

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

23 – 24 April 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 Community (page 8)
- Vice President Engagement (page 10)
- Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (page 12)
- Student OU Council Member (page 16)
- Area Association Representative (AAR) for Europe (page 18)
- 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 25)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) (page 26)
- Faculty Association Representative (FAR) for Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (page 29)

The positions of Area Association Representative (AAR) for Northern Ireland, 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 Vice President Education, Vice President Student Support, Area Association Representative (AAR) for Wales, Area Association Representative (AAR) for England for this quarter.



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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| NAME: | Sarah Jones |
| ROLE: | President |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: Working on the 50th | |
| <p>The 50th Year launched in January with our conference. We have so far had a month about Love for all things OU Students and March has been discussing and sharing stories of women of the association.</p> <p>The plans for the 50th are ongoing and are coming together and we have a theme for each month. Having a plan now for the rest of the year and the 3 different teams now working it is much more about oversight for me and Reiss Miller (50th Project manager). We have had the chance to talk with a former student leadership team member about some of the things that have happened in the past and it is helping how we celebrate the future. I am really excited to see that we are getting engagement with what we are doing. We are now looking at how we measure this and make sure that we record the impact these events have</p> <p>This has links across all areas of our strategy.</p> | |
| AREA 2: Conference | |
| <p>Our 50th year has got off to a great start with Conference and Freshers! It was amazing to be part of Conference and listen to the different guests. The inspirational stories that came out will stick with me. It was amazing to see so many new students taking part and having their say in how we do things. And as part of Conference being part of the 'For' campaign and seeing the engagement of new students in it was really encouraging. Showing them the different ways that they could be involved and them getting stuck in was brilliant.</p> <p>Conference was fantastic this year and the diverse range of guests and sessions was a testament to the hard work of the team involved. My favourite sessions were the Coffee and Consultations. I love speaking with students and hearing their views on things that matter to them.</p> <p>This links across all areas of our strategy</p> | |
| AREA 3: Stormont Visit and Belfast Graduation | |

I went over to Belfast again for a day to give a speech at Stormont to help the Northern Ireland OU office launch their manifesto ready for the upcoming elections. I got to speak to Politicians and students about the plans to support students in NI and more widely in the UK. It was a great privilege even if it was 19 hours door to door!! We have launched our manifesto as well so it was really interesting to see how the OU's was received by Stormont in general.

Belfast Graduation was a huge highlight for me. It was personal highlight as it was the first face to face thing that I had done as President. It was also a great honour to represent the Association and Council at a celebration of student success. To see all the families cheering on and all the amazing shoes!!! To then be able to talk to various people in the Northern Ireland offices and those who have been supporting students was really encouraging. There were 100 nurses crossing the stage, which given they have all been working on the frontlines during the pandemic, it was a huge privilege to cheer them on.

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.37

Issue 1: Concerns over new government HE policy

I have had some students concerned about what is happening within the sector regarding the consultation that has just come out. I have been able to reassure them that we are working with the OU on the issues that concern part time distance learning students. It has been good to be already in those conversation with the Vice Chancellor and also the government and external affairs team.

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

Issue 2: University Sustainability

A couple of students have contacted me regarding the OU's sustainability plans. I have been able to share with them the OU's plans for sustainability and reassure that we have students on Sustainability groups. We have also just started our Sustainability working group to examine the issue from the association perspective. Hopefully we will be able to get more students involved in this as we progress rather than just student reps.

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

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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| NAME: | Ian Cheyne |
| ROLE: | Deputy President |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: Working together | |
| <p>‘There is a greater feeling of working together within the CEC’.</p> <p>Yes. That was the welcome comment I made in my previous report. And some of us are still working together and getting things done, though it is not yet reflected in all areas. I’m happy to say that there is progress in putting into place what is needed to ensure a harmonious working environment for us all. With determination from everyone to act responsibly and enable everyone to benefit from the good work which has been achieved, we will certainly improve things.</p> <p>With so much positive change in our behavioural training, frameworks and procedures, I’m determined to ensure that my final report in July as Deputy President will record a genuine and realistic optimism that the issues we’ve been tackling will very soon become and remain a thing of the past!</p> | |
| AREA 2: The Graduate School | |
| <p>I’m pleased to see that progress is finally being made in enabling our PGR students to actively engage in a much enhanced way with the Association. We have now established mechanisms for a meaningful dialogue between the Association (including our staff) and the PGR community. I’m also optimistic that facilities being made available via our new website and ‘The Hoot’ will initiate the levels of engagement which have been previously lacking. Many thanks to all involved for this!</p> | |
| AREA 3: Governance Review/re-structuring | |
| <p>I covered this item in my previous report. There is no doubt in my mind that the governance proposals marked progress—change is inevitable and it is infinitely better to be in control, not of change for obvious reasons, but of the ways in which we are able to successfully respond to change. As an organisation we still suffer from the 75% majority requirement which prevents change wanted by a majority. Is it democratic for a minority to decide the fate of the majority? Because that is precisely what this arrangement enables, and will continue to enable, unless we challenge and change it without delay.</p> | |

