



**QUARTERLY
STRATEGY PERFORMANCE REPORT
DECEMBER 2021**

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SECTION A:
STRATEGIC KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
(KPIs)

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This section provides a quarterly update against the 20 strategy metrics.

Where the data collection mechanics have not yet been established and/or no new data is currently available, metric boxes have a strike through. Where data is being reported for the first time and there are no previous statistics to track movement against, this is indicated in the metric box.

Where there are previous statistics, this is displayed in the metric box along with a movement indicator.

Movement	For metrics where we are seeking to achieve upward tracking	For metrics where we are seeking to achieve downward tracking
Significant improvement	 Solid green upward arrow	 Solid green downward arrow
Moderate improvement	 Hollow green upward arrow	 Hollow green downward arrow
No change	 Amber horizontal arrow	 Amber horizontal arrow
Moderate deterioration	 Hollow red downward arrow	 Hollow red upward arrow
Significant deterioration	 Solid red downward arrow	 Solid red upward arrow


For metrics which require supporting/qualitative information (eg profiles, impact reports), the information is attached as further appendices.

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AWARENESS

Metric 1

Annual Membership Survey (AMS) - % response rate

 **2020 - 0.98%**
2021 – 2.14%
(significant improvement)

The 2021 survey received 3,883 responses representing a response rate more than double the previous year's. There were many contributing factors to this including earlier release, improved prizes, increased comms and greater support from the OU in promoting the survey.

Metric 2

Annual Membership Survey Question 8 - % of responders selecting options 1,2,3 (awareness of membership of Association)

2020 Roll-out 95.1%
2020 Soft-Launch 89.0%

No new data until full 2021 AMS analysis is available (anticipated Mar 2022)

Metric 3

Annual NSS Question 26 - % of responders selecting "N/A" (proxy for not aware)

2021 – 14.3%
2020 - Unpublished
2019 – 16.4%

No new data until 2022 NSS results are available

Metric 4

#new visitors to website & Hoot (rolling 12 month figures)

Website:

Year to Nov 2021 – 231,945
Year to Nov 2020 – 212,682
(moderate improvement)

Hoot:

Year to Nov 2021 – 17,889
Year to Nov 2020 – 10,660
(significant improvement)

Continuing improvement in website visitors year-on-year. The most visited pages in the last quarter were Freshers, the Annual Membership Survey, Totum and Shop related (discounts, past exam papers, merchandise).

The Hoot statistics are again showing a huge year-on-year growth, reflecting its growing readership and the focus on generating fresh and engaging content.

INFORM & SUPPORT

RELEVANCE

Metric 5

Service/resource usage – #students per area

[See summary on pg 6](#)

Significant improvements across the board. Of particular note are newsletter sign-ups, YouTube views and use of Peer Support & Library Support services, all indicating increases in awareness, relevance and engagement.

Metric 6

#returning visitors to website & Hoot (rolling 12 month figures)

Website:

Year to Nov 2021 – 47,136

Year to Nov 2020 – 44,033

(moderate improvement)



Hoot:

Year to Nov 2021 – 2,546

Year to Nov 2020 – 1,416

(significant improvement)



Good growth showing year-on-year in returning visitor numbers. If returning visitors are calculated as a percentage of new visitors, the figures are holding steady year-on-year, suggesting that there is still more work to do on improving the relevance of content for our members.

Metric 7

Social Media Engagements (Assoc Twitter a/c) – % of total impressions

3 months to Nov 2021 – 2.28%

3 months to Aug 2021 – 1.70%

(moderate improvement)



Increase from previous period to usual levels that run at 2 - 3%. Highest engagement on tweets about Freshers and Student Voice Week results and highest impressions on formal announcement tweets on Essay Mills and UCU strike action. President's Twitter achieved an engagement rate of 1.59% with highest impressions on formal announcements and highest engagement on messaging around Student Voice Week and starting studies.

