



OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

23-24 April 2022

REPORTS FROM OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION GROUPS

C E C is asked to:-

- i) **receive** the reports
- ii) **note** that unless this paper is starred for discussion prior to the meeting, printed copies will not be supplied

Reports submitted by:-

OU PRIDE (Page 2)

OU Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Committee (Page 6)

Due to the resignation of the Chair, there is no report from the Disabled Students Group (DSG)

Central Executive Committee (CEC) April 2022 REPORT FROM OU PRIDE

1. Committee Updates

The OU Pride committee currently stands at 4 members, 2 elected positions and 2 co-opted positions.

We held the following committee meetings

11th January – a planning session for the year ahead

17th March – general committee meeting

In addition to this 1-2-1s were held between Lyndsay and each individual member

2. Group Membership

We currently have **841** members registered via OUSTudents.com.

We continue to reach out to our membership via the forums and Facebook asking them to join in and asking for ideas on events we can run.

3. Communications

We currently have 763 members on our closed Facebook group, an increase of 33 from the last quarter.

Of these members, 494 were active members between 3rd and 30th March 2022. This number has increased from the last quarter.

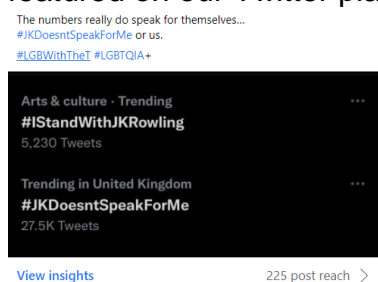


This can be attributed to the regular daily posts on the platform with a mix of news and fun items all with their own #.

We ensured that all key dates were covered on our posts.

Our posts continue to have an average reach of between 300 and 400 and an average engagement of between 30 and 60.

Our most popular post this quarter was news of a JK Rowling tweet which also featured on our Twitter platform



This was closely followed by a post highlighting the upcoming elections



4. Events & Activities

Our regular events are:

Drop-In – a chance for members to join us online, meet the committee and have an informal chat:

28th January

25th February

We did not hold a drop-in in March as we had another event scheduled the following evening

OU Pride Book Club – a book club where the book is written by a queer author or has strong queer representation within the book:

18th January

22nd February

29th March

We have a very special book and meeting scheduled for May where the author is going to join us. We plan to advertise this as a special event and not just a book club event.

OU Pride Anti-Valentines!

We ran a teams event on Saturday 12th February for any of our members who do not celebrate Valentines Day, with something the opposite of love – a murder mystery! It was another fun night with some of our members even dressing up to get in to character! No-one correctly guessed the murderer but all who attended enjoyed the game.



Well the murder mystery night was FANTASTIC. Thanks everyone for putting it on.. Thanks everyone for being soooooo friendly as I only knew a couple of people there. Please do another murder mystery one day if possible. I would say it was my favourite social event ever (ditto your previous murder mystery) and an utterly superb night 'out'.

OU Pride Bingo

We arranged a Bingo night on Saturday 26th March

This fell during the great weather, so we only had 1 attendee.

Alex and the attendee played a game of Kahoot!

During this period there were a few major days of note in our calendar.

Tuesday 1st February we ran 'A Whistlestop Tour of LGBT History' for Freshers Week. The event was well attended and generated a lot of discussion after the main

slides were finished.
We could have talked for hours!

February was LGBT+ History Month

We ran a number of articles on The Hoot, highlighting important people in LGBT+ history. Each of the committee chose someone who mattered to them and wrote an article

https://thehootstudents.com/lgbt-history-month-spotlight-marsha-p-johnson/?fbclid=IwAR1NP_2-F76nzXtNFmid21DEpEGtXLqTNqLT3_GvTSTXTu0MCJS7vkz6MaQ

Links to the articles were also shared across our social media platforms.

Our friends in the DSG also shared articles on historical disabled LGBT+ people.

Week beginning the 7th February was National HIV Testing Week where we encouraged our members to get tested and to encourage others to do the same.

On Monday 7th February, with relatively short notice, the Pride Group ran a successful takeover of the OU Students Association Twitter, highlighting LGBT History Month, and related themes and events. Throughout the day, there was positive engagement with the tweets, in particular related to our events and book clubs. This led to an increase in the follower count of the OU Pride Twitter, which has consistently continued to grow.

Feedback following the event was overwhelmingly positive, including confirmation that, following what was only the second twitter takeover:

“after the success of today, we'll definitely be looking to do some more”.



Zero Discrimination Day was 1st March

The theme this year is "Remove laws that harm, create laws that empower"

We celebrate the right of everyone to live a full and productive life, with dignity and free from discrimination!

International Transgender Day of Visibility was 31st March

We decided to celebrate and support two campaigns

[#TransDayOfVisibility](#) [#TDOV2022](#) [#inwiththebins](#) [#IAmEnough](#) [#YouAreEnough](#)

Today we are supporting both the [#InWithTheBins](#) campaign, aiming to get supermarkets, businesses and universities to put bins for sanitary products in ALL toilets.

