

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

January 2022

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORTS

The CEC is asked to:-

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

Reports submitted by:-

- President (page 2)
- Deputy President (page 4)
- Vice President Administration (page 6)
- Vice President Engagement (page 8)
- Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (page 10)
- Vice President Education (page 15)
- Student OU Council Member (page 17)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Europe (page 19)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) (page 20)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Business & Law (FBL) (page 22)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Open and Access (page 24)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (page 28)

The positions of Area Association Representative (AAR) for Northern Ireland and Area Association Representative (AAR) for Scotland are currently vacant and therefore no report is available for this quarter. Due to personal circumstances, there is no report available for Area Association Representative (AAR) for England, Vice President Community and Vice President Student Support.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Sarah Jones
ROLE:	President
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Working on the 50th and Conference</p> <p>It has been a busy few months working hard with Reiss Miller (50th and Conference Project manager) on the plan for the 50th and all the details around the Conference which will be at the end of January. The Conference steering committee have worked really hard on what activities will be happening at Conference. The Governance Reform team have worked hard to make sure that the business going to Conference has been well publicised and thought out, with the inclusion of a debate on the issues. The 50th steering group have also been working hard on the priorities for the 50th and what themes each month with have. Celebrating 50 years of the Association will be an amazing way to showcase all the work we have done whilst celebrating the amazing OU students.</p> <p>This has links across all areas of our strategy.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Opportunities to share the work the Student Association are doing</p> <p>As well as continuing to share my blog on twitter and LinkedIn me and Danielle (Council Member) had the opportunity to not just share a quarterly report with Council but the Annual report. This report is put together collaboratively with the whole Association and we share all the events that have happened and the issues that we have dealt with over the past year. This report was very well received by Council and it was even commented by Malcolm Sweeting (Chair of Council) that our reports are his favourite bit of Council. There really is an appetite in Council to hear more of what we are doing at the Association.</p> <p>This links with the Influence and Transform strand of the Strategy</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Highlighting Digital Inclusion, Mental Health and Loneliness</p> <p>I had the opportunity to speak at a conference in South Africa in November. The panel was discussing the issue of Digital Inclusion and they wanted a perspective from the UK. It was really interesting being able to highlight the issues that students in the UK have had during the pandemic around Digital Inclusion and</p>	

Mental Health and also the feelings that many students have had around loneliness. This issue has also been one raised at Athabasca University in Canada. We have all had the same issues, so it is good to share good practice around how we tackle it. The OU have a page helping students with their mental health and the Association also has a wealth of website links on our website for students to access help. I am on the Digital Inclusion Management group working towards making a difference for students.

This links with the Influence and Transform strand of the Strategy it also goes towards our mission of making a positive difference for all students.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

Approx.36

ISSUE 1:

Raising the Issue of Face-to-Face meetings with the OU

As part of many of our student volunteer roles are in normal times face to face, I have been raising with the University the issue of inconsistency across the OU when it comes to the expectation of face-to-face meetings. I have met with Liz Marr and others in an attempt to make sure there is a position statement around this that student reps and volunteers can refer to. Obviously, this isn't an issue right now due to more covid restrictions but as we start to look to the future it is a much-needed statement. As an Association we are keeping this in mind when we address the issue of face-to-face meetings and events for us as well.

This links with Influence and transform strand of the strategy and goes towards our mission of making a positive difference to all OU students

Due to the nature of the last few months I have been focusing on Governance Reforms, Conference and the 50th and a lot of the 'issues' have gone into the business as usual part of my role.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Ian Cheyne
ROLE:	Deputy President
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Working together</p> <p>There is a greater feeling of working together within the CEC. Compared with the situation last year at this time—this has been my view for several months but I'm glad to say that I'm not alone in holding this view. In my conference report I spoke about the extended time period which the Deputy President needs to settle into the job, and why this is the case. There may be some exceptions depending upon what other CEC roles a new Deputy has experienced. But the process is greatly helped when the whole team is working together—and of course this applies equally to every new officer to a greater or lesser extent.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Conference</p> <p>Conference is one of the two hot topics at the moment. As expected, Covid has impacted on this as much as it has changed our daily lives generally. The real questions for me are (1) can we benefit from the enforced changes in order to make conference <i>business</i> more effective and (2) what can we do to compensate for the lost (at least at present) <i>face-to-face interactions</i> which have made the event a success in the past? The answers will come in due course while we progress on a 'suck it and see' basis. Any proposed changes by definition are also going to be affected by change. What is important at this moment is that we make the most of the opportunities which have arguably been forced upon us, as opposed to having been chosen by us.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Governance Review/re-structuring</p> <p>The second current topic is the Governance Review and the proposals for change which have been made as a result of this. While 'behavioural' issues represent for me the greatest, ongoing, challenge it eventually became clear to me that any actions taken to tackle the problem would need to be supported by a suitably structured Association leadership team. And a re-structuring of the team is at the same a pre-requisite to a greater management agility on the part of the Association. The proposals, consequently, represent a complete package which enhances the ability, and the capacity, to provide our essential service to all OU students.</p>	

Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	12
<p>ISSUE 1: The Association Governance Review—For/Against</p> <p>We have tackled the vexed topic of volunteers' behaviour in the revised Volunteer Policy and in our new complaints procedures—this is, of course, in addition to the many other changes designed to help and support volunteering in general. Whatever we do, we always have to be mindful of the particular needs of a volunteering environment, especially when there is the inevitable relatively small pool of students available and willing to take on the various responsibilities. I have said elsewhere that the Association's primary activities on behalf of students are effectively driven by the ways in which the OU, and its many complexities, operates. We can, however, make every effort to simplify the structure of the Association's management/leadership in order to make life easier for both our leadership team and the Association's professional staff. It's for all these reasons that I have come to recognise, and support, the proposed changes which have emerged from the governance review. If we don't implement these changes now then there is a real risk that the improvements already made, as referred to above, will suffer.</p>	
<p>ISSUE 2: AGMs and the Trades Union thing</p> <p>We aren't a trades union. We don't have the luxury of being able to attract a substantial majority of our membership to attend and take part in the often very vocal, hustle and bustle, events surrounding Annual General Meetings and the elections of General Secretaries, and so on. Even when our President and Deputy President were elected during our biennial conference our face-to-face delegates were limited in number. But even if they hadn't been restricted the attendance would still have represented a miniscule proportion of our total number of students. The new proposals for our AGM I feel sure will be provide an enhanced democratic procedure over the existing system. And as such it should be welcomed.</p>	
<p>ISSUE 3: Do new students mean new ideas?</p> <p>As a charitable support organisation we always need to re-evaluate and explore alternatives in order to provide the best service. Every new student to the university doesn't necessarily mean new ideas. There is, however, something to be said for listening not only to what our students say generally but also for being aware of how those new to the OU see us...'O, wad some Power the giftie gie us, To see oursels as others see us!' was Robert Burns conclusion ... New students, new eyes...maybe new ideas!</p>	

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Matt Porterfield
ROLE:	Vice President Admin
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Culture and Governance of the Association</p> <p>The proposed Governance reforms are progressing well thanks to a team effort lead by Rob and Alison on the staff side and great involvement from other CEC colleagues. Articles and Bye-Laws are now ready and awaiting Conference approval of the change resolutions. Consultation on the changes has been completed, a debate looking at both sides of the proposals was organised and run by Dan with Jackie Weaver in the Chair. After a couple of initial hitches, it went well and allowed some new student voices to be heard both in the debate and Hoot articles. Now we just wait for approval by the membership when voting opens later this month, which should not be an issue if delegates take the time to read the papers.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Finance, Resources and Risk</p> <p>This new sub-committee of the Board of Trustees has been approved and is getting on with it's remit. It is an example of one of the proposed Governance changes which did not have to wait for approval at the AGM and will take some of the pressure of the full Board agenda as the detail can be discussed here. Initial work involved developing our Terms of Reference, inviting and interviewing tenders for the annual audit of the Association and the charity arm OUSET and updating the risk register. We are currently looking at options for trustee training ready for the next intake.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Other activities</p> <p>The October (J) start for undergraduate degrees went well with fewer module caps due to tutor shortage than initially feared, this has to be due in a major part to the Presentation Readiness Working Group which Gareth and I sit on. This group has members from every area of the OU, academic, production and management, and although initially set up for anticipated issues around 21J presentation it has now become a permanent feature covering all presentations. Its membership allows for early oversight of potential issues and cross-departmental cooperation to ensure the best outcomes for the student experience.</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

Direct contact n/a in this role

ISSUE 1:

The biggest risk to the Students Association, as I see it, is not getting the 75% majority of voting delegates to pass all the Governance reforms. This could lead to resentment if a minority of voters will prevent progress on democracy, transparency and best practice. This could in turn mean reduced numbers of members willing to volunteer as leaders and representatives of our Association.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Fanni Zombor
ROLE:	Vice President Engagement
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Student Voice Week</p> <p>Student Voice Week is a week-long event that took place 13 to 21 November in 2021. I co-chaired both the organising and planning group made up of student reps, OU and Association staff and was involved in the setup of the week in a lot of detail. With this project, we gave a voice to over 800 students across more than 90 sessions. Building on Student Voice Week 2020's success, we increased the variety and type of sessions, for example by adding activities that ran all week using forums so more students could participate. One of my personal highlights of the week was taking over the Twitter account of OU in Scotland allowing me to engage with students in Scotland by a variety of polls and posts.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Students Association website</p> <p>At the time of writing this report, our brand-new website (still at oustudents.com) launched 3 weeks ago. During the last 3 months, my main focus has been on the navigation and content of the website, to make sure we don't assume students visiting the website are aware of the workings of the Association. Using evidence from our previous website, feedback from students and expertise knowledge in our staff team, we have worked to remap the navigation, make frequently visited pages more prominent and create opportunities for students to find other important information on our website. The launch of the new website will make us more accessible to students to help them find what they need on the site, increase repeat visitors and in return hopefully increase engagement.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Annual Membership Survey</p> <p>The Annual Membership Survey is now a recurring yearly survey for all OU students to help us establish the views, needs and expectations of the student body. In 2021, the survey was open for a month and we managed to more than double our response rate compared to 2020, going beyond our target number which has been a massive win for us. Hopefully this means we will be able to make even more improvements to the way we operate and what we offer in the coming months.</p>	