Metric 8

Annual Membership Survey Questions 15 & 16 - % (median) of service/resource users who would recommend

From 2020 survey:

Services users – median 88%

Resources users – median 71%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Mar 2022)

Service/Resource Description	Measurement Basis	Measurements Jun 2021	Measurements Sept 2021	Measurements Dec 2021	Change
Societies	As at reporting date	23	17	17	-
Societies members	As at reporting date	7,677	7,450	7,785	Increase
Shop orders	In quarter prior to reporting date	417	468	630	Increase
Shop average order value	In quarter prior to reporting date	£35.71	£28.63	£36.67	Increase
Assoc newsletter new sign-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date	219	330	970	Increase
Assoc newsletter open rates	Average for quarter prior to reporting date	26.8%	26.3%	24.5%	Decrease
Assoc newsletter click through rates	Average for quarter prior to reporting date	2.6%	3.6%	5.2%	Increase
YouTube Video Views	In quarter prior to reporting date	2,118	1,427	2,640	Increase
TOTUM cards	For 12 months prior to reporting date	12,974	12,226	11,216	Decrease
Peer Support Users	For 12 months prior to reporting date	125	101	146	Increase
Library Support Requests	For 12 months prior to reporting date	91	98	153	Increase
Ouset successful applications – number and % of all apps	Most recent presentation/academic year	2021 E/B 9 (75%)	-	2021 J/K 52 (91%)	Increase

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ENGAGEMENT

Metric 9
 Election participation – % eligible voters taking part

Main elections:
 2020 - 1.13%
 2018 - 0.82%

By-elections:
 2020 - 0.75%
 2019 - 0.76%
 2018 - 0.51%

No new elections held since 2020 main election & by-elections


Metric 10
 Activities participation - students per activity type

[See summary on pg 8](#)

Significant improvements across the board. Of particular note are the increases in Club and Group membership, again indicating increases in awareness, relevance and engagement.

Metric 11
 Quarterly volunteering participation - volunteers active in roles and applications

Active in roles – Year on year tracking:
 3 months to Nov 2021 – average 294
 3 months to Nov 2020 – average 245
 (significant improvement)



Active in roles – month on month tracking:
 Nov 2021 – 307
 Oct 2021 – 299
 Sept 2021 – 275

Applications:
 3 months to Nov 2021 – applicants 137 (% new volunteers = 77%)
 3 months to Aug 2021 - applicants 109 (% new volunteers = 35%)

Year-on-year tracking showing good growth due to the introduction of new some volunteering roles and the expansion of existing volunteer cohorts.
 Month-on-month tracking showing a good increase due to the expansion of volunteer numbers in the Student Experience Link role.
 The previous quarter’s recruitment figures include a large response to a recruitment drive for Library Support Volunteers (82 applications, 69% from new volunteers).

Activity Description	Measurement Basis	Measurements June 2021	Measurements Sept 2021	Measurements Dec 2021	Change
DSG members	As at reporting date	674	730	795	Increase
OU Pride members	As at reporting date	641	734	841	Increase
BAME Group members (excl FaceBook)	As at reporting date	86	98	129	Increase
Clubs	As at reporting date	79	75	87	Increase
Club members	As at reporting date	11,587	11,717	14,255	Increase
Number of online events & meet-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date	51	23	40 **	Increase

** These are regular and ad-hoc online events and meet-ups - the figure excludes the 47 online events that formed the Freshers Fortnight programme

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REACH

Metric 12

Profiling of election participants

No new elections held since 2020 main election & by-elections

Metric 13

Annual profiling of engaged students

Not yet available

Metric 14

Annual profiling of active volunteers

An anonymised profile was shared in the June 2021 report for all volunteers active in roles during the period January 2020 to March 2021 which showed under-representation of younger students (35 and under), newer students (Level 1) and male students in the total volunteer cohort in comparison to the make-up of the overall OU student body.

The next stage of this work - to determine whether different types of roles show differences in demographic characteristics to the student body and volunteer cohort as a whole – is still in progress and will be shared when available.

