QUARTERLY
STRATEGY PERFORMANCE REPORT
MARCH 2022

SECTION A:
STRATEGIC KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

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	G — Solid green upward arrow	G — Solid green downward arrow
Moderate improvement	G — Hollow green upward arrow	G — Hollow green downward arrow
No change	A — Amber horizontal arrow	A — Amber horizontal arrow
Moderate deterioration	R — Hollow red downward arrow	R — Hollow red upward arrow
Significant deterioration	R — Solid red downward arrow	R — Solid red upward arrow

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

OU Students ASSOCIATION

INFORM & SUPPORT

AWARENESS

Metric 1

Annual Membership Survey (AMS) - % response rate

2021 – 2.14%
2020 - 0.98%

No new data until 2022 results are available

Metric 2

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

R 2021 – 91.8%
2020 - 95.1%
(moderate deterioration)

The underlying data shows that the proportion of first year students completing the survey has increased significantly (2021 38% vs 2020 14%) which is likely to have impacted overall awareness levels.

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2020 - Unpublished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 Feb 2022 – 210,777
Year to Feb 2021 – 220,162
R (moderate deterioration)

Hoot:
Year to Feb 2022 – 16,298
Year to Feb 2021 – 14,941
G (significant improvement)

New visitors to the website have reduced slightly year-on-year – this is the first time we have seen a dip in the year-on-year figures and work is underway to see if there are any identifiable underlying causes. The most visited pages in the last quarter (based on access to the new website) were Freshers, Events and Clubs & Societies.

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

INFORM & SUPPORT

RELEVANCE

Metric 5

Service/resource usage – #students per area

See summary on pg 6

Many of the services are showing a quarterly decrease, but these are in line with normal seasonal fluctuations.
Video views and TOTUM Cards are the two metrics showing longer term declines, Peer Support and Library Support use are showing longer term upward trends.

Metric 6

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

Website:
Year to Feb 2022 – 42,965
Year to Feb 2021 – 47,494
(moderate deterioration)

Hoot:
Year to Feb 2022 – 1,889
Year to Feb 2021 – 2,350
(significant deterioration)

Website returning visitors have dipped in line with the dip in new visitors. Although the Hoot year-on-year growth is still healthy, an underlying slowing of growth in new & returning visitors has been identified and is being investigated further.

Metric 7

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

3 months to Feb 2021 – 1.7%
3 months to Nov 2021 – 2.28%
(moderate deterioration)

These are disappointing engagement levels in a quarter that includes December (where we typically see high engagement with festive and social content) and January (which included conference). Tweets that saw the highest impressions and engagement were on Christmas, Conference and Pride Month.

Metric 8

Annual Membership Survey Questions 14 & 15 - % (median) of service/resource users who would recommend to other students

Services users:
2021 median - 91%
2020 median - 88%
(moderate improvement)

Resources users
2021 median - 93%
2020 median - 71%
(significant improvement)

Of note are the recommend levels for our OU Pride Group (96%), our Online events and meet-ups (96%) and our BAME Group (99%).

Service/Resource Description	Measurement Basis	Sept 2021	Dec 2021	Mar 2022	Quarterly Change	Year-on-Year Change
Societies	As at reporting date	17	17	17	No change	Decrease
Societies members	As at reporting date	7,450	7,785	7,887	Increase	Increase
Shop orders	In quarter prior to reporting date	468	630	282	Decrease	Decrease
Shop average order value	In quarter prior to reporting date	£28.63	£36.67	£35.43	Decrease	Increase
Assoc newsletter new sign-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date	330	970	275	Decrease	Decrease
Assoc newsletter open rates	Average for quarter prior to reporting date	26.3%	24.5%	22.3%	Decrease	Decrease
Assoc newsletter click through rates	Average for quarter prior to reporting date	3.6%	5.2%	3.7%	Decrease	No change
YouTube Video Views	In quarter prior to reporting date	1,427	2,640	2,270	Decrease	Decrease
TOTUM cards	For 12 months prior to reporting date	12,226	11,216	10,828	TDecrease	Decrease
Peer Support Users	For 12 months prior to reporting date	101	146	135	Decrease	Increase
Library Support Requests	For 12 months prior to reporting date	98	153	131	Decrease	Increase
OUSET successful applications – number and % of all apps	Most recent presentation/academic year	-	2021 J/K 52 (91%)	-	-	# Increase % Increase

ENGAGE & INVOLVE

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](#)

We are currently unable (at time of measure) to add new group members via our new website. In the year-on-year comparison (Mar 2021 to Mar 2022), support group membership has grown by an average of 30% and clubs membership has grown by 24%.