AND

[#YouAreEnough](#) / [#IAmEnough](#) to show solidarity with our trans and non-binary friends and colleagues

<https://lgbt.foundation/.../trans.../trans-day-of-visibility>

Join with us [#InWithTheBins](#) [#YouAreEnough](#) [#IAmEnough](#)

We put out a questionnaire to our membership, using the new oustudents.com website to send the emails. We asked our membership what they thought we did well, and what they wanted us to do for the rest of the year. We are currently collating the answers.

Lyndsay also attended an EDI group chairs meeting on 25th March where we started discussions on how we can work together to make life better for our memberships. We only have 3 core events planned for the next quarter:
Come and Chat – 29th April/ 27th May
Book Club – 3rd May

Pride month is June and we are awaiting a decision on whether face to face will be allowed before we firm up our plans.

Lyndsay took part in the EDI event during Student Conference Week where we discussed how working together benefits both our members and ourselves as volunteers.

5. Student issues & challenges

This quarter we are still feeling some effects of the GCRN with a small number of students continuing to feel unhappy with the situation.

6. Any other initiatives or updates

We are planning a few events to cover Pride month and are looking at various options for both face to face and online only.

We have a special event planned for HIV Long-Term Survivors Day on the 5th of June.

Lyndsay Thomson

Chair

For and on behalf of OU PRIDE

7. Committee Updates

The (Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic) BAME Committee acquired full membership through co-option in January 2022 with announcements made to appointed members week commencing 27th January 2022.

Membership currently consisting of 9 Committee members.

Committee Membership

Chair – Tracey Inverary

Secretary – Shanice Henry

Events and Communications Officer - Narraser Gordon

Change and Awareness Officer (Culture and Campaigns) – Zara Khan

Change and Awareness Officer (Community Cohesion) – Eesha Waseem

International Officer – Sristi Sengupta

Wellbeing and Support Officer – Hope-Autumn River

General Committee Member – Rukhsaar Bibi

Ex-officio Committee member and Vice-President EDI – Patrice Belton

Meetings held:

Committee Induction

Date: 10th February 2022

Attendance: full attendance

Host: Project Officer and Ex-Officio Member

Intention: Introductory meeting and introduction to policies, discuss OU account access

First Committee Meeting

Date: 25th February 2022

Attendance: full attendance

Host: Chair with Project Officer and Ex-Officio Member support

Intention: To set standards, expectations, answer questions using a Q&A sheet which was made available to committee members to keep.

8. Group Membership

Chair has not had active access to statistics regarding the BAME group and navigation of application software has yet to be arranged thus access to statistical data regarding the group membership, growth, decline or engagement numbers is not yet available is limited. The Chair has requested the most accessible data and is seeking support with access to current and ongoing statistical data.

Group Membership currently consisting of 132 members

Facebook Membership currently consisting of 141 members

Activity on the BAME group forum, witnessed by the Chair is indicative of new members though there is evidence of reduced student engagement. Committee members have engaged with our student community to stimulate discussions. Please also **Communications** and **Events and Activities**.

9. Communications

As a collective we are working to increase engagement levels through Comms and activities.

Led by Ex-Officio member, ideas were welcomed from our student community at our introduction to students at a specific 'Freshers' event on the 2nd February 2022. These ideas have been recorded to discuss further action required and resources available to make them viable.

The Chair has shared ideas on our website and sessions for our student community and welcomed input from committee members. A Team Space has been established for communication between committee members, where ideas have also been stored.

In generation of ideas, the Chair encouraged collaboration between committee members. Please see **Events and Activities**.

In light of ideas shared the Chair has reached out to seasoned OU officers and teams for support with building avenues for engagement. The main engagement is through awareness.

Meetings on communications (completed and planned):

- Regular Meeting with FBL EDI Lead

Date: N/A

Intent: These are meetings the Chair has regularly with the FBL EDI student representative. After confirming appointment, the Chair discussed collaborative work. There is a possibility of committee members and group members getting involved in focus group work and inclusive curriculum work.

Pros/Cons: There is group awareness built within this relationship. Really good opportunities available, however, this will be pertinent to FBL committee members.

- FBL News Meeting

Date: 29th March 2022

Intent: Discuss purpose of publication and potential for committee and group

Pros/Cons: Publication a good way to start a conversations and advertise group work/activities. The publication is specific to a particular faculty and will mean a filtering of particular group activities.

- OU Social Media Manager Meeting

Date: originally 7th April moved to 11th April 2022

Intent: Discuss potential of social media to support and advertise committee and group work. How to enhance our voice and how to capitalise on current platforms in use.

Pro/Cons: High expectations, though limited communication with committee members means little will be agreed at the meeting and a further discussion required to establish needs of our committee and group.

The Chair requested for an immediate update to the website to avert any issues as to the status of the committee and group ensuring a personal welcome and update to information about the committee and possible channels of engagement. Committee members have been invited to introduce themselves to our student community on our BAME website. Once all introductions have been received, these will also be added to our BAME website to make our committee persona more tangible to our student community.