INFLUENCE & TRANSFORM

IMPACT

Metric 15

Annual Membership Survey Question 25 - % of responders agreeing that the Association has a positive impact on their student experience

2020 Roll-out 38.4%
2020 Soft-Launch 32.1%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Mar 2022)

Metric 16

Annual NSS Question 26 - % of responders agreeing that the Association effectively represents students' academic interests

2021 – 43.4%
2020 - Unpublished
2019 – 45.0%

No new data until 2022 NSS results are available

Metric 17

Annual volunteering feedback – % volunteers identifying positive growth & development

The annual feedback survey is under development but has not yet been introduced.

Metric 18

Biennial Representation/ Service Review – % OU committee staff identifying positive student impact/influence in committees

2019 Review 82.0%
No new data available yet.

INFLUENCE & TRANSFORM

IMPACT

Metric 19

Qualitative Impact Reporting:

CEC Quarterly Impact Reports for January 2022 have been provided separately.

Appendix 2 – Central Committee Representatives - Impact Report

Appendix 3 – Library Support Volunteers - Impact Report

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

MAINTAIN AN ENABLING
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Metric 20

Annual Membership Survey Question 26 – % responders selecting 'agree' options on whether the Association is living its values

Integrity:

2020 survey – 42.3%

Equality & Inclusivity:

2020 survey – 46.1%

Openness:

2020 survey – 44.3%

Collaboration:

2020 survey – 42.7%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available
(anticipated Mar 2022)



SECTION B: STRATEGY PROJECTS UPDATES

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SECTION B1: COMPLETED PROJECTS

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Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 1A	<p>Conduct membership research and analysis.</p> <p>Workstream 1A: Develop and launch the Annual Membership Survey to gain membership feedback. The survey will provide valuable on-going data for strategic KPI tracking, provide inputs for service/activity reviews and help to inform business decision-making.</p>	<p>Workstream 1A: The AMS was piloted and then fully launched during 2020. It will be repeated in Autumn each year. This work has now been transitioned into Business-as-Usual activities and sits within the Strategy & Insights Business plan for delivery and reporting for the 2021-22 AY and on-going.</p>
Project 2	<p>Individual Representation.</p> <p>Phase 1: Identify needs, assess options and develop recommendations and funding requirements. Prepare a full business case for presentation to OU PVC-Students to seek OU funding.</p> <p>Phase 2 (subject to funding provision): Develop and implement individual representation resources and services for a fixed pilot programme period. The pilot programme will provide ‘proof of concept’ for the realisation of the benefits identified in the Phase 1 business case. It will also provide the evidence base for the development of a case to secure additional funding to allow the permanent inclusion of individual representation for students in the Association’s services portfolio.</p>	<p>Phase 1: A feasibility assessment was carried out during 2020 and a business case for funding was presented to the OU. Funding was agreed for a 15 month pilot programme, commencing at the start of the 2021-22 AY.</p> <p>Phase 2: The pilot programme was launched in August 2021 and will run until October 2022.</p>

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 4	<p>Scope of work: Map the student journey from registration through to graduation, identifying comms and engagement touchpoints where the Association can meet student needs and expectations at key stages of their journey.</p> <p>Project Required Outcome: This work will contribute to the aim of creating meaningful on-going connections and communications with OU students at all key stages in their student journey.</p>	<p>This work was completed during June 2021 and delivered comprehensive engagement and comms recommendations for six key stages in the student journey: pre-study; initial engagement; learning; end of module; results; and after study.</p> <p>These recommendations will be incorporated into future marcomms plans, commencing with the 2021-22 marcomms plan (Strategy Project #15).</p>
Project 8	<p>Stakeholder mapping & analysis:</p> <p>Workstream 8A: Stakeholder mapping exercise – identify all internal and external stakeholder groups, develop an understanding of the importance, contributions and potential impacts of each group.</p> <p>Workstream 8B: Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan. The plan will include the objectives and aims of any engagement/comms with each of the stakeholder groups and will be used to inform decisions on the choice of engagement/comms channels, comms content, timings and priorities.</p>	<p>The stakeholder mapping exercise (Workstream 8A) was completed in the Spring of 2021. Three maps were created: one for the OU Students Association; one for the OU; and one for the external stakeholder environment. On-going maintenance of the stakeholder maps has been passed across into Business-as-Usual activities.</p> <p>The work to complete initial stakeholder engagement plans (Workstream 8B) was completed during early Summer 2021. The implementation of these plans has been consolidated into the development of the 2021-22 marcomms plan (Strategy Project #15).</p>