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

Active in roles – Year on year tracking:
3 months to Feb 2022 – average 319
3 months to Feb 2021 – average 246
(significant improvement)
G

Active in roles – month on month tracking:
Feb 2022 – 305
Jan 2022 – 305
Dec 2021 – 347

Applications:
3 months to Feb 2022 – applicants 74 (% new volunteers = 78%)
3 months to Nov 2021 - applicants 137 (% new volunteers = 77%)

Year-on-year tracking showing good growth due to the introduction of some new volunteering roles and the expansion of existing volunteer cohorts.

Month-on-month tracking showing a reduction in active volunteers due to a reduction in Central Committee volunteers and the expiry of a number of Meet Up Host roles.

The previous quarter's recruitment figures are for a number of student voice roles and show we are still extending our reach to new volunteers.

Activity Description	Measurement Basis	Sept 2021	Dec 2021	Mar 2022	Quarterly Change	Year-on-Year Change
Disabled Students Group members	As at reporting date	730	795	795	No change	Increase
OU Pride members	As at reporting date	734	841	841	No change	Increase
BAME Group members (excl FaceBook)	As at reporting date	98	129	129	No change	Increase
Clubs	As at reporting date	75	87	88	Increase	Increase
Club members	As at reporting date	11,717	14,255	14,264	Increase	Increase
Number of online events & meet-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date **	23	40	27	Decrease	Decrease

** These are regular and ad-hoc online events and meet-ups - the figures exclude online events that form part of our Freshers Fortnight programmes

ENGAGE & INVOLVE

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 28 - % of responders agreeing that the Association has a positive impact on their student experience

2021 – 52.6%
2020 – 47.6%
(moderate improvement)

In both surveys, around a quarter of responders selected 'not sure' to this question. The percentages above are from the three quarters of responders who did express a distinct view. This shows positive improvement but is still a relatively low performance for our core mission.

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 – see separate paper 04/22/01

Appendix 2 - Central Committee Representatives' Quarterly Impact Report

Appendix 3 – Individual Representation Impact Report

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

MAINTAIN AN ENABLING ORGANISAITONAL CULTURE

Metric 20

Annual Membership Survey Question 29 – % responders selecting 'agree' options on whether the Association is living its values.

In both surveys, around a third of responders selected 'not sure' to this question. The percentages below are from the two thirds of responders who did express a distinct view.

INTEGRITY:
2021 – 68.5%, 2020 – 68.5% (no change)

EQUALITY & INCLUSIVITY:
2021 – 72.1%, 2020 – 71.5% (moderate improvement)

OPENNESS:
2021 – 70.5%, 2020 – 69.6% (moderate improvement)

COLLABORATION:
2021 – 68.9%, 2020 – 69.4% (moderate deterioration)

KINDNESS & COMPASSION:
2021 – 71.6% (first time measurement)

Movements are minor (all less than 1%) between the 2020 survey and the 2021 survey.

SECTION B:
STRATEGY PROJECTS UPDATES

SECTION B1:
COMPLETED PROJECTS

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 1A	**Conduct membership research and analysis**. **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.	**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.
Project 2	**Individual Representation.** **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. **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.	**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. **Phase 2:** The pilot programme was launched in August 2021 and will run until October 2022.

OU Students ASSOCIATION

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 4	**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. **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.	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. These recommendations will be incorporated into future marcomms plans, commencing with the 2021-22 marcomms plan (Strategy Project #15).
Project 8	**Stakeholder mapping & analysis:** **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. **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.	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. 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).

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.	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. The recommendations were accepted by our Board of Trustees and a draft implementation plan was produced. 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. The proposals have been developed into a set of resolutions and these will be voted on by members at Conference.
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.	The Equalities Action Plan was completed in Quarter 1, 2021. 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.

