

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**Central Executive Committee (CEC)**

23 – 24 April 2022

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SURVEY REPORT 2021

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **Receive** the Annual Membership Survey Report
- ii) **Comment** on the 3 discussion topics
- iii) **Recommend and agree on** action points for the 3 discussion topics.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The 2021 Annual Membership Survey (AMS) took place from 1 November to 13 December 2021 and received a record 3,883 responses (2.14% of eligible students). The full report can be found in Appendix 1 with full details of the questions in Appendix 2.
- 1.2 Following a meeting with the Vice-President of Engagement (Fanni Zombor) and Faculty Association Representative Business and Law (Gareth Jones), three topics were drawn out for discussion at April 2022 CEC.

2. Report highlights

- 2.1 Although we fell short of our target of 3% of eligible students completing the survey, a record number of students still took part. One of the highest turnouts for an Association survey.
- 2.2 We gained the support of faculties and major departments within the Open University by inviting them to sponsor prizes such as Microsoft tablets and £150 shopping vouchers, which were gratefully received by the winners.
- 2.3 The number of students taking part in Association activities who would then recommend them rose from 88% to 90.5%. Similarly, students who have used our resources and would recommend them rose from 71% to 93%. This shows a high level of satisfaction with our offering.

- 2.4 Several new questions or question amendments were included in the 2021 survey, giving us valuable insight into: care-experienced students; different types of disabilities; our individual representation service; and the types of events students that like to get involved with.

3. Discussion topic one: Elections

- 3.1 The AMS showed an increase of 36% in the number of students 'not sure' if they will vote in the 2022 Elections. The student age group most likely to vote in the elections were aged 26-35 (60.31%).
- 3.2 The free text comments on this section were about students not understanding the relevance of voting to their student journey. What can be done to improve voter turnout and student knowledge of the way in which voting can positively represent their voice and impact their student experience?
- 3.4 Is there a way to convert students that are already engaged in surveys, societies or other Association activities, into 'definitely will' vote?
- 3.5 Immediate actions for 2022 Elections (22 March – 18 May 2022)? How do we turn the 'might vote', 'will not vote' and 'not sure' students into 'definitely will' vote for the 2022 elections?

4. Discussion topic two: CEC awareness

- 4.1 This is focused on the transparency of CEC and getting students engaged. An average of 96% of AMS responders are unaware of the existence of the CEC and the Board of Trustees (BoT), indicating that we have more to do to raise the visibility of and engagement with these teams.
- 4.2 Only 3.66% of respondents were aware of the CEC and its role for students. Just over 30% of AMS responders were aware of them but not what they do, showing that we need to do more to promote CEC's work, responsibilities and impact.
- 4.3 Again, many of the free text comments were from students unsure of the relevance of CEC to their studies. What can be done to raise awareness about the value to students, of having a Student Voice?
- 4.4 Given the concerning AMS feedback, we need a way to demonstrate how CEC, Volunteers and Representatives work collaboratively to make a positive difference for all OU students.

5. Discussion topic three: Types of events

- 5.1 The AMS shows that there is a real appetite for more events related to areas of study, personal interest and careers. 58% of student respondents wanted more events related to an area of personal interest e.g. creative writing, sports, hobbies etc.
- 5.2 Over 48% of students were interested in events linked to careers advice and employability. Similarly almost 46% of those surveyed, cited 'Gaining new skills' as still the highest motivation for students to volunteer. Many of the free text comments were around the benefits of skills building that come with volunteering.
- 5.2 The free text comments mentioned holding lectures or seminars with specialists/academics, which could potentially meet all three of the top event types requested.
- 4.3 The most popular time for engaging with online events was 7-10pm, when many of our events take place. This was also the option with the lowest 'this time doesn't work for me' response.
- 5.4 Could such events be used to engage students and keep them informed about Association activities and support? Is there a way to convert student interest at club and societies level to engagement with the Association and CEC?

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 Topic one: Agree immediate actions for current 2022 Student Elections, to reverse the AMS trend and boost student engagement and voting levels.
- 6.2 Topic two: Propose medium-term actions to improve CEC transparency and student awareness.
- 6.3 Topic three: Longer-term, discuss ways that lectures and seminars could be used to meet student interests, improve their engagement, and promote awareness of the Association.

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