Alongside the 2021 survey's running, we have also been discussing the 2020 results in leadership meetings and as a result, we are looking to create more video content to make it easier to explain our current offerings to students.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this month to ask for support on a specific issue?

60

ISSUE 1:

Confusions around TMA marking turnaround time and the gradual return of pre-pandemic rules at the OU

ISSUE 2:

Support and events over the Christmas period – including the community available and how students can get help from tutors and SST over the break

ISSUE 3:

The complications of student finance when registering or starting a degree in the February cohort – starting full time in February has implications on the seasonal academic year and accessing further finance..

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Patrice Belton
ROLE:	Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (VPEDI)
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p><i>“This quarter was focused on community, wellbeing, student voice, and identity; from supporting students through their first encounters with the OU and Association at Freshers (September) 2021, to helping students feel heard during the start of their modules (by troubleshooting for support to meeting their resources needs), offering a sense of belonging and empowerment during Black History Month (October) 2021, facilitating moments for deep-listening, nurturing collaboration and community cohesion during Student Voice Week (November) 2021, and finishing off with building mental health awareness at the Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference and, by sharing support resources from the OU and Association leading up to the winter break.”</i></p> <p>AREA 1: Update on E D I Students Insights & Student Voice Week</p> <p>In the last quarter, ‘following the Association’s E D I Conference in the Summer which was aimed at equipping Volunteers and Representative with knowledge and understanding around EDI, we (the E D I Working Group) were looking for other opportunities to raise and integrate E D I discussions into the (wider) student body and (broader) student-facing events; in line with our statutory obligation to be welcoming and inclusive to all and, to embed EDI as Practice. Therefore, a (new) collective approach from the Associations’ Student Community Team and E D I Working Group, was the introduction and launch of the E D I ‘Student Insights’ Events Programme and Sub-working Group, aimed at facilitating ‘E D I Student Insights’ sessions at Freshers (in September 2021) and beyond. This was to enable us to align E D I relative events with other (major) student-facing events, at standard, whilst ensuring we incorporated and/or embedded deep-listening practices into our student community (as recommended by our recent Governance Review), to help “nurture an ethos of compassion, inclusion and co-operation...” (Jackie Weaver).</p> <p>I hosted this first event alongside the Students’ Support and Welfare Projects Officer; with guests from the OU Pride (LGBT+) Group and Disabled Students Group (i.e. Students) and E D I Expert Jiten Patel. The event was said to be ‘informative, insightful (all puns intended) and hopeful’ for students who (both) listened in and participated. Students were empowered to take part in follow-up sessions and to share their experiences further; one student wrote a blog post, reflecting on the event and the importance of enabling students to share their lived experiences and voice. The second ‘E D I Student Insights’ event took place at</p>	

Student Voice Week 2021, where I hosted, alongside the Association's (Biennial) Conference and 50th Anniversary Projects Manager; the focus of the session was to reflect on and review the Associations' updated '**Values and Behaviour Policy**' which (now) incorporates **Kindness and Compassion**. Following on from this, the next 'E D I Student Insights' event will take place at Association's (Biennial) Conference in January 2022, and I will be hosting alongside the Student Support and Welfare Projects Officer, to help students reflect on **Collaboration** *one of our core values and one of the OU's ten Employability Skills*.

(Strategy Links: Shared Values – All / Aims – All; also point 7 and 14 of E D I Action plan)

AREA 2:

Update on work around pastoral support & Mental Health Strategies

In the July's Quarterly Report, 'I advised students were reaching out directly; to vent about personal challenges vs the limitations of the OU's support systems (e.g. inconsistencies with pastoral support, namely from Tutors, which had (somewhat) decreased during the challenges of the Director for Student Support (and since within the Student's Mental Health Working Group (SMHWG)). pandemic), as a result, more students had been expressing feelings of distress, uncertainty, and a lack of motivation towards their work (namely assessments) across various modules' which was raised with the OU's Director for Student Support' (and within the Student Mental Health Working Group (SMHWG), which I sit on as a student representative).