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Project Final Update
Project 15, additionally incorporating Project 5 and Project 6	**Overall Scope: Develop Comms Strategy and Marcomms Plan.** **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. **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. **Part 3: Develop Association Marcomms Plan for 2021-22 AY** with clearly identified actions, responsibilities/accountabilities and monitoring/evaluation mechanisms. 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.)	**Part 1:** The Communications Strategy was completed in July 2021 and runs through to the end of the 2022-23 academic year. **Part 2:** The Marcomms planning tool was completed in October 2021 and will be regularly maintained vis business-as-usual processes. **Part 3:** The Marcomms Plan for 2021-22 was completed in November 2021 and is now operational. The development of an annual Marcomms plan will now form part of annual business-as-usual planning processes. **Project 5** The engagement value statement was completed during March 2022 and will be published via the 'Get Involved' section of the website. **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.

SECTION B2:
PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
Project 1B	GREEN	**Overall Scope:** Improve our understanding of student needs, expectations and motivations and conduct a regular review of our services, engagement activities and communications. **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 infirmed decision-making on resource allocation/prioritisation.	**Workstream 1B:** **Completed:** Services have been identified for the review, as well as teams and staff contacts to be involved. Membership Services Team members and Managers are aware of the review, and their role in this. A planning session with Strategy and Insights team is booked, and an away day pencilled into the diary. **Key actions and next steps:** • Planning for away day • Teams to complete process mapping • Work with Strategy Team for how this will feed into the strategy review and recommendations to CEC based on operational findings **Risks and Interdependencies:** Large projects such as Elections, 50th planning and Freshers will always impact staff capacity, the planning had taken this into consideration.

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Update (PLEASE ALSO SEE SEPARATE CEC PAPER 04/22/08 FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THIS PROJECT)
Project 7A	GREEN	**Workstream 7A – WORK IN PROGRESS:** Create new communities where students can benefit from social interaction and informal mutual support. **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.	**Workstream 7A** was initiated in March 2021. **Completed:** Phase 1 of Test and Learn Business Case to OU's Digital Strategy Steering Group (DSSG) approved May 2021, completed and reported to the project team August 2021. An overlap of scope with work ongoing within the Digital Student Experience (DSE) programme which will deliver "MyOU" was highlighted at phase 1 wrap up. In particular, the "student chat" function. It is unlikely that we will receive further funding from Test and Learn as their criteria are now more stringent. Meetings with DSE team had been positive about potential integration of an Association run Student Chat Platform within MyOU. However, at our latest meeting, the team indicated that the timeframe for introducing this might be upwards of two years. This is prohibitive for the Association, for something which many students identify as missing for them within the student community - students need a safe and user-friendly space to communicate with one another. A decision has been taken for the Association to pursue our own pilot. Two project team members met with representatives from Athabasca to hear about their experience running an App which has a popular student-student chat function. Lots of their learnings are relevant. The Association Project Group met for the first time in early March. **Key actions and next steps:** • Investigate potential providers and get costings • Decide on provider • Secure funding from appropriate funding stream **Risks and Interdependencies:** • We will stay in close contact with the DSE/MyOU team as there is still a significant interrelationship between the aims of the projects . • We will need to arrange single sign on for whichever platform we choose to use.

Project Number	Project Status	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
Project 9	AMBER	**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. **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. Support the University's own Student Voice Action Plan. 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.	There have not been any updates on the student engagement standard framework due to other work strands that needed to be prioritised and stakeholder's busy schedules. We are looking to meet this week to start looking at actions from feedback provided by members of the student voice steering group . The Supporting and Improving Academic Representation Task & Finish group met last week and one of the items on the agenda was consideration on next steps for starting the work on creating code of practice. I shared the available framework of the code of practice for members to go through in preparation for discussions at the next meeting. We are currently supporting the working group with identifying barriers to communication between student reps and the student body. We have been tasked with providing guidance for student representatives on how to respond to other students on updates they cannot share, additionally we have also been tasked to produce guidance for student reps on how to ask committee staff members for timelines on when updates will be communicated to the wider student body. A decision was made for the team to start drafting an association version of a code of Practice which we would then be able to share with the Task and finish group This project has STATUS AMBER as there are still some interdependencies between the Students Association and the University and therefore still some aspects of this project which we are will find difficult to progress on a unilateral timeline.

Project Number	Project	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
Project 10B	GREEN	**Workstream 10A:** **WORK NOT YET STARTED** Establish a process for authorising, funding, supporting and running campaigns. **Workstream 10B:** **WORK IN PROGRESS** Produce a manifesto for life-long learning.	**Workstream B:** This work is commencing during March 2022. Expressions of interest in joining the project team were sought from CEC members and staff during January and February 2022, and the project team has now been formed. Four student consultation sessions were carried out during Conference exploring four different aspects of life-long learning: - Student Finance - Inclusivity - Digital World Connectivity - Sustainability The student input gathered during these sessions will form part of the evidence base to support the creation of manifesto content.