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| 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? | 9 |
| ISSUE 1: Association Cultural and Governance Reviews | |
| behaviour...behaviour...behaviour | |
| There's been an awful lot of noise about 'democracy' in recent months. Sometimes I wonder why we bother trying to improve the ways in which we carry out the fundamental job of representing all students in their best interests but the Association will prosper on constructive debate. We are a volunteering organisation first and foremost. Let's never forget that. | |

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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| NAME: | Matt Porterfield |
| ROLE: | Vice President Admin |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: Culture and Governance of the Association | |
| <p>This has to be a major focus for the remainder of current terms of office although it will inevitably also be an issue for the incoming team after the elections. The proposals recommended by external experts were put to a vote at Conference and although they all achieved a majority, they did not reach the 75% required by our constitution. Reducing this high hurdle was in fact one of the proposals. We are now looking at what recommendations can be progressed without alteration to our articles.</p> <p>The Trustees are also looking at how our internal rules can be tightened up to deter and sanction some of the unacceptable behaviour observed amongst a small minority of elected representatives. The rules exist however they are not always followed until a formal complaint is raised, something that needs to change.</p> | |
| AREA 2: Finance, Resources and Risk | |
| <p>Work is proceeding at a good pace. We now have new auditors from August this year and they are already providing us with excellent (free) Trustee training. An internal control check has been completed by the Committee Chair and myself, the Committee now has a trading working group chaired by me reporting in to it, and the risk register has been completely reviewed/updated by the committee members.</p> <p>An important task was reviewing the terms and remuneration of the two paid posts. President and Deputy President. A subject matter expert agreed to join the committee in a lay capacity and was able to bring valuable experience to us.</p> | |
| AREA 3: Other activities | |
| <p>The Graduation Ceremony season is starting, back to Face-to-Face, and a host of volunteers are required to run our Student Shop stalls at these events. The call for student volunteers went out late due to glitches on our new website, so Association staff members are having to step in. I was the first volunteer, at Brighton, and it was wonderful to meet real students rather than online, including a fellow volunteer from the 2012 Olympics in London who I had persuaded to try an</p> | |

OU degree. I had not seen her for years but she is now firmly committed to volunteer at the next Brighton Graduation in November

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:

Our main overall issue must revolve round the transition from the pandemic restrictions to having the freedom to hold face-to-face meetings and events. This is not a simple 'back to how we were' as online has its advantages for some. Travel and overnight stays can be avoided, accessibility is, in most cases, improved and the planning cycle is shortened.

Of course there are arguments on the other side about effectiveness, social contact and avoidance of misunderstandings or accidental exclusion.

Without going into the debates that are happening now, the future is looking 'Hybrid' and that is even written on the back of my car!



CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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| NAME: | Anca Seaton | |
| ROLE: | Vice President Community | |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 | |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | | |
| Key progress areas: | | |
| AREA 1: Freshers Fortnight January/February 2021 | | |
| <p>The 22B Freshers Fortnight was a success. We had lots of sessions for all areas of interest for freshers – from academic and study skills sessions, through to social events and competitions. Lots of opportunities to choose from and attend, and also get involved. A paper about the evaluation of Freshers Fortnights 21J and 22B is on the agenda for this meeting.</p> | | |
| AREA 2: Clubs and societies | | |
| <p>We have an increasing number of clubs, they almost always seem to be created as a result of students getting together for Freshers Fortnight. We had 2 clubs becoming societies now, and they are doing really well. We also are looking at the Students Associations clubs. They've been launched at the 2018 Conference, and we only had basic guidance and support, as they are a light-touch type of community groups. After a few years, and dealing with good and bad events/issues/interactions, it is time to review how the clubs are run and how we support them. A paper about this Clubs Review is on this meeting's agenda. As a result of the issues we had with certain clubs, the acceptance of new clubs have been stopped temporarily, pending the Clubs Review paper being passed by the CEC and Board of Trustees.</p> | | |
| AREA 3: | | |
| <p>The traditional graduation ceremonies have re-started this spring. There were a few hiccups when trying to recruit volunteers due to the new website, but now registration is open for all the ceremonies in the spring season. Training was provided in an online environment, with good participation from the volunteers. There are some slight changes in the way we do these events, mainly due to the pandemic and the need to streamline the process and make the whole day easier to get through and also enjoy. Personally, I am looking forward to volunteering at a couple of ceremonies in my area.</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? | | 18 (most of my interactions happen in |

online events and they are not directed to me specifically)

ISSUE 1:

Students are asking when the face-to-face meetups are going to be resumed. Our website still states the Students Association has decided against holding any face-to-face events until February 2022 at the earliest. The restrictions have been listed in most of the four nations, so it is a legitimate request, although in the last month, there's been a sharp rise in the number of Covid cases. This, and the removal of free general Covid testing for England from 1st April, followed by the other nations as well, are not welcome news when trying to decide whether we should re-start face to face events.