Following on from this, and with my input, we have now launched *the '**Associate Lecturers (AL or Tutors) Toolkit to Support Students' Mental Health***' which has been distributed widely and across all (AL-facing) platforms and module websites, to enable Tutors to inform their knowledge and understanding around mental health (MH) challenges but also to troubleshoot, assess and access support (including for themselves) when faced with students experiencing difficulties. Equally, the OU has updated the '*Studyhome*' page (accessible by all students), which incorporates a designated section for (student) '*Wellbeing*' under the '*Connect tab*'; this includes various signposts and tools for students to interact with, learn from and find support or self-help tools - including links to the Associations'; *Peer Support Service, Togetherall, E D I Groups and Clubs (e.g. the Disabled Students Group or OU Pride (LGBTQ+) Students Group and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students Group), free wellbeing courses, a (newly) affiliated free-24/7-text-service SHOUT (**text OU to 82528**) for UK Based Students, and other support links* from the OU's Student Support and Mental Health Advisors.

There are also links to a designated (public facing) website that focuses on the *OU's Mental Health Strategy* and other support for MH and Wellbeing. Much of these updates, tools and services were informed by an OU-wide 'Resource Audit' (including a list of support services and resources, which I collated on behalf of the Association) and collated on to a (public-facing) MH Resource Hub via OpenLearn. There are *Mental Health Champions* available to support staff training (including Tutors) and students within the Student Support Team and *Gender Identity Champions* to Support staff and students (from the LGBTQ+ communities). Work around developing Personal Learning Advisers (PLAs) to help students along in

their study journeys continues and, in January 2022, I had my first meeting with PLAs representative for *Disabled, Neurodiverse, LGBTQ+ and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students*; I have now exchanged details to help connect them with the E D I Groups and Club Chairs for these cohorts; I have also offered insights on behalf of the Association, around the Groups, student community to help them market the Association and its events to Students they engage with.

In December, to help reiterate the range of resources and support options available to all, and to highlight the Mental Health Strategy work carried out to date as well as what had been achieved or changed over the course of the year, the MH Strategy Implementation Steering Group and SMHWG collaborated a **'Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference'** (*open to all*) in December 2021. This final event, helped to signify that, not only have I been able to take your concerns forward (as V P E D I), but that I have had the ability to input and inform the work carried out in OU Departments and Units, throughout the process (and first-hand) on behalf of students, to ensure your voices were heard, acted upon and, this was formally showcased for all to see, with students at and staff mental health and wellbeing the forefront.

(Strategy Link - Shared Values: All; Aim – Influence & Transform, Inform and Support)

AREA 3:

Update on Race Equality work & Black History Month (B H M)

As part of the Association's collective initiative toward Race Equality, and to improve the student voice for our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Cohorts and Student Group; I have continued to act as 'lead representative and voice' within OU spaces to help voice students concerns and champion for more representation and visibility in Staff and Student communities.

Particularly, over the last year, I have been, working closely with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Students Office to support and review **'Mental Health Declarations for Black Students'** as part of the Language and Communication (L&C) Work-package and (wider) Task and Finish Group, which housed 5 other Work Packages (from Scholarship to Resources and Data – Baseline all exploring what barriers students may face to makes declarations at the OU). In line with the OU's Widening Access and Participation Success Strategy & Plan (APS/APP). My contributions (as V P E D I and, a student representative) has been significant and informative, due to my heritage and lived experiences as a 'Black, Caribbean, Woman and OU Alumni, experiencing challenges with Mental Health (as that offered insights on the impact similar students have, whilst reviewing academic and student community-based knowledge which reflects the voice of those students we are hoping to help); effectively; **I am the target audience(!)**.

I was also able to help highlight one example of the deficit model and to share insights around language and communication along with (Black and Minority Ethnic) Staff who were students also students at the OU, who contributed to our research, interviews, and a survey. The Project concluded in October, and since then, me and the L&C Team, have been **delivering presentations to OU Staff and Departments across B H M (and beyond), to help inform and support with recommendations for change and to help build awareness to further**

support (BAME and other underrepresented) students to declare concerns around wellbeing and mental health. We have since collaborated at a Conference for the Task and finish Group, in December 2021, to roundup and showcase the work from across the whole project.

Looking back at Black History Month, I sat on the OU's B H M Working Group, as a consultative figure to help inform communications to students and to help relay the 'students' voice' amid events and planning. At the Association, together with the Student Support and Welfare Projects Officer; we project-managed, collated and, disseminated proceedings and activities when went out to students, from the Association (with support from the Digital Communications and Media Team). It was extremely empowering to see students from the BAME Group sharing articles (with photos) of themselves on the Hoot magazine and, to see a diverse group of students from the (wider) student body, liking and participating in some of these activities. **B H M 2021** (for me) was an awareness building, E D I success, which concluded with signposts to reading lists (also shared via the Hoot) and a personal video and article '**Vote of thanks from the V P E D I**', to everyone who supported and/or took initiative to improve Race Equality at the OU and Association. So, what next? We (me, the E D I Projects Officer and Student Support and Welfare Projects Officer) carried out survey consultations with the BAME Students Group in October-November and I have since collated and shared (other) 'post-B H M' updates and events from the OU and Association, which students can get involved with including notice of an '*Alamy / OU photography project and competition*' to help better representation of Black and South Asian students in distance learning. All of the above signify there is much being done (here) but equally how much work there is still to do, but this is progress and we truly need all of you to help us continue.