Project Number	Project	Project Scope / Description	Project Update
Projects 12 & 13	GREEN	**Project 12:** Identify a model of 'One Team' working and produce a 'protocol' for student representatives and staff members identifying clear expectations. Communicate a 'One Team' message and intent, devising a 'One Team' action plan and designing/leading 'One Team' sessions and activities. **Project 13:** Devise an agenda that highlights, encourages and celebrates our stated values.	This is the Culture Change Working Group's (CCWG) first formal update about these two projects. The CCWG was reformed with revised membership and Terms of Reference in September 2021. We had a break over Christmas and Conference so have not been able to progress as much as we would have liked. **Project 12** One of the Culture Review's recommendations was 'Build Consistent Collaboration' and within this we have been considering how we can further the 'one team' ethos. • An infographic has been created to highlight how the Board of Trustees, Central Executive Committee and Staff team work together as 'one team' • As part of this work we have created an accessibility standards working group to ensure that everyone understands how we work together to create collaboration and inclusion in all areas of work. **Project 13** • The CCWG sponsored and supported the creation of the Values and Behaviours policy • Work is currently ongoing to campaign for the awareness of the policy • A slide is now presented at the beginning of every online event reminding participants of our values and expectations of behaviour – this has correlated with a decrease in complaints related to events.

SECTION B3:
PROJECTS NOT YET STARTED

Project Number	Project Scope / Description	Notes
Project 3	**Scope:** **Workstream A:** Implement a student support resource library. **Workstream B:** Explore opportunities to expand our student support services through partnerships with external service providers, support agencies and societies.	**Workstream A:** 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. It is anticipated that the development of a full resources library/hub will be considered as a development opportunity for the new website. **Workstream B:** It is likely that any requirements for this work to be conducted will be determined by the outcomes of the annual service review (Project 1B).

