



CEC 07/22/2

## OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

### Central Executive Committee (CEC)

15 – 17 July 2022

### REPORTS FROM OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION GROUPS

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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) July 2022 REPORT FROM OU PRIDE

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## 1. Committee Updates

The OU Pride committee currently stands at 3 members, 2 elected positions and 1 co-opted position.

We held the following committee meetings  
24<sup>th</sup> May – a general committee meeting

## 2. Group Membership

We currently have **850** members registered via OUStudents.com, which is an increase of 87 members on the last quarter.

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 754 members on our closed Facebook group.

Of these members, 541 were active members between 27<sup>th</sup> May and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022. This number has again increased from the last quarter.



This quarter we can attribute that to the regular daily posts on the platform with a mix of news and fun items all with their own #, especially centred around Pride month. 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.

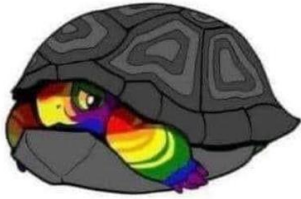
Our most popular post this quarter was talking about how overwhelming Pride events can be and how it is ok if you are not ready yet

Today was Portsmouth Pride, it made me think... I want to go to more Pride events, but I get very anxious about them.

I'm 36, I'm HIV+, I look increasingly like a barrel and have a face like a tram smash, so it's sad, but I don't necessarily feel 'welcome' at pride events.

It reminded me of this tweet, so I just wanted to share it with you to remind you all that you're loved, you're not alone and that you are welcome here.

It's OK if you're not ready yet.



This post had an reach of 451 with an engagement of 50. This was also cross posted on our Twitter feed.

#### 4. Events & Activities

During this quarter we scaled down our regular events due to EMA and exam prep being done by our members.

Our regular events are:

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

29<sup>th</sup> April

27<sup>th</sup> May

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

14<sup>th</sup> June

We held a very special book club in June where we discussed 'XX by Angela Chadwick'.

It was one of our regular book groups but with a difference. We were joined by the author of our book of the month who spoke with members present and engaged with a great question and answer session about the book and the writing and publishing process.

The group were positively engaged with the session, and feedback following the event was very positive.

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

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April was International Lesbian Visibility Day

On this day we encouraged everyone to tell us about their favourite lesbians (famous or otherwise), with the committee talking about theirs throughout the day.

The 3 posts had a reach of 483 between them with a few comments thrown in too.

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May was International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)

Here we shared this years theme for the day which was 'Our Bodies, Our Lives, Our Rights'

This post had a reach of 119 and sparked a conversation about **why** days like this are still needed.

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May was Agender Pride Day

To celebrate this day we shared the Agender Flag and a link to the LGBT Health care consortiums description of Agender.

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May was Pansexual and Panromantic Visibility Day

To celebrate this day we shared the Pansexual/ Panromantic flag and gave a link to the LGBT Foundations page on 5 things you should know about Pansexual Visibility Day.

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June was HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day

For this day we decided to run an 'ask-me-anything' event where we set up an online form where our members could ask any burning questions about HIV or AIDS either anonymously or named, and Steve promised to answer.

Lyndsay and Steve then recorded the Teams session where these questions were asked and answered.

This was then posted to Facebook:

[HIV LTS](#)

We added a list of support organisations to this post and encouraged our members to support them.

On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June, the Pride Group ran a successful takeover of the OU Students Association Twitter, highlighting Pride Month, and related themes and events.

Throughout the day, there was positive engagement with the tweets, in particular related to what students would like to see from OU Pride and the OU Students Association. This led to an increase in the follower count of the OU Pride Twitter, which has continued to grow.

Feedback following the event was positive and we look forward to further takeovers in future.

The month of June is also Pride month!

We have been sharing posts throughout the month around Pride history and quotes from people important to the Pride movement.

We have also created a Hoot post about the History of Pride and a quiz on the history of Pride.

It was decided that whilst we would not be attending Pride marches in person ourselves we would advertise the major events throughout the country and encourage our members to attend their local events and maybe even meet up themselves.

Lyndsay was also involved in helping to organise the EDI conference, in particular 2 sessions. A panel discussion, which Steve took part in, on what being an Ally is and a workshop ran by an external body on 'Being A Good Ally'.

Lyndsay also attended an EDI group chairs meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> April where we discussed how we can cross share important dates in our respective calendars.

Alex has spent this quarter researching ways we can engage OU Pride members and increase our groups membership numbers.

Time was spent with a previous committee member trying to navigate our discord

server channel in order to make adjustments and adaptations to entice members to join. Eventually it became apparent that discord is difficult to navigate, and the largest hurdle may be lack of awareness around what discord is and how it can be accessed. Alex highlighted a possible requirement for a video tutorial of discord. We are still investigating this possibility.