(Strategy Links: Shared Values - All; Aims – All)

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek signposting/ask a question/flag an issue?

- 180+ via Facebook/Whatsapp
- 30+ via email/Messenger
- 15+ via forum

Student Contacts and Key Issues

Key Issues:

- **Accessing OU Tutorials:** Student with Auditory Processing challenges finding it difficult to access Adobe Connect Tutorials due to no live caption functions; as this was something ongoing I referred this with the OU Directory for Student Support (for interim support advice and workarounds) and to the Senior Product Manager from the Learner Support Team (to weigh up permanent fixes; an update was given and will be publicised to students asap, whilst other mitigations and upgrades with adobe connect are being reviewed).
- **Module Results Delays:** Students reaching out due to module results delays; this was raised with other members of the Central Executive Committee, V P Education, and the Director for Students Support (all separately). Cause: an increase in plagiarism cases. Workarounds and support, mainly referrals and signposting to the SST. However, we (your Vice Presidents - Student Support, Education and E D I along with the OU's Assistant Director for Student Policy, Compliance and Case) have formed a Working Group to review student policies around plagiarism and academic misconduct and will also be hosting a collaborative "*Good academic practice: how to*

avoid plagiarism and academic misconduct" session for (all) students at Student Voice Week 2021 to help support students on interim and going forward.

- **Neurodiversity (ND) Support:**

A fair amount of discussions and queries being raised by students with ND and in the Association's Affiliated ND Club, due to; misunderstandings between Tutors (who may be limited in knowledge on how to support this cohort) and Students and, challenges with module materials, module selection and ND accessibility; this remains unresolved, but have been raised with the Association's EDI and Student Welfare Team on behalf of the Chair for the ND Club (who was copied in on the original query email) to look into this matter and start discussions; this is scheduled for this (new) year, due to busy schedules and winter breaks.

Praise & Gratitude:

- **Alternative Formats and the Student Learning Adjustments Strategy (SLAS)**

2021: I am a fair and amicable person (I'd like to believe) and although, I am aware things did not run entirely smoothly or without some glitches and delays; I must express my gratefulness and 'Thank You' to the OU's Student Support Teams, Learner Experience Team and Distribution Centre and the Association's Volunteers, Representatives and Staff who all collaborated, listened, signposted, managed and improved (both) communications and roll-outs of this year's 'Alternative Formats for our Disabled Students Cohort'. Your help and understanding meant students' queries and complaints around this issue were few, and students (for the most part) received their resources, or had means to help manage their expectations and, so, were able to pursue their studies in a timelier manner (than in previous years). Please let's keep this support, collaboration and partnership going, hopefully, we can make this the standard for students and the OU in future. My heart sings! 😊

(Strategy Link - Shared Values: All; Aim – All)

Strategy Key:

Shared Values - *Integrity, Equality & Inclusivity, Openness, Collaboration and Kindness & Compassion*

Aims - *Inform & Support, Engage & Involve and Influence & Transform*



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Cinnomen McGuigan
ROLE:	Vice President Education
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Support</p> <p>Actively engaging with the Individual Representation Service and promoting how to navigate the complaints process with the wider student body.</p> <p>I stood on a platform to get this delivered if possible, and since the launch back in August we have done a session as Student Voice Week and created a video to share what we do and how we support students. We are actively helping engage with students at their most vulnerable and most in need of support. The complaints process is hard enough without feeling isolated and alone, so having a key support through the process will help many students navigate this much more successfully.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Representation</p> <p>We have recently undergone a second recruitment cycle for Central Committee Reps and Senate Reference Group members and delivered their training. The active improvement work that has gone on across appointments led to one of the best and most engaging training cycles I have been a part of. We have a much higher number of engaged and proactive reps now, that will be raising concerns and student issues across the university.</p> <p>Please consider getting involved with academic governance committees with us. It is a great way to engage.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Community</p> <p>I have been working hard getting ready for Conference and Freshers to try to help engage students across the wider community. I already host a number of community building events both aimed at Reps – like my monthly rep drop-in session, and others aimed at staff and students, like at Book Club and our monthly Writing drop in. And am always happy to lend support to students who want to engage further. I speak to students most days about all sorts of stuff.</p> <p>Sharing that love of the student community and helping students feel less lonely is a key consideration for many of us reps, and I am not any different in that regard.</p>	

Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	In the hundreds
<p>ISSUE 1:</p> <p>Conference and Campaigning. Seeing a number of people discussing the governance review changes proposed by the Association.</p>	
<p>ISSUE 2:</p> <p>Complaints – since we launched the Individual Rep service, I have found myself dealing with many more students caught in the complaints process. They know I am involved because I signpost a lot of people that way, and sometimes they just want to talk over what’s on offer. Sometimes they want to know that there is someone to listen rather than engage fully in the process.</p>	
<p>ISSUE 3:</p> <p>Remote Exams. Students want to know what the future of exams will look like as we go into yet another pandemic spike. We will be hosting some discussion at Conference about this, with the OU coming to talk to students to get their opinion on how best to move forward,</p>	

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Danielle Smith
ROLE:	Student Member of Council
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Students Association 50th Birthday Celebrations</p> <p>2022 sees the OU Students Association turn 50! I am part of the 50th steering group which has been coming up with lots of fun and exciting ideas on how to celebrate this milestone birthday. There are things planned right through the next 12 months and the steering group will continue to meet as the year progresses to deliver these celebrations.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Representing Student Voice at Council</p> <p>The Council met in November 2021. The November meetings are usually quite finance heavy as much of the business centres around approval of the annual accounts and financial statements. Other business included the Council's approval of the brand new OU five year strategy. Student voice is evident in the development of this document as students have been consulted throughout the strategy development work. The strategy is due to launch imminently and communications will be issued by the OU to launch this. However the work is not yet complete, as Council will have a workshop session at the beginning of February to agree the key performance indicators by which the OU will measure the success of the strategy.</p> <p>The Students Association has a regular update slot on every Council agenda, and Council are always very interested to hear what the Association has been doing for students. These updates are delivered with a huge amount of pride at all the work that goes on and for our fantastic volunteers and Council are always keen to recognise all of the work the Association does.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Conference</p> <p>January 2022 is Conference month! As with the 2020 Conference, this is being held entirely online due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. However the Conference steering group and project management team have put together an exciting and varied programme of sessions.</p>	

One of the most important parts of Conference is the business section. This is usually held on the Saturday morning when Conference is face to face, and includes voting on proposed resolutions. This is particularly pertinent this year as the Association recently underwent a governance review and a number of significant changes to the structure of the Association have been proposed which require the delegates approval. You may have seen on our social media campaigns for and against these changes. Whilst I am remaining neutral in this campaign (I see the pros and cons of each side), I want to emphasise how important it is for students to get involved in these matters. These are decisions that ultimately affect us all and it's important to have your say. If you are a Conference delegate, please do take the time to read up on what the proposed changes are and vote.

Both the Central Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees have discussed and reviewed each of these proposals in depth, with a lot of work being done behind the scenes by the team to get these ready to be brought to Conference for approval.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?

0

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Kate Wells
ROLE:	Area Representative in Europe
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1:</p> <p>We (Tala, Isabelle and I) had a couple of good Freshers sessions in October; which were followed up by a drop in session in December.</p> <p>We're now preparing a combined drop in (i.e. informal chat with questions) and quiz session for the February Freshers session.</p>	
<p>AREA 2:</p> <p>I have worked with Tala and Isabelle to host online events for all International students over the past quarter, and will continue to do so.</p>	
<p>AREA 3:</p> <p>I am looking forward to my first Conference in January, both as Area Rep and as a student.</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	0

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Bev Smith
ROLE:	FASS FAR
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1:</p> <p>I'm still part of the FASS sub group which is arranging online talks throughout the year for B.H.M. It is thought that spreading Black History Month across the year will enable more people to attend the events, which will encourage engagement and inclusion. The next event (yet to be advertised) will be held at the end of January.</p>	
<p>AREA 2:</p> <p>The FASS 'Speakeasy's are proving popular. Plans are underway for the next event which will hopefully be held at the end of March. Although these were originally designed to be Nation based and face to face, there have been some advantages in holding them nationally and online. More students have been able to engage (even International students). This has helped with engagement and retention, due to the fact that students have been able to interact with senior members of the Academic community and ask questions directly.</p>	
<p>AREA 3:</p> <p>I think that another area of progress has been working with other reps over the last few months in organising joint online activities for students. This has helped inclusion, between the reps as well as students. The students have felt part of a community and included.</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	45
<p>ISSUE 1:</p> <p>Pending results was the largest issue over the last few months. In a recent TAS meeting I attended with Tom Muirhead the issue was raised by Matt Staples, (Director of Teaching SS & Global Studies) along with other senior members of staff, who are really unhappy with this issue. There are still pending results but it is hoped that these will be addressed soon. Shortage of staff was said to be the issue but it was agreed that students deserved better, and it is hoped that plans are put in place for this year's results, so the issue is not repeated.</p>	

ISSUE 2:

There have been a few problems with Adobe Connect. However things have seemed a little better since the upgrade. Students have been having problems with sound and I have also attended tutorials when the AL's have had connection issues.

