YOU SAID, WE DID
#OUstudentsVoice

Over 2018 we provided many opportunities to hear from our members - Here's what we have to feed back!

Students said they wanted to see more colourful presentation of research, so we have made our website and reports fresh and colourful.

Students said that they should be involved in the early stages of research, so we have introduced the role of Student Voice Researcher to bring students in at the very beginning of projects.

Students said they wanted research to speak to students where they are, so we have created a Student Voice Twitter with a reach of over 800 students. During October, Freshers engaged with research questions via Twitter polls.

Students said: They should be represented by people who are able to identify and address issues affecting students in a manner that is understanding, proactive and timely.

We did: We currently have over 100 students volunteering within Academic Representation and Student Voice related roles, putting OU students at the heart of university decision making. As part of our Association strategy we have committed to work alongside the OU to develop a Code of Practice for Academic Representation, which will seek to be an agreement which enables us to offer better information about rep work and achievements to the wider student body.

Students said: There should be two-way communication between faculty and students on key issues, such as curriculum content.

We said: The Faculty Association Representatives have this at the heart of their role. The Students Association conduct Faculty specific online chats in Freshers Week, which has the possibility to extend to other times in the year. Whilst this role in particular continues to develop, there may be the possibility for module websites to include relevant FAR details, as well as the opportunity for FARs to have reserved membership on our Senate Reference Group, and to work more closely with their faculty-specific academic services teams.
You said: We should be holding the University to account and making sure it maintains the highest academic standards.
We did: The Students Association continues to hold The University to account and keep The Open University mission at its core. We have membership of many University committees /working groups that are designed to influence policy. This right is enshrined in the Student Charter and Relationship Agreement and applies to any committee whose terms of reference affect the student experience.

You said: There should be a clear agenda of what the Students Association wants to achieve, a strategy for achieving it, and a channel of communication that makes these things clear to students.
We did: Our strategy continues to shape and influence the direction of travel for the Students Association and regular updates and outcomes are brought to each of the Central Executive Committee meetings for further information and input, of which all papers are available to our members via our website.

You said: Communication strategies that recognise that not all students are ‘natural engagers’ and may value a range of channels. This could include a tutorial-type activity.
We did: It is recognised that due to the vast number of OU students, there is no one method of communicating with students. When information is sent out, all channels (email, social media, signposting to / from website and post) are utilised. We are committed to ensuring that students who do not use social media are able to access equivalent information through our website and via email. We also offer a mailing list for student who prefer to receive a digest of news via a monthly email.

You said: There is confusion about how the Students Association and academic representation works with excessive jargon and initialisms, which doesn’t encourage engagement
We did: We are aware of the confusing terminology, and this is outlined in our strategy as to remove the jargon from our roles and role descriptions. We understand that due to the complex nature of a lot of the Academic Representation related work the overall message about what we are doing and achieving can be lost. We are looking to produce clearer resources and content in the future, which includes the launch this year of the student voice bulletin, we have produced a video based on the work of the Senate Reference Group and we utilising a Student Voice Twitter account to release bite sized and digestible bits of information that relate to our work.