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 11	To commission an external review of the OU Student Association governance structures and mechanisms that will result in clear and achievable recommendations for change that can lead to improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.	<p>Almond Tree Strategic Consulting were commissioned to carry out the full Governance Review and they delivered their findings report and recommendations to the Association in Spring 2021.</p> <p>The recommendations were accepted by our Board of Trustees and a draft implementation plan was produced.</p> <p>A number of student consultation activities were carried out and, building on the consultation findings and the report recommendations, a series of proposals were developed. The Board of Trustees accepted these proposals and agreed to call a Conference for 22nd and 23rd January 2022 for members to vote on whether the proposed changes should go ahead.</p> <p>The proposals have been developed into a set of resolutions and these will be voted on by members at Conference.</p>
Project 14	Develop and implement an action plan to further the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout all Association policies, activities and ways of working.	<p>The Equalities Action Plan was completed in Quarter 1, 2021.</p> <p>The requirements of the plan are being taken forward by the EDI Working Group under Business-as-Usual processes as part of a broad scope of work to advance our EDI agenda. This will also include the development of an EDI sub-strategy. The Working Group delivers quarterly updates on progress to the CEC and the BoT.</p>



SECTION B2: PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

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Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
Project 1B	GREEN	<p>Overall Scope: Improve our understanding of student needs, expectations and motivations and conduct a regular review of our services, engagement activities and communications.</p> <p>Workstream 1B: Service & Activity Reviews. Create the process for an annual service and activity review and facilitate the first such review before transitioning the process into BAU. The annual reviews will enable us to assess, on an on-going basis, the effectiveness and impact of our work and enable informed decision-making on resource allocation/prioritisation.</p>	<p>Workstream 1B: The CEC approved a proposal to delay the first annual service/ activity review until the results of the AMS roll-out were available. These results were shared with the CEC at its July meeting and further work is now underway to carry out a ‘deep dive’ on the results at a business area level.</p> <p>The first annual service review will be initiated February 2022 and will look at key services, engagement activities and communications channels. The work has now been loosely scoped and individuals involved are beginning to collect relevant data. In the first instance, we will review services and activities with regards to the following areas: equality and inclusion; participation levels; and impact.</p>

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
Project 7A	GREEN	<p>Workstream 7A – WORK IN PROGRESS: Create new communities where students can benefit from social interaction and informal mutual support.</p> <p>Workstream 7B: - WORK NOT YET STARTED Create more opportunities for students to support other students though volunteering roles that are effective and adaptable to student needs.</p>	<p>Workstream 7A was initiated in March 2021.</p> <p>Completed: Phase 1 of Test and Learn completed and reported to the project team in August 2021. An overlap of scope with work ongoing within the Digital Student Experience (DSE) programme which will deliver "MyOU" and is linked to the Core Systems Replacement (CSR) was highlighted at phase 1 wrap up, in particular the "student chat" function. A first meeting was positive about potential integration of App within MyOU. An update meeting with the Test and Learn Team and a representative from the consultancy who completed Phase 1 took place in November 2021.</p> <p>Key actions and next steps: Second meeting with DSE team scheduled for 8/12/21 to discuss in more detail the possibility of our App plugging in to MyOU as the "student chat" function. Staff Project Lead due to present to the Test and Learn Working Group on 16/12/21 to ask for support from them when applying to Digital Strategy Steering Group for funding to undertake phase 2 of the Test and Learn which includes assessment of options available and a pilot.</p> <p>Risks and Interdependencies: We are aware of delays to CSR which, should we decide to proceed with the Association App being part of the MyOU project, could make for significant delays to any progress with this project. However, the alternative option to proceed without planning to link with MyOU could be a far greater risk to the overall success of the project.</p>