ISSUE 3:

Just general questions, which have been answered or signposted to student support.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Gareth Jones
ROLE:	FAR FBL
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1: Engagement</p> <p>The previous quarter has provided numerous opportunities to expand on the progress made during the term with regards student engagement. The primary example of this was co-leading the development and operation of the FBL AL Student Conference at the beginning of October. This Conference held a special place in my heart, as its predecessor in 2019 led to me becoming more aware of the different opportunities to engage and I was keen for this to be a success. Based on the feedback received, the Conference was well received, and planning is already in place for the next incarnation.</p> <p>Engagement opportunities were further provided through Student Voice Week events, Black History Month events as well again taking observers to the Faculty Assembly in November.</p>	
<p>AREA 2: Expanding the range of voices heard.</p> <p>One common theme during my term so far has been to ensure that those within the Faculty and the OU have the opportunity to hear from as wide a range of voices as possible. This quarter has provided a few opportunities to help build on the work already in place. A great example was being able to invite guests to the quarterly student rep huddle held with the AD for Student Experience, allowing them to provide their perspective on the issues discussed.</p> <p>Together with the observers attending the Faculty Assembly, this has generated two potential new volunteers who have engaged in discussions on how to get involved.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the end of this quarter has brought upon a period of ill health for myself but knowing that there was a team of reps fully capable of covering for my short absence was reassuring and I am sure my absence was not noticed because of this.</p>	
<p>AREA 3: Curriculum development – Student Involvement</p>	

As the curriculum within the faculty continues to be developed/re-developed at pace, the ability to ensure that students are in the room as key decisions are made has been a real pleasure. Student involvement in these workshops will benefit future cohorts for years to come by providing their viewpoint based on their key attribute – being a student!

Thankfully, I work with a faculty that has come to realise the benefit of this, but work still continues to ensure that the range of voices are appropriate and the process of student involvement is not just a box ticking exercise.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this month to ask for support on a specific issue?	150+
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ISSUE 1:
Academic References

This issue came to my attention over 12 months ago initially, with efforts and methods being put in place to tackle the deficiencies in the current process. Despite best efforts of those involved, it is clear now that the methods used are nothing more than a plaster on a crack, with multiple issues raised in the last quarter.

Work is now taking place through multiple channels to bring this to the attention of the institution centrally.

ISSUE 2:
AL Consistencies

Whilst these type of issues are an ever present in this role, often involving information giving/sign-posting to the students, there has been a noticeable increase in queries of this topic. This has resulted in conversations taking place with the appropriate people within the faculty to discover what has happened, and steps to be taken to resolve any standout issues.

ISSUE 3:
Enrolment, Student Finance and Initial Study Queries

As this quarter covered the traditional start of the academic year, there was the usual questions involving getting settled into studying. Questions can include topics like: tutor allocations; initial assignments; deferrals; finance payment dates etc.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Lucy Richardson
ROLE:	FAR OAA
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1:</p> <p>I have been assuring open and access voices are heard on governance committees</p>	
<p>AREA 2:</p> <p>I have been trying to reach the student voice in hard-to-reach places and work to see it included including sessions at student voice week</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this month to ask for support on a specific issue?	0
<p>ISSUE 1:</p> <p>I have continued to work collaboratively with other Fars to insure Open and access voices are heard across the faculties. Usually where an issue occurs, students contact the far for the faculty the module is in not me directly.</p>	

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME	Stephanie Stubbins
ROLE	FAR STEM
QUARTER/YEAR	January 2022

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

Key progress areas:

AREA 1:

Pledge 1 - I will work as part of the CEC leadership team to improve the student experience for OU students, while supporting the individual and collective work of the CEC.

New Beginnings - I have been in role since the 1st of December 2021 and have been spending the time getting settled into my new role. My first aim is to get settled into this role and I have created a log of how I am setting this role, so I have something to handover to the next elected STEM Faculty Representative. I am focusing on 3 areas as my role pledges which are represented in the 3 AREAS's of this report (I have added them this time, so students can become aware of them).

Induction - I have had individual induction sessions with some Association Staff members and individual catchup with CEC members, staff contact Beth Metcalf and CEC buddy Gareth Jones who are supporting me in my role. I participated in Student Representative Training and attended my first CEC weekend meeting. I have also made some connections with other STEM volunteers from the Central Committee Representative and Student Experience Links.

CEC Work - I have had a lot of support from CEC members as I get up to date with the work they have doing, and I am excited to be part of this CEC term. I have been added to some working groups and committees to support the University wide work of the CEC and I will continue to be open to other members of the CEC when they need it.

AREA 2:

Pledge 2 - I aim to build links with the STEM faculty, creating a two-way communication channel to filter student voice through to the OU while feeding back to students.

Introductions - I made initial contact via email with Executive Dean (STEM), Communications and Engagement department (STEM) and eSTEEeM Director and from those conversations we set up meetings and kick-started a working relationship. I did a brief article for the STEM Faculty Newsletter and a profile piece for the eSTEEeM newsletter, introducing myself and leaving an open invitation for other departments to contact me.