Following this, it was decided that we should focus less on discord and more on strengthening our actively used social media platforms. Some ideas to explore will be engagement posts, more event ideas and further correspondence with the student association of publicity and advertisement of what ourselves at OU Pride have to offer.

We do not yet have any core events planned for the next quarter due to the summer break however the committee are discussing this at present and are discussing ideas for the influx of Freshers in September and October.

## **5. Student issues & challenges**

This quarter our members had a discussion about the name of our forum as there was a space within the name that they believed had some negative connotations. We held a poll for a name change and this was updated

## **6. Any other initiatives or updates**

We are planning an online murder mystery event for early July to mark Pride month and the end of exam/ EMA season.

**Lyndsay Thomson**

**Chair**

**For and on behalf of OU PRIDE**

**Central Executive Committee (CEC)**  
**July 2022**  
**Black Asian and Minoritised Ethnic Committee Report**

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## **1. Committee Updates**

The (Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic) BAME Committee still operates under full membership.

*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:*

EDI Conference bi-weekly Working Group Meetings

Date: From 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 onwards

Two Committee Members agreed to represent and join this Working Group: Change and Awareness Officer and Wellbeing and Support Officer along with the Project Officer

Meeting with no agenda

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Attendance: 54%

Host: Ex-Officio Member and Project Officer as support (Due to timings of agreement to meet and available communication channels for finalising the meeting, Chair could not attend as host.)

Intentions: A meeting with no agenda, to help provide an informal time and space for presenting concerns and gaining clarity on committee roles. The intention was to focus on Committee Members e.g. questions Members still have, or need for further direction. Discussions on whatever Members felt significant to them regarding our Committee.

‘MS Teams “walk through” Meeting

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Attendance: Approx. 54% attendance

Host: Project Officer

Intention: To provide an understanding of MS Teams and help navigate the platform.

Meetings not previously noted:

*Chair, Change and Awareness Officers Meeting*

With intention to discuss and arrange actions for engaging students during Ramadan

*Chair, Ex-Officio Member and Project Officer Meeting*

With intention to discuss ways forward with providing members with roles that keep them challenged and satisfied as members as a result of missing out on roles they originally applied for.

## **2. Group Membership**

Chair does not yet have direct access to statistical data and has requested ongoing support with access to most up-to-date figures.

***BAME Group Membership*** currently consisting of 134 members

***BAME Facebook Membership*** currently consisting of 143 members

The BAME Group forum activity and engagement is moderate at the moment. Committee Members remain consistent in connecting with our student community.

Please also ***Communications*** and ***Events and Activities***.

## **3. Communications**

As a collective, the BAME Committee Members are consistently providing Forum and social media content to update our student community on events and publications, while Group Members are using the forum to request research support or welcome Members to discussions and encourage voting in the lead up to the “OU student elections”.

The Chair has expressed concern on issues around communication as a Committee. Contacting Members on personal email prompted some regular connection though a more consistent form of connectivity was needed.

The Project Officer has set up the ‘Slack’ platform to remedy communication issues and since implementation, there has been an increase in communication and almost all Members have connected in real-time to establish events, provide ideas or agree meetings.

The Chair has continued to encourage ownership of activities and leadership from Committee Members with regards to their particular roles.

The Communication Officer has been able to join and take the lead on two meetings with stakeholders.

The Change and Awareness Officer (Community and Cohesion) has communicated access to resources for students who observe Ramadan and for our BAME LGBTQA+ students.

Our Wellbeing and Support Officer has communicated necessary advice and beneficial resources regarding wellbeing, monthly to our OU student community.

Please see ***Events and Activities***.

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 Lead. The Chair is still in discussion regarding collaborative work. There is ongoing discussion for committee members to feature in focus group work.

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

**- 'Catch up re CES Employer Team working with BAME support group' Meeting**

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Intent:** Discussion about possibility of 'live events where students can meet employers with vacancies' with the aim to 'make it feel more accessible and build contacts', 'vacancies/schemes aimed at specific cohorts including BAME Students', monthly communication, possibility of newsletter and events to highlight 'CES and available resources'.

**- (second follow-up) FBL News Meeting**

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022

**Intent:** Discuss BAME Committee content – "Spotlight section". Content required by 8<sup>th</sup> July.

**Pros/Cons:** Publication a good way to start a conversations and advertise group work/activities. The publication is specific to a particular faculty though potential to increase exposure, scale-up membership highlight unknown EDI matters and build social capital.

The Chair has requested future meetings with FBL News Team.

Work with FBL News Team and CES may help to generate a sense of belonging, interest and awareness amongst our Student Community.

**- Meeting**

**Date:** 0<sup>th</sup> X 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.

See ***Events and Activities***.



#### **4. Events & Activities**

Student Community focused events:

- On the 25<sup>th</sup> May I was invited to join a panel to discuss digital inclusion from the perspective of a student from a BAME background with Lawrie Phipps from JISC.
- EDI Conference took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June.