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
Project 9	RED	<p>Revised Overall Scope: To develop a Representation Action Plan to support the shared goals of the Association and Open University to ensure Student Voice is effectively heard at all levels of the University to improve outcomes for students. This work will aim to remove barriers to inclusion, increase engagement.</p> <p>The action plan will: Develop, in conjunction with the OU, a shared Code of Practice for academic representation with the aim of improving the effectiveness of student voice within OU governance.</p> <p>Support the University's own Student Voice Action Plan.</p> <p>Develop shared principles for best practise and standards for Student Engagement, working with key OU stakeholders to promote the standards and embed student engagement in OU activities and projects.</p>	<p>The <i>Supporting and Improving Academic Representation Task & Finish Group</i> have met and reviewed the key documents that have a role in supporting the development of the shared Code of Practice – the Open University –OU Students Association Relationship Agreement, the OU Governance Code of Conduct and the Students Association Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement Form.</p> <p>The student engagement standard framework was presented to members of the <i>Student Voice Steering Group</i> for feedback and ideas on how to best utilise the framework. Feedback now needs to be collated and reviewed and further.</p> <p>This project has STATUS RED as we recognise that there are multiple interdependencies between the Students Association and the University and therefore some aspects of this project which we are unable to progress unilaterally. There will be a new Head of Governance joining the University in January 2022 and we will need to take time to build a relationship and understand the University's immediate priorities in this area. The Strategic Projects Assurance Group discussed and proposed an alternative approach to gain traction on progressing this project which will be discussed by the project leads – this is likely to involve reviewing the scope of the project, identifying things that could be prioritised (e.g. small things, nearly finished things, things completely within our control, etc) and to work on these whilst potentially pausing the larger interdependent aspects. The team will also consider whether to create a Code of Practice from the Association's perspective for presentation to the University.</p>

Project Number	Project	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
<p>Projects 12 & 13</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Project 12:</p> <p>Identify a model of ‘One Team’ working and produce a ‘protocol’ for student representatives and staff members identifying clear expectations.</p> <p>Communicate a ‘One Team’ message and intent, devising a ‘One Team’ action plan and designing/leading ‘One Team’ sessions and activities.</p> <p>Project 13:</p> <p>Devise an agenda that highlights, encourages and celebrates our stated values.</p>	<p>Projects combined for reporting as they are both being progressed by the Culture Working Group, alongside the Culture & Behavioural Governance recommendations.</p> <p>Following a period on pause, the Culture Working Group has now been re-initiated as the Culture Change Working Group with an expanded membership and an agreed Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The Working Group have created an action plan to implement the recommendations from the original Culture Review conducted by Pecan, alongside the culture and behavioural governance recommendations from the Governance Review conducted by Almond Tree.</p> <p>The Working Group will provide progress updates via future Strategy Performance Reports.</p>

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
<p>Project 15 (additionally incorporating Projects 5 & 6)</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Overall Scope: Develop Comms Strategy and Marcomms Plan.</p> <p>Part 1: Develop Association Communications Strategy in same format as other enabling strategies (Volunteering & Research) incorporating aims (linked to strategic aims), objectives and measures of success.</p> <p>Part 2: Develop Marcomms Planning Tool by merging comms matrix work to date with stakeholder engagement outputs from Project #8. Planning tool to identify external/OU/membership audiences, audience comms objectives, audience messaging themes and channels/timing considerations.</p> <p>Part 3: Develop Association Marcomms Plan for 2021-22 AY with clearly identified actions, responsibilities/accountabilities and monitoring/evaluation mechanisms.</p> <p>This project incorporates the two further strategy projects that were initially separately scoped: Project #5 (the development of a Student Engagement Value Statement) Project #6 (working with OU principal stakeholders to promote, sign-post and support the Association.)</p>	<p>Part 1: Complete</p> <p>Part 2: Complete</p> <p>Part 3: Complete</p> <p>Project 5 – Work has begun on an Engagement Value Statement for the Association. A draft statement exists that the project team are reviewing and expect to finalise in the New Year.</p> <p>Project 6 – Requirements for working with OU stakeholders to help to promote, sign-post and support the work of the Association have been incorporated into the 2021-22 Marcomms Plan.</p>