STEM Faculty - I been contacted by various STEM Faculty departments and we have started discussions on how to increase student engagement with the faculty with the aim to improve student voice, student satisfaction, student success and student experience. I have also been included in conversations around EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion), teaching and learning, career and employability, and OU communications. I have been added to some working groups and committees so that STEM students are represented and have asked that there are more opportunities for STEM students to be involved.

eSTEE M Scholarship Centre - I have made valuable connections from within eSTEE M who promote innovation, scholarship, and research in teaching, learning and engagement, while seeking to enhance the student experience in open and distance STEM education. I have also been added to the eSTEE M Student Reference panel.

Student Experience - I had a meeting with Victoria Nicholas – Associate Dean (Student Experience) in STEM and we talked about the importance of hearing from students and how student experience impacts all areas of the university, from student recruitment, student satisfaction, student success, student retention (and more). We are looking at existing and new routes for capturing the current Student Experience and associated issues from STEM students.

AREA 3:

Pledge 3 - I want to represent STEM students, listen to their views, ideas, and concerns, and take their student voice to the relevant areas within the University to positively impact decision-making.

Student Voice - I have raised issues and concerns within STEM that affect the wider student community and have spoken with students that needed some support or advice, directing them to appropriate areas.

Engagement - I hosted a Christmas day drop-in for students who were alone at Christmas or wanted some time out to talk to other students, which went well. I am making plans to do a STEM Freshers session on the 2nd February 2022 during our fortnight of Freshers events which are held between 25th January to 6th February 2022.

Student contacts and key issues:

Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support on a specific issue?

39

ISSUE 1:

TMA Question error

3 days before the submission day I was contacted by a number of level 1 students who believed there was an issue with an assignment question and the guidance given to answer it.

I redirected them back to their tutors for advice, but soon realised it was a bigger issue as some students were going round in circles looking for information on how they could do the answer, even though there was no way it could be answered in that way. In some cases, wasting valuable days of time around their other commitments while still not being able to answer it, was making them doubt their ability to study with the OU.

Misinformation had stopped students from believing it was an error and instead they must have missed it in module materials. I took it forward to the relevant school and it was an error, and it has now been resolved, without affecting students' marks.

ISSUE 2:

Appropriate behaviour in Facebook groups

I have had a few different scenarios where behaviour on social media groups and the rules of them being different to the how some were behaving. I took additional advice and signposted them to check the rules of the group, advised them to talk to the admin and gave them a link to the OU social media policy. These seem to have resolved the concerns raised.

ISSUE 3:

Funding issues and removal from module

I have 3 students contact me concerning their funding not being approved in time and they had been removed from their modules which they started in October 2021. I sign-posted them to ring student support to explain the situation and their funding body to check on their applications. 2 out of these 3 students had the situation resolve, their funding was approved, and they were reinstated. The 3rd student has decided to reapply for January 2022 start for the same module and start again, this will still be funded by the same 'year' of funding and that should be through shortly.

There was 1 further issue of a student being remove by accident from their October 2021 module (again this student has already started and had a TMA marked), but their student finance has been in place since August 2021. This issue has now been resolved, after a copy of the student finance letter was emailed into the student fees department.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

NAME:	Nichola Connolly
ROLE:	FAR WELS
QUARTER / YEAR:	January 2022
QUARTERLY SUMMARY	
Key progress areas:	
<p>AREA 1:</p> <p>Being involved in several successful and well attended sessions for Student Voice Week both with the University and Students Association. Included in these were Good Practice within Academic Representation, a session on Life, Work, Study Balance and The Value of an OU Degree with was collaborated and planned with the AAR for England and the other FAR's</p> <p>This is part of the Engage and Involve area of the strategy</p>	
<p>AREA 2:</p> <p>Planning sessions for the January/February fresher's fortnight including a WELS drop in. I am also involved in planning and co-hosting other fresher's sessions. Also planned and hosted a successful Christmas event.</p> <p>This is part of the Engage and Involve area of the strategy</p>	
<p>AREA 3:</p> <p>Involved on the website working group to advise on the best layout for the new website which has come to fruition and has now been launched in December.</p> <p>This is part of the Inform and Support part of the strategy</p>	
Student contacts and key issues:	
Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?	40
<p>ISSUE 1:</p> <p>There were still ongoing issues around pending results all these seem to have been resolved as had no further enquiries from students about this.</p> <p>This is part of the Inform and Support part of the strategy</p>	
ISSUE 2:	

There were ongoing issues around alternative formats which appear to be resolved as had no further enquiries on this from students.

This is the Inform and Support part of the strategy

ISSUE 3:

Contacted in December from students who were still waiting longer than the required timescale for TMA scores and feedback. This has been resolved and all students that contacted me about this have now had their TMAs returned.

This is the Inform and Support part of the strategy