Committee Member focused events:

- Training with Project Officer for secretary Committee member successfully completed. Further training to planned after confirming supportive sources for training.
- Wellbeing and Support Officer published wellbeing series in “The Hoot” and Group forum. Wellbeing and Support Officer still engaging with Facebook members.
- Wellbeing and Support Officer collaborated with LGBTQA+ Officer on a promotional project.
- Culture and Awareness Officer (Community and Cohesion) published series in “The Hoot” and on Group forum.
- It was confirmed on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022 that the Chair’s article was published as part of the printed magazine for SiSE.

#### **5. Student issues & challenges**

These two points remain the same:

**i)**Challenges and issues are not fully known as well as whether the issues are bounded issues.

**ii)**It is expected that monitoring of statistical data will reveal the extent of engagement challenges.

The request by EDI and Student Welfare to look at name change is still a consideration and efforts for a name change are in progress.

Regarding, internal Committee challenges are consistent engagement with some Committee members, this could be due to work schedules and demands of modules for those completing 20-30 hours of study per week. Discussions due between Chair

and Members and between Chair and Head of EDI to look at alternative ways forward.

- *Any successes to report:*

*(Summary from points made above)* Continued significant interests from Hoot, CES staff, OU and FBL News all wanting to meet to arrange support and projects to highlight our group activity or work with us.

*The EDI Conference* was a success and thanks to all involved including the Project Officer, Wellbeing and Support Officer and

## **6. Any other initiatives or updates**

It is still too early to see any major impact on our student community. We are hopeful that recent hard work by our Committee will provide ample reading, events and opportunities for new students and seasoned students as they gain some free time after Summer assessments and exams.

Updates:

- Our Committee will be featured in an achievements video as part of the OU 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations.
- Our Committee are looking to create drop-in sessions for our Student Community.
- BAME website has further information about Committee Members.
- Our website will have links to articles and resources published by Committee Members.
- The Project Officer, on agreement from Committee Members, has arranged for 'an automatic welcome message to be issued for new members' when they sign up to our groups.

**Tracey Inverary**

**Committee Chair**

**For and on behalf of Black Asian and Minorities Ethnic Committee**

**Central Executive Committee (CEC)**  
**July 2022**  
**REPORT FROM THE DISABLED STUDENTS GROUP (DSG)**

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## **1. Committee Updates**

Since January 2022, we have lost our secretary Eileen Newman and one committee member Leanne White. However, two of the committee members are now sharing the secretary role and we are in the process of potentially co-opting two new members to the committee.

We have held committee meetings on a monthly basis:

21 February

21 March

20 April

30 May

27 June

## **2. Group Membership**

Registered members: 821

The membership numbers have been increasing at a slower rate. However, this is normal for time of the year. The plan is to promote the group more heavily during Freshers and hopefully also gain some attention during the Association's 50th birthday celebrations throughout the rest of the year. We are also planning a more active approach on the Facebook group to make sure we get people to sign up through the website as well as being a member of the group on social media.

## **3. Communications**

Social media statistics:

Twitter: 595 followers

Facebook: 2234 members

With the election of the new committee, the DSG website had to be updated with the current information. We have short introductions, and in some cases photos, about the committee members. We are in the process of creating a newsletter which will go out to members by email, as well as being available on the website. We hope to make the newsletter quarterly, to the best of our ability. We are also planning to create a regular series of articles about various awareness days throughout the year. There has been more activity on the DSG forums recently. As the new committee has settled in and tasks have been allocated, there are more resources to moderate and create posts which in turn makes it easier for students to engage. We are still continuing with weekly #SharingPositivity posts on Facebook and the forum, which are well received with varying levels of engagement.

## **4. Events & Activities**

We have successfully hosted a series of monthly social drop ins since the start of the year, with varying levels of engagement and attendance. The feedback has been positive, and members seem to be happy about a consistent platform to socialise and get involved. There are plans for the drop-ins to continue once a month. In August we plan to have a special drop in with a quiz and prizes as it was the DSG's 19th birthday in June.

Some of the DSG committee members attended the OU Students' Association EDI conference held on 17-18 June.

## 5. Student issues & challenges

Some students are uncertain about benefits (maintenance loan etc) and others have queries about DSA. So, one theme that runs through the discussions is Student Finance. We point students in the direction of the Student Support Team, the Disability Support team or help pages from the OU. There have also been queries regarding extensions and how often they can be used, as well as submitting special circumstances forms. In these cases, input from other students in similar situations can be extremely helpful, as well as the signposting to SST.

The committee will be working on a list of resources or FAQs to put on the website about DSA, benefits and so on both to help us and for students to find the information more easily.

## 6. Any other initiatives or updates

Marilyn Salstrom  
Chair of DSG Committee  
For and on behalf of the Disabled Students Group