ISSUE 2:

When the new website was launched, some of the data from the old website wasn't transferred over. I highlighted this to the Community Team and provided them with the names of the clubs with no contact details.

ISSUE 3:

The acceptance of clubs was temporarily stopped due to the Club Review and the issues we experienced with a very small number of clubs applying. I am confident they will be resumed shortly.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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| NAME: | Fanni Zombor |
| ROLE: | Vice President Engagement |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: Annual membership survey | |
| <p>Following the close of the survey, we have had nearly 4,000 students completing the annual membership survey – beyond what we thought we may achieve. After the initial survey responses being analysed by the Strategy & Insight team, we have started making a plan to discuss the results in a higher level and to initiate change as a result of the results. This will include the appropriate results being disseminated to different teams for consideration and a plan of discussion areas for CEC at each of their leadership weekends until October. The paper will contain 3 discussion areas – 1 short term, 1 medium term and 1 longer term areas for change. This will allow the results of the survey to have the biggest impact whilst considering priorities already going on at the Association.</p> <p>A full CEC paper for discussion has also been submitted to the meeting.</p> | |
| AREA 2: Student Consultation Meetings | |
| <p>As part of my role, I sit on the Student Consultation Management Group, which has responsibility of running the Student Consultative Meetings every year. Beyond the management group, I worked in partnership with the OU's PVC-Students, Student Voice team to help shape the topics for this year's meeting. My continued input has meant that the questions and topics were relevant for students' areas of interests around this time of the year. I also worked with the staff team at the Association to plan and come up with the Association session at the end of the consultation meeting.</p> | |
| AREA 3: National Students Survey | |
| <p>The NSS comes around every year and is a feedback tool that I ensure the student voice is in every year. The meetings organised by the OU run December – April every year. My role in these meetings has been making sure the OU encourages students across a range of platforms to complete the survey, but that it is done in a way where students who have already completed it or are not eligible aren't tripping over adverts for the 4-month period. I also play a key part in ensuring that changes made as a result of the NSS are explained to students, so they are more encouraged to fill out yet another survey, as it shows how the voice of students makes a difference.</p> | |

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| Student contacts and key issues: | |
| Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this month to ask for support on a specific issue? | 50 |
| ISSUE 1: | |
| Elections questions – lots of students have approached me to ask about different roles, overall CEC responsibility and what it's like being on the team. | |
| ISSUE 2: | |
| Deferral and fee liability questions, from students struggling with workload | |
| ISSUE 3: | |
| Issues around non-responsive tutors, and extended marking time from tutors causing issues for students completing and progressing with their modules. | |

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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| NAME: | Patrice Belton |
| ROLE: | Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (VPEDI) |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| <p>“This quarter was focused on change and learning to embrace difference (particularly) in Leadership and (internal) Cultures; from the Association’s <i>Biennial Conference 2022</i> – where myself and the E D I Working Group (W G) explored <u>collaboration</u> with students, during our <i>EDI Students Insights session</i>; through to students having their first encounters with their (new) <i>E D I Group Committee Leaders at Freshers (February) 2022</i>; and, in questioning <u>accessibility practices</u> at (both) the OU and Association, to advocate for and champion against (internal) cultures which acts as barriers (to students and their mental health and wellbeing) - whilst encouraging more moments for <u>active listening</u>, <u>accountability</u> and <u>support</u> (so that students’ needs and lived experiences are considered at all times, thus enabling them to feel <u>heard</u>, <u>welcomed</u>, <u>valued</u>, <u>understood</u> & <u>accepted</u> for their differences. ‘Collaboration is: ‘A result that is bigger than the sum of its parts’ or ‘Everyone having a VOICE.’ (OU Students)</p> | |
| AREA 1: Updates on E D I at the Association | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>E D I Students’ Insights</u>: Our latest, ‘E D I Student Insights’ event took place at the Association’s (Biennial) Conference (in January) 2022, which I hosted alongside the Student Support and Welfare Projects Officer, it aimed to help students and Association Representatives to better understand and reflect on Collaboration ‘one of our core values and one of the OU’s ten Employability Skills’. Students valued the session greatly as it also offered tips, they could apply to group work during their studies. In terms of the next steps, we the students’ insight Team are now planning to roll out more of these sessions throughout the year and incorporate more skills development and awareness building topics. Our next Student Insights session will focus on Careers and Employability (please keep watch for more on that). - <u>E D I Strategy</u>: As part of the Association’s Strategic objectives to embed E D I (here), members of the E D I W G and Strategy & Insights (Staff) Team are presently working on a (formal) E D I Strategy to be actioned alongside the Association’s main Strategy; further news on this to follow soon. - <u>EDI Group Committees</u>: As informed in my January report, our three E D I Groups have been electing and co-opting (new) Committee Members and roles, to support their group developments. I am pleased to say, we now have; 4 for the OU Pride (LGBT+) Group, 10 for the Disabled Students Group (D S G) and 8 for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Group. Equally, students had the opportunity to engage with some of these volunteers, at Freshers in (February) 2022. Several Committee Members (from each group) are now | |