Initially it was understood that an announcement of committee membership would be made. Misinterpretation of this meant communication to the wider student community was somewhat delayed. The Chair was unaware that other committees outside of DSG and Pride, for example, OU staff and student forums, did not receive an announcement of the committee and announcement of a BAME group. A request by the Chair to discuss with Ex-Officio member and project officer, which coincided with a catch-up arranged by Project Officer to discuss a matter pertaining to committee members, revealed this mis-step. The discussion enabled a sharing of efforts in play and plans for the committee to be better understood. We discussed remedial actions to improve Comms and student engagement to ensure the student community are aware of our BAME group.

See ***Events and Activities***.

10. Events & Activities

Planned Student Community focused events:

- EDI conference,
- EDI conference prep,

Planned Committee Member focused events:

- The Chair has published an article in “The Hoot”.
- Training with Project Officer for secretary Committee member. The Chair is passionate about mentoring and thus development is a priority. The Chair has requested development support from our Project Officer and from seasoned Committee secretaries. Further discussions to take place regarding the latter.
- Wellbeing Officer set out monthly agenda for addressing wellbeing for our student cohort and article series in progress to be published on “The Hoot”. Wellbeing and Support Officer already engaging with Facebook membership. The committee Wellbeing and Support officer has caught the attention of the Media Manager for “The Hoot” who has extended help with any work to be published.

- Culture and Awareness Officers working on activities to engage our Asian student community. An article series is in production to speak to our student cohort that follow Ramadan.
- Further meeting requested to aid settling in of members and alleviate any possible concerns. Please see *issues & challenges*.

11. Student issues & challenges

Challenges and issues are not fully known as well as whether the issues are bounded issues. Outcomes of 'events and activities' will provide a clearer picture on student pain points and needs. It is expected that monitoring of statistical data will reveal the extent of engagement challenges.

This presides on the student members of the committee:

i) Committee Members have yet to acclimatise to the Teams space and adjust to corresponding using OU accounts. Communication outside of these mediums is low, though communication is still taking place. Members not using the aforementioned mediums are most active on WhatsApp.

ii) Ongoing technical issues affecting some members using the Teams space.

iii) The wider student community from BAME backgrounds initially were enthusiastically engaged, though this has slowed, despite committee members engaging in forums discussions. Events are due to be arranged as are Comms through various mediums, which are viewed as positive actions to re-engage and enthuse our student community. Student community did, during engagement, refer to having a more inclusive title for the group and committee, which is a view shared by committee members too. The Chair has agreed to this consideration and efforts for a name change are underway though care has been taken to ensure the committee is not trying to be everything to everyone, the focus is inclusivity and providing clarity in acceptance of all that identify as Black, Asian, Indigenous and of diverse minoritised ethnicities with experiences of diverse cultural backgrounds.

- *What is the extent of the issues:*

i) Two members have yet to fully engage outside of committee meetings with committee Chair, though one member has reached out to Ex-Officio member through WhatsApp.

ii) One Committee member has bandwidth issues that prevent necessary software to be downloaded to use all OU application software. What is the extent of the issues – number of students affected (some may be one-off, but some may affect larger numbers of students)

- *What work have we done/are we doing to try to address these issues:*

i) Committee Chair has reached out via email, requested project manager to contact members via personal email, requested Ex-Officio member to send out message of confirmation that each member is well and whether any support required via WhatsApp. Personal number has been exchanged.

ii) Personal time set aside to walk through technical issues 1:1. Suggestion of activities to help committee members engage.

iii) Events are due to be arranged as are Comms through various mediums, which are viewed as positive actions to re-engage and enthuse our student community. What types of issues and challenges are students raising with us. What work have we done/are we doing to try to address these issues, eg raising with the Association or the OU, sign-posting to support resources, etc

- *Any successes to report:*

(Summary from points made above) Significant interests from Hoot media staff, secretary personnel, OU social media team and FBL News all wanting to meet to arrange support and projects to speak about our group activity. Three Committee members are actively involved in committee work and commenced work on a series of articles due to be published, art work through collaboration with fellow EDI committees and active updating on our website. One member is very active on our Facebook platform. One member is sitting with our project manager to begin preparations for involvement in the EDI conference.

12. Any other initiatives or updates

It is too early to see any major impact on our student community. However, initial engagement during Freshers and in the forum has been positive.

Updates:

- Committee Chair was able to generate interest during a March student consultation.
- CES Manager is seeking input/consultation from BAME Committee Members on their communications to student community
- *Updates on any other activities and initiatives (not covered above), or any information, that we would specifically like to bring to the CEC's attention:*
 - Committee Chair is continuing to arrange for links with seasoned OUSA members and OU staff to support development of committee members.

Our Project Officer is considering putting particular support and induction processes in place that could be beneficial for other committees as a result of work with our BAME committee.

**Tracey Inverary
Committee Chair
For and on behalf of Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Committee**