SECTION C:
BUSINESS PLANS UPDATES

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Chief Executive	Conference was successfully delivered, thanks to the excellent coordination by the Conference Project Manager and the efforts of all staff, reps and volunteers. The Association's Articles have been revised in line with the approved changes from Conference and were ratified by the OU's Council too. Our blended working trial is re-starting. Trustees intend to return to face to face meetings as of April/May. We will be commencing work on a policy/position on future face to face student activities. The OU Students Educational Trust (OUSET) strategy has been approved.	We're bidding for continuation of the individual representation service at present. Recruitment remains an issue in some areas. Culture and behaviour issues are a significant risk to reputation and wellbeing. Reputational risk around media interest in certain aspects of club, society and group affiliation also remains.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Director of Membership Services	Several projects are underway with the support of a range of different students, this includes the Accessibility Standards Working Group who are focused on ensuring we all understand what we can do to ensure that student's accessibility needs are met and we focus on creating a welcoming and inclusive space for all. The new Resolving and Settling Differences Policy went live 8 March 2022, and with it brings more opportunities to deal with complaints informally before the requirement for formal investigations.	A range of confidential issues have been causing capacity issues which have led to some pieces of work to stall. It is important for us to put behind us some of the disagreements (which have never been personal) related to the governance review to decide how we best proceed together in implementing what students want and to expand on our growing engagement and reach.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Director of Engagement	The International Distance-Learning Student Forum (IDLSF) has helped to strengthen the partnership with colleagues in Athabasca after a successful second meeting in February with an increase in attendance on the first meeting. Further links have been made with Canadian colleagues to better understand their experience of developing an app. December and January saw the Association deliver the first ever formal campaigns on the Governance Reform resolutions that would be voted on at conference. Several opportunities were created for those who were *for* and *against* to share their views, and both campaigns conducted themselves well. This could hopefully be a campaign model ahead of future Conferences. The new OU Students Association website was launched in December after a huge amount of work from the Digi Comms team and an amazing team effort across the whole staff team. There were inevitable teething issues, but these have now been mostly overcome and the general feedback on the functionality and presentation is overwhelmingly positive.	The main issue at the current time is that we have been unable to recruit a Policy & Public Affairs lead, meaning that I am still stretching myself across both remits. After several rounds of recruitment over the last few months, we are conducting interviews at the end of March and hope to appoint shortly afterward.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Community	Another busy few months in the Community Team. We are pleased to have two big events – Conference and Freshers under our belts and we are proud of the contribution our team made to those events. Freshers once again saw fantastic collaboration between our volunteers, groups, clubs and societies all coming together to welcome students to our organisation. The Clubs Review is underway, and recommendations are being considered following stakeholder interviews, a focus group and a survey. We are pleased to have supported Area Reps to send a further Welsh newsletter, alongside a photo competition and we are excited about the recently launched International Students Newsletter. Another highlight was our involvement in the Student Insights event during Conference, which was a great chance to work with our colleagues, both staff and students from the Equality Diversity & Inclusivity (EDI) working group. We are also thrilled that our University Challenge Team made it through to the televised rounds of the show and we look forward to watching them on our screens in July.	Issues with a small number of societies and clubs continue to be a challenge for us, but we hope the Clubs Review will help with those challenges.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Digital Comms	It's been a very busy few months for the Digital Communications team. The new website launched in December 2021 and has been well-received by students and staff alike, with common feedback being that it is now far easier to navigate around to find things, and generally looks more modern and welcoming. The Association's key dates, campaigns and activities for 2022 have been logged in various comms-planning documents used by the OU Marcomms unit. This should help us receive more support in promoting our messaging to students. A new podcast is underway, featuring the President and other student hosts, aiming to mark the Association's 50th by discussing various important topics over multiple episodes to be recorded and released throughout the year. Also, work is progressing on the creation and delivery of a version of The Hoot for students in secure environments. There will also be a mechanism for students in secure environments to share their stories, which will then be published on The Hoot's website. Overall, the range of content on The Hoot has continued to diversify. Important topics such as neurodiversity, motivation and mental health are now well-represented. In addition to this, a new content series, known as 'All About…' launched recently, allowing for a deep dive into various aspects of Association and OU activity. The team continues to support on an array of projects and working groups, including the elections, accessibility, and Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI).	There were slight teething issues with the site as we not only got to grips with a new website but an entirely new system underpinning it – the majority of which have since been resolved. We are cognisant of the fact that this is all part of moving to a new platform, and as we get used to it issues will be easier to resolve and avoid in the first place. The Digi Comms team will act as the liaison between staff/students and our developers going forward. Our regular analytics reporting continues to be affected by website work, but we are hoping to resume normal service in the very near future.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