active members of Association Working Groups and are collaborating with OU Staff on projects, to ensure more student voice is embedded in our collective practices. Lastly, (greatest news) in our latest **Annual Membership Survey results**, the percentage of students who say they have benefitted from the groups and would recommend them to peers, were; **94%** for the D S G, **96%** for OU Pride & **99%** for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Group. This shows that not only do students feel they are being heard but that they find some sense of community and belonging (here).

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

AREA 2: Updates on EDI at the OU

- **EDI Committee:** As a part of my role, I sat on the OU's E D I Steering Group, as a Student Representative alongside the Vice President for Student Support, whilst the Association's President sat on its subgroup (the E D I W G (OU) which concluded its work in January 2021). This E D I collective operated outside of the OU's governance structure, whilst it was tasked to monitor and inform practices of E D I across the University. The difficulty that posed for both staff and students, as it seemed far removed from informing the OU's Senate and Council, who are ultimately the decision-makers. Thus, as part of the OU's (new) Strategy and to enable E D I to feed directly into the OU's governance and vice versa, both the E D I Steering Group and E D I W G (OU) will form the (new) E D I Committee. I, along with the Association's President, was invited to sit on the Committee as Students and Association Representatives.
- **E D I Advisory Group:** In conjunction with the above changes, the E D I Dean and other OU Leadership, have formed this sub-group, to help put together a formal **University's E D I Plan**; I (now) also sit as a student member here, thus ensuring I can continually feed insights into the OU's EDI practices on students' behalf – but I cannot “VOICE” alone – your insights are always welcomed so, do email (me) or the Association to share thoughts for us to take forward.
- **Black History and Culture - OU and Santander Partnership (towards Race Equality):** *Are offering a second run of their (free scholarship) FutureLearn course - Union Black: Britain's Black cultures & steps to anti-racism (Cohort 2), which had its first run around Black History Month 2021. It is open to (all) University Students, Staff and Academics across the Higher Education Sector. This course is valuable to students, particularly those hoping to build on their understanding of Black culture; strengthen their knowledge and advocacy practices; and those who are active allies or hoping to become allies for this cohort.*

Why does E D I at the OU matter? As I motioned (above, and under the Equality Act 2010) **all students at the OU should feel welcomed, valued, understood, and accepted for their differences** including Race, Ethnicity and other Intersectionalities, being a representative within these spaces, mean I can advocate and share insights to and from a student's perspective. Therefore as V P E D I, I hope to not only be a voice and representative for students but to stand in the gap on their behalf of those who are underrepresented (here), until they find their way through. One way to ensure I can do this is to have effective tools and knowledge gained through training, hence I too am taking the course, and will go a

step further (in Summer 2022), by sitting on a panel of students with Santander, to speak about this scholarship project and to share my insights on the course and its impact for OU students.

(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?

70+ (via Facebook(F B)/Email/Forums)
20+ (via WhatsApp/F B Messenger)

Student Contacts and Key Issues

Key Issues:

- **Neurodiversity (N D) and Accessibility:** Discussions and queries are being raised by N D students via email and within the Associations' N D Club, due to challenges with Tutorial accessibility, exam adjustments and Tutor support – I aim to raise this with the Director for Support Services (OU), at our next (regular) Student Support catch up. Equally, as an E D I and support development within the Association (following on from these conversations and previous exchanges with the Club's Chair), the E D I Student's Insight Team have been planning a *Student Insights* session (with the Club's Chair), specifically aimed at *Celebrating Neurodiversity & Demystifying Neurodivergence* (at the Association) to help build awareness, have a better understanding of the needs of N D Students and to support better Allyship. Lastly, the N D Chair has also been invited to sit on and inform a (new) *Accessibility Standards Working Group*, aimed at creating baselines for accessibility support, across the Associations and (wider) student community.
- **Module Errors in Alternative Format Documents:** Concerns raised by students around modules that were not fully prepared for (at the start of the study in September / October 2021), which resulted in alternative format documents being issued to students, were either incomplete or had missing and obsolete information to support TMAs. This was raised with the Module Team to rectify these issues and, with the Director for Support services to help inform and prevent reoccurrences in future.
- **Troubleshooting and Study Materials Support (at the OU):** Concerns were raised by students who had been reaching out to the Student Support Team but felt their queries were not being addressed promptly whilst not being able to make queries outside office hours. This was raised with the Director for Support Services (in the above module error query). As result, I and the V P for Students' Support were invited to a follow-up meeting with the Associate Dean for Student Additional Support (S A S) to discuss alternative options available to students. (Gratefully), we have discovered that the Computing helpdesk and the Distribution Centre now operate as one Team, within Academic Services at the OU (i.e. **The Computing and Distribution Helpdesk**) and are working closely with other areas of the University to provide support to both students and tutors more effectively; covering topics from *Adobe Connect* and *alternative formats* to *IT issues troubleshooting* (e.g. Website, Office 365) and are open for longer hours to enable support. This is available to all students and contact details are on Studenthome or the OU Help-centre.

Praise & Gratitude:

Elections 2022:

As the Association 2022 Elections for the **Central Executive Committee (Student Leadership) and Student Trustees** – are on their way, I have been truly empowered to see (new) students reaching out to me to enquire about volunteering and putting themselves forward; some mentioning their gratitude to me for encouraging them to do so. It's been such a solemn, humbling, and emotional moment for me to say the least, and I truly wanted to thank those students and others feeling inspired, moved, or stirred to take on any of the elected roles and to help us continue this work on behalf of students. I would also like to thank the Association's Election (Staff and) Team for putting out lots of information and advice to and for students and in various formats, with support and accessibility in mind; that too has made me extremely proud and grateful as a colleague, student representative and advocate for E D I and Accessibility (Thank you!!). This work requires a lot of commitment and selflessness, but it truly is worth it; I wish all nominees and elected reps the very best of luck!

My Role:

I tried to avoid this bit because it truly stings (heart on sleeve and all) but needs must; I would like you all to know that I will not be returning to sit a 2nd term as V P E D I this year's elections. Finally, I will be Graduating in May 2022, and I will not be returning to studying for a while, thus I will not be eligible to run (fair), as I will no longer be a student. That said, I am ever so grateful for the opportunity and experiences I have had with OU Students to date, you have all inspired me to find and use my voice and, to push through when things became tough; I came up with a plan to help improve things (here) for you all, but in the midst, you've made this journey an amazing plight for me. I still have a few months left to my term, so this is not the end, just a token of gratitude and accountability. I am gratefully emotional! Thank you OU Students!! 😊

(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

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|---|---------------------------|
| NAME: | Danielle Smith |
| ROLE: | Student Member of Council |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: Students Association 50th Birthday Celebrations | |
| <p>Celebrations of the Association's 50th anniversary continue with lots of different workstreams taking place to deliver aspects of these. Whilst I am still part of the main 50th steering group, I have also joined one of the sub working groups which is tasked with planning the fundraising interventions that will enable us to raise £50,000 for OUSET (Open University Students Educational Trust) which provides students experiencing severe financial hardship with grants for study related costs. We have now had a couple of very productive meetings and are bringing together a fundraising strategy, which we hope will leave a legacy in years to come for the Association.</p> | |
| AREA 2: Representing Student Voice at Council | |
| <p>The Council met again at the beginning of March. As usual, many of the topics on the agenda centred around the good governance and financial health of the University. Council received updates on some key areas of work taking place such as the core systems replacement which is the overhaul of many of the IT systems in the organisation.</p> <p>We also received the annual report from the OU in Scotland (OUiS). It's been a hugely successful year for them, and Council congratulated their Director, Susan Stewart, on this. The report contained several student success stories which were hugely inspiring, plus the success of the Big Blether, which is a project that was started by one of the Association's own student representatives. A fantastic achievement.</p> <p>As ever the President delivered our regular update to Council, which included a summary of the recent Freshers events that took place at the end of January. Once again, Council were extremely impressed with all of the work being done by the Association to build the student community. Excitingly, as a result of my suggestion, we have now also obtained an agreement to present an annual update to Senate (the highest academic governance committee in the University), which we previously did not do.</p> | |
| Student contacts and key issues: | |