SECTION B3: PROJECTS NOT YET STARTED

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Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Notes
Project 3	<p>Scope: Implement a student support resource library.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to expand our student support services through partnerships with external service providers, support agencies and societies.</p>	<p>Within Business-as-Usual activities two mini-hubs have been created - one for EDI resources and one for individual representation resources – and scoping work has been carried out on the development of a broader Association-wide resources hub for use by students, volunteers and staff.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the development of a full resources library/hub will be considered as a development opportunity within the new website.</p>
Project 10	<p>Workstream A: Establish a process for authorising, funding, supporting and running campaigns.</p> <p>Workstream B: Produce a manifesto for life-long learning.</p>	<p>Workstream A: Currently no specified start date.</p> <p>Workstream B: This workstream will be initiated in February 2022, with the aim to complete the production of the manifesto during the current academic year. Four student consultation sessions will be carried out at Conference exploring different aspects of life-long learning (Finance, Inclusivity, Digital Connectivity and Sustainability) to provide initial student voice input for the project.</p>



**SECTION C:
BUSINESS PLANS UPDATES**

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Chief Executive	<p>We have made swift progress on Conference planning.</p> <p>The Audit has been completed with no adverse findings. Re-rendering of auditors is nearing completion and award at the time of writing.</p> <p>The proposals for the implementation of the Governance Review recommendations were approved and are moving forward.</p> <p>The staff blended working trial is operational as of 15 Nov and we're continuing to log feedback and monitor the wider issues around us in terms of Covid.</p> <p>I was invited to present at the internal OU professional services staff event on our approach to supporting team wellbeing and communication.</p>	<p>The OUSET strategy has not advanced as quickly as hoped and remains a little way off finalisation.</p> <p>Recruitment for some staff roles is tricky, with a challenging market in the sector right now and this has been most notable for our Policy and Public Affairs Manager role where we have brought in support from a recruitment agency.</p> <p>The developing Covid situation remains of real concern. The lack of a University position on student face to face meetings is an issue for our approach and consistency.</p> <p>Staff engagement survey not developed and introduced yet, due to workload pressures for the team.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Director of Membership Services	<p>New Values and Behaviour Policy approved and live.</p> <p>New complaints procedure approved, staff training arranged to allow launch 2022.</p> <p>Case management system reviewed by myself and Amy to enhance our management of individual rep cases and complaints cases.</p> <p>New CEC member joined us in the role of STEM FAR following co-option panel.</p>	<p>There continues to be a high level of complaints, many of which are difficult to ascertain resolution and which require further investigation.</p> <p>There continues to be a range of undesirable behaviour between students in online spaces, more work needed to spread cultural change and improve behaviours in our spaces.</p> <p>No applications for Ireland or Scotland AAR – further work needed.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Director of Engagement	<p>The new communications strategy was approved at the last CEC meeting, and work on the other elements of Project 15 are nearing completion. The Comms Matrix is now complete and being used to populate the Comms Plan, which will be delivered in the very near future.</p> <p>The International Distance Learning Student Forum (IDLSF) was launched and held its first meeting in November 2021, where student leaders and staff from the Students Association and Athabasca came together to discuss the topic of ‘community building’ and share best practice and innovations. The meeting was well attended and the feedback has been very positive. This will hopefully be a permanent quarterly fixture, with the next meeting due to take place in February 2022.</p> <p>Furthermore, I have led on the data elements of the new website development and supported the DigiComms team to progress the build towards the intended launch date.</p>	<p>The main issue at the current time is that we have been unable to recruit a new Policy & Public Affairs Manager, meaning that I am still stretching myself across both remits. We are currently in the process of our third attempt to find an appropriate candidate, this time through an external recruiter.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Community	<p>It has been a busy few months in the Community Team, with the biggest highlight being welcoming our new Projects Officer into the team. One of her first projects is to begin a Clubs review which will have a wide-ranging scope, considering the requirements to be an affiliated club, our guidelines for clubs and the support we offer.</p> <p>Freshers in September was a huge success with fantastic levels of engagement. Planning is well underway for January Freshers.