EDI & Student Welfare	We are back up to a full team with Tom Mitchell joining us as Sammi Wight's maternity cover in January. Our Library Study Volunteer requests have hit over 300! We have new Committees for our Disabled Students Group and Black Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) Students Group - both were oversubscribed during election/co-option. We decided to co-opt for the BAME Committee (their elections will be at the end of this year) but we saw significantly higher engagement levels with co-option (12 applicants) than last years election (4 applicants). Work continues to progress with the Culture Change and Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Working Groups. The EDI Strategy is in progress and we hope to have this ready to share with you all soon.	We were unable to receive Group membership applications from mid December – March and therefore numbers have not increased. Peer Support onboarding continues to be a long process that we are looking at ways to try and simplify.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Executive Support & Staff Welfare	In the last quarter we have had four successful inductions; Tom Mitchell (Projects Officer, Equality Diversity & Inclusion), Charlotte Stone (Student Advice Admin Assistant), Samantha Smeraglia (Strategy and Insight Assistant) and most recently, Gemma Dorrity (Head of Operations) who is covering Magda Hadrys whilst she is on maternity leave. We changed the format of the inductions and have had positive feedback as a result. December Central Executive Committee (CEC) ran well and the social was also a success. A Taskmaster style session was run on the Friday and the change from the quizzes seemed to be a welcomed change. We have recently started an Improving Recruitment project, whereby an engaging and informative application pack and recruitment video will be created. A workshop was run alongside Digi Comms and there was lots of discussion and some great ideas came out of it. We hope that these new pieces of content will increase our application numbers for our vacancies.	Planning for July CEC has started although it has thrown up some difficulties from the offset. Due to the majority of hotels in Milton Keynes already having the majority of the summer months taken up by weddings and other large-scale events such as the women's Euros, finding a venue has been hard. I have been liaising with an external company to help me in this search. We think we have a venue, but I am waiting for confirmation before it is announced. The CEC observer role went live two weeks ago and we have a lack of interest in the role again. We are hoping that with the introduction of live reporting at April CEC, students might be more interested to observe and see what happens at the meetings.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Finance & Resources	All members of the team have been busy supporting Association wide projects including the culture project, the website implementation, blended working arrangements, conference and the 50th anniversary plans. Alongside this and the cyclical nature of business as usual work, we have completed our Societies database that gathers all the information about our Societies in one place to help us and the Community team better administer and support Societies with their affiliation requirements. We have also created a log of all our contracts and regular payment to help support planning and forecasting.	Managing ongoing issues with our finance software is time consuming and frustrating. There are likely to be budget implications as we may need to procure external technical support to resolve these and help us to find a longer term solution more suited to blended working and with future proofing.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Operations	The OU Students Educational Trust (OUSET) Strategy 2022-2025 has been officially approved and adopted by the OUSET Trustees during their meeting on Wednesday, 2nd March. Following the recent announcement about the return of facet-to-face graduation, the work is now underway to reinstate the presence of the Association and OU Students Shop at these events. Scoping out a project to move the e-commerce platform to the new supplier has been concluded. The final decision has been taken to remain with the existing supplier for the time being. The Operations Team will continue to benefit from the additional temporary staff support.	A new increased pricing structure was introduced to help the OU Students Shop to maintain the profit margin targets. Direct response to the current economic situation Difficulty estimating the level of response and interest in the return of face-to-face events following Covid. Challenging recruitment process. A new project plan is in place to remain with the existing e-commerce platform provider.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Policy & Public Affairs (P&PA)	Despite limited time due to the Policy & Public Affairs role still not having been filled, we have submitted formal responses to the Office for Students (OfS) consultations on Student Outcomes and the Teaching Excellence Framework with the support of the Position Statements Working Group, who provided valuable perspectives and ideas. The Northern Ireland Assembly elections take place in May 2022, and the Students Association manifesto is ready to go. A launch and comms plan is underway. Finally, we were able to obtain engaging and entertaining political speakers in the form of Baroness Garden and Daniel Zeichner MP for the January 2022 Conference.	Once again, it is a frustration that the vacant P&PA role has not been filled, which limits capacity to focus on policy and public affairs activity. We hope that this will be filled in the coming weeks. Furthermore, the Ireland and Scotland Association Area Representative (AAR) roles remain vacant after recent co-option efforts, which compounds the lack of a dedicated P&PA person when trying to develop activity within the nations.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Strategy & Insight	A series of significant analysis and evaluation/impact projects were completed in order to be presented to the April Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting - Annual Membership Survey, Conference and Student Voice Week. Phase 1 of the Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Research Programme was completed and an initial draft of a new EDI strategy has been produced. A new strategy project to develop a Manifesto for Life-Long Learning is being initiated. Four Coffee & Consultation sessions were held during the January Conference to provide initial student input for the manifesto – the consultation topics were Sustainability, Digital World Connectivity, Inclusivity and Student Finance. We have supported the planning and delivery of the OU's eleven March Student Consultation events, working with the OU to develop consultation topics, coordinating Association attendance, creating a new Association presentation and delivering facilitator briefings.	Workloads in the early part of 2022 around analysis and impact/evaluation projects and OU consultations 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 & Insights Practice.

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Volunteering & Representation	The volunteer opportunities are finally on the new website with the graduation volunteer and graduation coordinator being the first volunteer roles to appear on the website. We have been able to receive applications for these roles. Other volunteer opportunities will soon be on the website. The team organised a successful training weekend for the newly appointed reps in December. The focus was to provide enough information for reps before training but also emphasising on support we offer reps. The team continues to prepare for the upcoming elections. A new election website has already been created to start raising awareness of the election. It features all the key dates throughout the election process. We are currently working on renewing our investing in volunteers accreditation. The team are currently completing the self-assessment form as one of the first steps in this process after meeting the assessor during an introductory session.	The team is still learning the functionality of the new website and have had to dedicate a considerable amount of time to get things like volunteer opportunities live. This has been coupled with other teething processes which are expected within a website transition process. We can see the impact this is already having on the recruitment process specifically the low number of applications for the graduation roles that are currently on the website. We continue to struggle to engage with some of the reps on university committees. Despite having undergone training and being provided with @open.ac.uk emails addresses for communication, some of the secretaries have still not heard from them.

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