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| Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue? | 0 |
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CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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| NAME: | Kate Wells |
| ROLE: | Area Representative in Europe |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: Student Community | |
| <p>Isabelle, Tala and I are making great efforts to build a sense of community for the international students. We hold regular sessions, which include quizzes and "drop-ins". Two new items are the forthcoming international student newsletter, which should be released sometime soon, and an idea to have international students volunteer to be trained as hosts for meet-ups so that meetings can be held in appropriate timeframes, without those of us based in Europe needing to be awake half the night. The fora for "Continental Europe" and "Rest of the World" will be merged (and some posts archived) to be the "International" forum for all "non-UK" students.</p> <p>T</p> | |
| AREA 2: Freshers | |
| <p>We held a well-attended Freshers session, and had a very productive chat before an excellent quiz (with prizes!).</p> | |
| AREA 3: Conference | |
| <p>Conference was very interesting, the online element makes it hard to meet new people tho', and I wonder if there is a way this can be brought in to the Conference for the future, in order that those of us who will never be able to attend (due to location) can perhaps meet some other students. I don't however have any bright ideas on how to go about accomplishing this.</p> | |
| AREA 4: Student Consultations | |
| <p>The student consultation raised the ever-present issue of why doctorates are only available to those who are willing & able to move to Milton Keynes. This not only precludes all international students, but also anyone who has any kind of responsibility at home.</p> <p>The other issue to be noted is that the consultation was held on a weekday morning, not the most inclusive time for international students, despite this there</p> | |

were a few students, but more thought should be put in to the timing of the meeting by the University (perhaps in future with some input from the Association).

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?

5

ISSUE 1:

Available help with funding for international students. OUSBA is able to help some students, and is looking to expand its remit, but faces the challenge of meeting all the financial rules in each different country. This is perfectly understandable, and there is nothing which can be done to speed up the process.

ISSUE 2:

Postal charges for EU students: after July 2021 each EU country has put in place customs duty on imported goods from the UK, these are now in line with all countries outside the EU. This means OU students in Europe now have to pay for parcels delivered to them by the OU, which were previously without cost. The OU needs to understand this (and a disclaimer about paying for charges is not enough), and preferably group mailings into as few as possible to reduce the cost to the student.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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|--|------------|
| NAME: | Bev Smith |
| ROLE: | FASS FAR |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: | |
| <p>Although freshers was a little quieter this time it was good to be involved and to welcome new students. Although it's busy, it's time well spent to encourage new students to get involved with The Association and hopefully increase their engagement, both with The Association but also with other students. It helps with engagement and some of those students who attended freshers in February are regulars at the weekly/monthly online events.</p> | |
| AREA 2: STUDENT EXPERIENCE/ENGAGEMENT | |
| <p>I have been involved in the first meeting between the Faculty and a group of 5 students, both undergrad and post grads to gauge ideas on how to get students more involved and create a sense of identity within the faculty and with the staff too. Ideas suggested were varied, from induction days with staff, more guest lectures, to more face to face activities. It has been suggested that we can try an online event using Brella, a new platform which allows for easier breakout rooms etc. I'm still waiting for feedback from staff as to what happens next.</p> | |
| AREA 3: | |
| <p>The new Psychology group for Scotland (a joint venture between The University and The association is set to launch on 21st April. This is welcomed within the faculty and the aim is to roll out the group to all Nations throughout the coming year. It is hoped that if this group is successful, other schools will follow with similar groups. It will increase engagement between staff and students, build a strong student community and hopefully offer a good student experience.</p> | |
| Student contacts and key issues: | |
| <p>Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this quarter to ask for support/seek sign-posting/ask a question/flag an issue?</p> | |
| ISSUE 1: | |
| <p>A student contacted me about pending results which had been going on for quite a while. After some discussion the matter was passed to VP Ed for further action</p> | |

ISSUE 2:

Students have contacted me re face to face meet ups. Although the pandemic isn't over and cases are rising, students are still asking about regional face to face meet ups. Some of them have formed groups and are meeting unofficially, which is fine, though I think they'll be reluctant to join any future official regional meet ups now they've formed their own groups outside The association.

ISSUE 3:

Further questions on module choices and general enquiries during on line drop ins.