</p> <p>We were pleased to be involved in Student Voice Week this year, although it would have been good to have had a better turn out at our sessions.</p> <p>We're looking forward to some festive events including the OU Festive Bake Off.</p> <p>Another highlight of the previous quarter has been the launch of a new series of events – Student Insights – working with members of the EDI working group.</p>	<p>We continue to be working at full capacity within the team with very little ability to take on additional work. Prioritisation remains important for all of us.</p> <p>We have also had to give significant time and attention to issues with a small number of societies and clubs.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Digital Comms	<p>Three brilliant staff members joined us in October and really hit the ground running with their work. Many thanks to the students who made them feel so welcome, offered advice, and answered questions about their roles during their induction period.</p> <p>The soft launch of the new website is looking positive. Big thanks to the students who have been involved as part of the working group and gave feedback and input on crucial decisions.</p>	<p>Though we now have more capacity in the team, with the new website, Conference, Freshers, the 50th anniversary, elections and more on the horizon, it would be fair to say that the Digi Comms team will continue to be busy. Forward-planning will be crucial to make sure we are not overloaded, so as much notice as possible on communications needs would be very much appreciated.</p> <p>Our regular analytics reporting has been affected by website work. We are hoping to return to generating and circulating monthly reports in the new year.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
EDI & Student Welfare	<p>We are seeing a huge increase in Group applications across the board and suspect this is a direct result of the Association leaflet being sent in module packs.</p> <p>We are also seeing a huge number of Library Study requests coming through from students in prison and have gone over the 250 mark (we've had 26 in November alone).</p> <p>Engagement with the Disabled Students Group (DSG) Election so far has been really good as we've got a good number of candidates, many of whom are new names to us.</p> <p>Peer Support recruitment is open and we have made some changes to the role description that will hopefully encourage applications from volunteers who are able to commit fully to the Service.</p>	<p>Volunteer retention continues to be a problem as we have lost another Peer Supporter.</p> <p>We are recruiting again as Sammi departs for maternity leave again at the end of January.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Executive Support & Staff Welfare	<p>Our biggest achievement this quarter has been the recruitment and induction of 8 new starters. All new starters have settled in really well and have commented on how friendly the Association has been and how welcomed they have felt. This is a credit to both staff and students for making their induction periods so successful.</p> <p>The BoT and CEC meetings both ran well and to time, despite busy agendas. The December CEC is looking to be quieter so Saturday afternoon will comprise of a session surrounding the Association’s 50th plans and presenting the ideas the working group have come up with so far.</p> <p>Our team continues to promote wellbeing and a happy working environment with coffee catch ups, happy half hours and other social events scheduled. We also attend the Mental Health Champions meeting every 6 weeks to monitor ways of improvement.</p>	<p>The Association is going through an extremely busy period with Conference planning, 50th Anniversary preparations, Governance Review and the various committee meetings. This has resulted in a lack of engagement with our social events. We have been struggling to get 50% attendance to the happy half hours, but we hope that when we recommence them after Conference, we will see more staff attending and engaging with these events.</p> <p>We have also found it hard to maintain CEC observers once their place has been confirmed. Despite the regular communication, we have found that some students don’t respond any further and we then have fewer observers attending the CEC meetings.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Finance & Resources	<p>The audit of the 2020-21 accounts was completed in September and Trustees approved the financial statements at their meeting in October. We are proud to report that for the second year running, the auditor had no recommendations to make or control weaknesses to report.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Finance Resources and Risk Committee (FRR) were approved by the Board in October and the Committee held its first meeting in November. It reviewed the Association’s financial activity and position, as well as agreeing a process for the review of the remuneration policy for the President and Deputy President ahead of the next elections.</p> <p>We are now in the final year of our current contract for audit services. An invitation to tender was issued in October to 11 firms and we received 7 proposals. The FRR shortlisted 3 firms to interview. An appointment recommendation will be made to Trustees on 7 December.</p> <p>Finance related Conference business papers have been drafted, as well as governance reform related changes to the Bye-Laws.