

Jodie Yeah that's always really exciting to watch especially with the sets and everything else going on.

Steph Definitely it's a proper set it feels like you're on Good Morning Britain.
Jodie So do you remember, so we’ve got the dates of Freshers of 22nd January to 2nd February and our first one will be the Freshers chat, so that's the welcome chat on the Monday. And then you’re going to be there aren't you?

Steph Yes it's normally a really popular one. I think it’s the best attended out of all the chats. So new and returning students, existing students please come along. Come and find out what's happening for the rest of the week on that day.

Jodie Yeah we’ll both be there so you can see us trying to get through all of your messages and everything else. That's always a fun one.

Steph And also use our hashtag, so #new2OU and that's for new students and for students that are returning #back2OU. And if you are an existing student, you’re in the middle of your module you are welcome to Freshers as well. Come and support the students that are coming back or are brand new and need a little bit more support.

Jodie That's brilliant. So how can students find out or contact you a bit more yourself?

Steph So I'm actually on Facebook because I'm not shy of social media. So Stephanie Starr-Stubbins, you can also email me on Stephanie.stubbins@open.ac.uk. And I'm quite happy to talk to any student that wants to message me.

Jodie That's brilliant. I think that's a really nice round up of what you've done and freshers that's coming up. So I think you'll be hanging around a bit so if anyone has any comments in the bottom in the comments we'll both be there to answer them. So thank you very much for joining us today and we hope you have a great day. See you.

Steph Bye.