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

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|--|--------------|
| NAME: | Gareth Jones |
| ROLE: | FAR FBL |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: Engage and Inform | |
| <p>Work has continued this quarter in earnest to improve the levels of engagement. During this quarter, as an attempt to raise awareness of both the Students Association and its 50th Anniversary, I led an initiative to deliver presentations to all faculties, via their Faculty Association Representatives, at their Faculty Assemblies. This presentation aimed to highlight our achievements alongside our plans for the year, providing an opportunity for others to get involved. It also contained a handout which could be cascaded to others, including students.</p> <p>I have also developed a proposal, consulting with various members of the CEC and staff team, on introducing a Students Association Tutor Awards programme, with the view of making this a permanent feature. At the time of writing this report, this proposal is awaiting CEC and BoT approval, but the intent is to award tutors who have gone above and beyond in supporting students through their OU journey. This will help students engage with us, through the nominations process, providing students with a tangible method of recognising exceptional practice. It also helps us engage more with the AL body, developing relationships which could be mutually utilised in the future.</p> <p>Again, it was great to take a group of student observers to the Faculty Assembly, opening the curtain to behind the scenes of the faculty, and hopefully generating some interest in further engagement with the Association.</p> | |
| AREA 2: Influence | |
| <p>This quarter has brought about a few opportunities to exert influence in a wide range of areas. A prominent example of this is my involvement with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales as the part-time/mature student representative for all students within Wales. This quarter has brought with it a wide consultation period regarding some upcoming changes, but it has been a great pleasure to provide opinion and influence on some key upcoming areas.</p> <p>Additionally, and more internally facing this time, being involved with the recently established Position Statements Working Group has given me a chance to help shape the direction of the Students Association on public facing issues. The creation of the Position Statements Working Group has been a big step-forward in allowing the Association to react in a more agile manner, releasing considered</p> | |

statements and positions in a timelier manner, and it's been great to be a part of this.

Back in December, I took a paper to the Law Board of Studies regarding academic references and the associated deficient processes at the OU. With agreement of the Board, this has been escalated up the governance structure of the OU, with a view of finding a solution. Additionally, through consultation with the interim Head of Law School, this issue has been discussed at a sector level, at a recent conference of Law School Heads across the UK HEI industry. It is great see some progress being made, and I remain hopeful that a solution can be found in a timely manner.

Finally, this quarter has also given me plenty of opportunity to be involved in the recruitment process within the faculty. I have sat on the recruitment panels for new lecturers, a head of school and an intern for the Open Justice Centre, helping to ensure that those hired best serve the interests of the OU, and more personally, their students.

AREA 3: Inform and Support

During the last quarter, there has been a few opportunities to address some FAQs in collaboration with the faculty. This has seen the development of a series of videos and FAQ documents that help cover topics, including use of special circumstances forms; deferral processes; and initial study support. Some of these topics are a direct consequence student contacts received.

Contribution to the Students Associations 50th Celebration planning has allowed me to give my opinion on the topics which would better inform others about our past and future plans. One highlight in this area for me was interview two friends who found love at the OU, and it was great to share their inspiring story with others in an engaging manner.

March also brings about the annual Student Consultation, a highlight in the calendar for me. Alongside other CEC members, it is a real pleasure to interact with other students, discovering their concerns. It is also a pleasure to help share information about the Association with those students who might not have engaged/heard about us previously.

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: Special Circumstances/Deferrals/Discretionary Postponements

As we start to approach some of the larger end of year assessment points, there has been an increase in questions regarding the options available for students who are struggling. Advice has been given out and, as mentioned, I have worked with the faculty to ensure consistent advice is available to the students.

ISSUE 2: Tutor/Assignment/Strike Action/Tutorial

The impact of the strike action brought questions related to their impact on the on tutorials, tutor support and assignment returns. Information was given on the impact, with direction to the FAQ Association statement, as well as advice on BAU procedures.

ISSUE 3: General new student enquiries

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

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|--|-----------------|
| NAME: | Lucy Richardson |
| ROLE: | FAR OAA |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: | |
| The role is now well imbedded in the program. Regular quarterly meetings now take place | |
| AREA 2: | |
| I have held a number of events to learn about hard-to-reach student voices. Unfortunately, the accumulation of this work has been delayed by covid | |
| AREA 3: | |
| Work to help promote inter-disciplinary study within the university. | |
| Student contacts and key issues: | |
| Roughly how many students have contacted you direct this month to ask for support on a specific issue? | 1 |
| ISSUE 1: | |
| A general admin issue signposted to student support | |

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

| | |
|---|----------------|
| NAME: | Steph Stubbins |
| ROLE: | FAR STEM |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>I have been working with other CEC members in a number of areas including: -</p> <p><i>‘Student Consultations’</i> – being involved with the student consultation process, supporting students in the break-out rooms and co-presenting in the Students Association part. It’s been a great opportunity to highlight the work the Association does, the current elections and the services we provide. <i>‘Tutor Awards’</i> – which are student nominated awards for tutors for each faculty and access programme. Work is ongoing and nominations are open. <i>‘Faculty Assembly Presentations’</i> – I did 50th themed presentations with other Faculty Association Representatives at the Faculty Assemblies which are attended by wide range of Faculty staff.</p> <p>A highlight has been <i>Sustainability</i> – I have been working with Sarah Jones (President) around Sustainability with the OU and within the OU Students Association. This is an area I am personally interested in because I have a passion for environmental topics and am also studying Environmental Science, so I am excited to be actively engaged in early discussions in these areas. I attended my first OU Coordination of Sustainability Group (as the student member), which is an initiative led by the University and part of the OU Strategy. It was an insightful meeting, allowing me to understand the many activities, projects and approaches that the OU is taking to embed sustainability into the University, operationally, student facing and staff facing. I am also working with Sarah around environmental change within the Students Association, we are working within a new OU Students Association Sustainability Working Group (with both Student Representatives and Association Staff Members) and I am looking forward to seeing where this work will take us.</p> | |
| AREA 2: | |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | |

Communications in Partnership – have been working with the Associate Dean of Student Experience (STEM) Associate Dean of Academic Excellence (STEM) and have raised the importance of listening to student voice directly from the wider student community. We are working on communication in partnership to ensure accurate and timely information is delivered to students when needed and improve direct student engagement with STEM students.

Meeting with the STEM Schools – I have been meeting with the 6 individual STEM schools about the areas of work they are currently doing or planning. This is to understand the way they work, the initiatives they have been working on, and areas where we can improve, student engagement, student voice and the overall student experience for their students. I have gained networking contacts and understanding of how different each of the school's work within the faculty.

OU STEM Teaching Conference - I was a student member on a Student Engagement Panel session within the OU STEM Teaching Conference on the 2nd of March 2022. I was in discussions with Senior STEM Managers across the faculty, plus the Associate Dean for Academic Excellence in STEM and the Associate Dean for Student Experience in STEM. We debated the importance of Student Engagement, the challenges of distance learning environments, and how to foster meaningful engagement with OU students. Student engagement is a key area I am interested in, and I am glad I participated at this event.

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.*

Talking with STEM students – I have talked with STEM students who asked for advice (signposting), raised issues of concerns, or wanted to know more about some other roles in the student elections.

Freshers - I talked to STEM Students around and during Freshers while signposting them to useful resources. It was great opportunity to see new and current STEM students meet, connect, and discuss the study plans; and for them to talk to student representatives. During a dedicated STEM Freshers' event, we discussed student engagement with the Students Association, with the Faculty, and each School. We talked about how to get more involved and what their understanding was of an Academic Community.

eSTEEeM Student Reference Panel - I have become a member of eSTEEeM Student Reference Panel and made a connection with some of the student volunteers, some who have shown an interest in getting more involved with the Students Association (including the elections). It was great to see the cross-section of work that eSTEEeM does while getting students involved at every level.

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?

92

ISSUE 1:

- Capped Modules and Waiting Lists in Computing and Engineering
- Waiting list on module registrations

ISSUE 2:

- Tutor Strikes
- Cancelled tutorials
- Tutor Strikes and cancellation of tutorials before assignments due
- Non-Communication from Student Support and Tutor

ISSUE 3:

- Study-related funding costs
- Second degree funding for STEM Degrees

CEC QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT

| | |
|--|------------------|
| NAME: | Nichola Connolly |
| ROLE: | FAR WELS |
| QUARTER / YEAR: | April 2022 |
| QUARTERLY SUMMARY | |
| Key progress areas: | |
| AREA 1: | |
| <p>Being involved in organising sessions for conference 2022 which ran in January 2022. I facilitated a mind apples session as mind apples champion at conference 2022 which was successful and well attended by students.</p> <p>This is part of the Engage and Involve area of the strategy</p> | |
| AREA 2: | |
| <p>Hosting several sessions for Fresher's 22B including a Q&A with experienced students in collaboration with other CEC members. I also hosted a WELS drop in for Fresher's 22B both events were well attended, and students enjoyed them and engage with them.</p> <p>This is part of the Engage and Involve area of the strategy</p> | |
| AREA 3: | |
| <p>Involved on the culture change working group to look at the culture of the Students Association and help produce a new values and behaviour policy. I am currently involved in the values and behaviours campaign to introduce the policy to volunteers and students.</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? | 100 |
| ISSUE 1: | |
| <p>There were issues around the change in TMA marking turnaround and some tutors were still marking to the fifteen working days turnaround when it had reverted to ten working days. Advised students to contact tutors or student support team.</p> <p>This is part of the Inform and Support part of the strategy</p> | |

ISSUE 2:

Enquiries about what the impact would be to students if they did not submit a TMA. Also, enquiries about module choices and deferrals. Advised students to check their assessment guides about individual TMA's and advised to contact student support about module choices and deferrals.

This is the Inform and Support part of the strategy

ISSUE 3:

Enquiries about the process to change a tutor or how to have a TMA remarked. Advised students to contact student support to discuss the process.

This is the Inform and Support part of the strategy