</p>	<p>The consultation on proposed reforms to future benefits in the USS pension scheme is underway. The outcome will see our Pension Deficit Recovery provision between £1.3m and £2.0m (currently £418k). This is a very long term liability that presents a risk to our reserves policy and reported net assets position on the balance sheet. It will however only impact the cash balance should the OU not fully fund our core costs going forward, of which pension contributions are part.</p> <p>There are early indications of an underspend against budget for 2021-22. There is an opportunity therefore to consider re-allocating surplus funds to other areas of our strategic plan, adding capacity and other resource to support delivery.</p> <p>Necessarily, progress in some areas of our business plan has slowed whilst we have been establishing the FRR, working on the audit tender process and preparing business papers for Conference.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Operations	<p>Successful processing and completion of the 21J and 21K module presentations where all service deadlines were met.</p> <p>New OUSET funding criteria have been introduced and implemented in October in time for the new module presentations in 2022.</p> <p>Following the stock take and annual audit, the stock levels have been gradually replenished. There is more stock to come in the near future.</p> <p>Setting up of the new systems, policies and procedures in underway to prepare the service for the return of face-to-face events in 2022.</p> <p>The Ops Team has welcomed back Ryan Cragg. He will be temporarily supporting the team during the busy periods of work.</p>	<p>The team continues to explore the option to move the online trading services to the new provider (MSL). There are still some service integration issues that need to be worked-out and quoted for before a final decision is made.</p> <p>Close monitoring over the next year is needed to measure the impact of changes recently implemented to OUSET’s funding criteria and its funding policies.</p> <p>Number of contingencies is needed to make sure the return to face to face events is properly managed and safe.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Policy & Public Affairs (P&PA)	<p>I have relied on good relationships with OU's Government & External Affairs and nations P&PA teams to stay aware of ongoing activity within the university, but have had very limited capacity to pursue opportunities.</p>	<p>As the P&PA Manager role has not yet been filled, there has been very limited capacity to focus on policy and public affairs activity. The vacancy was advertised twice and not filled and so is now with an external recruiter.</p> <p>Furthermore, there were no applications for the Ireland and Scotland AAR roles in recent co-option efforts, which compounds the lack of a P&PA Manager when trying to develop activity within the nations.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Strategy & Insight	<p>The 2021 Annual Membership Survey (AMS) was live from 1st November to 12th December and received a great response from members – 3,883 surveys were completed, representing a 2.14% response rate, more than double the response rate to the 2020 AMS (0.98%).</p> <p>Many of our Strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – including our awareness and engagement levels - are showing positive upward trends for 2021 which are reflected in the AMS response results.</p> <p>We have been able to continue to showcase our strategy achievements to our members (through the quarterly performance report) and to the OU (through regular reports to Council and the OU Senior Team).</p> <p>We have supported the planning and delivery of the annual Student Voice Week event, which this year saw a much expanded programme of c80 online events for students, we continue to support the Governance Reforms implementation and we have completed further analysis of the 2020 AMS and the 2021 NSS.</p>	<p>The prioritisation of the planning, delivery and analysis of the Governance Reforms consultations, along with the initiation of conference planning activities, has necessitated the re-prioritisation and re-scheduling of some of the development activities in our Business Plan. These include the Strategy Review, KPI benchmarking and target setting and exploration of the development of a Community of Strategy & Insight Practice.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Volunteering & Representation	<p>The team is now working at full capacity after the addition of two new members Emily Cox and Danielle Cafearo. This will tackle the issue of capacity which has been persistent over the past months.</p> <p>We are already witnessing the benefits of being a full team as different ideas and suggestions on improving the way we do things are being implemented.</p> <p>Additionally, we were able to support with the organising of Student Voice Week and the recruitment of student volunteers for several roles including central committee rep, shop student committee member, peer supporters and co-option of the three vacant student leadership roles.</p>	<p>The two main challenges are recruitment and retention across the various volunteering roles. There is an immediate need to understand why these two issues continue to present themselves across various roles.</p> <p>This has led to allocating more resource and time to open more rounds of recruitment for several volunteer roles which has inadvertently eaten into time and effort on other projects and work strands.</p>



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