

Student Leadership Team (SLT) Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday 07 February, hybrid, in Milton Keynes.

Attendees:

| Name | SLT role | Initials |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| Natalie Baker (Chair) | President | NB |
| Abigail Cornea | STEM Faculty Representative | AC |
| Aimee Prior | Disabled Students Representative | AP |
| Alex Thomas | LGBTQIA+ Representative | AT |
| Andrew Kolapo | Student Member of Council | AK |
| Charon Gates | WELS Faculty Representative | CG |
| Isabelle Hoyet | International Representative | IH |
| Jack Flaherty | FASS Faculty Representative | JF |
| Jethro Tieman | Sustainability Representative | JT |
| Julie Catterall | England representative | JC |
| Kimberley Kennedy | VP Admin | KK |
| Loz Harris | FBL Faculty Representative | LH |
| Michael Jones | Wales Representative | MJ |
| Reece McKeown | Ireland Representative | RM |
| Rochelle Benjamin | BAME Students Representative | RB |

| Name | Staff role | Initials |
|---------------------------|---|----------|
| Alex Stradling | Student Advice Admin | AS |
| Beth Pacey | CEO | BP |
| Chan Howell-Walker | Student Belonging Officer | CHW |
| Ciara Linehan | Project Officer | CL |
| Dan Moloney | Director of Strategy & Democracy | DM |
| Emily Cox | Contents Officer | EC |
| Gabby Cull | Head of People | GC |
| Gareth Jones | Head of Student Voice | GJ |
| Heather Bloomer | Deputy Director of Marketing & Communications | HB |
| Jazz Simpson | SLT Liaison Officer | JS |
| Kate Dungate | Insights & Policy Officer | KD |
| Nicky Powell | Training & Wellbeing Officer | NP |
| Sammi Wright | Representation Officer | SW |
| Tom Mitchell | Project Officer | TM |
| Verity Robinson | Head of EDI & Belonging | VR |

Observer – Rebecca Fowler-Monk, Student Representative & DSG Secretary.

Apologies:

| Name | Role | Initials |
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| Jessica Hannington | VP Student Welfare | JH |

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Priority Projects Updates
3. Position Statements website walk around – Gareth Jones
4. Advocacy Action Plan Workshop
5. SLT Consultation session
6. Student Issues Reporting Tool – Discussion
7. Any Other Business
8. Content capture and consultation practice

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| 1. | Welcome and Introduction | |
| 1.1 | NB opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Referenced the NSS – urging attendees to encourage students to complete the NSS. Graduation volunteering roles are available – NB asked SLT to please share in spaces with students. NB went through the actions from the previous SLT meeting, providing updates. | |
| 1.2 | Action: SLT members were encouraged to get involved in the Wellbeing Weeks whiteboard, which is shared with SLT on the Teams space. | All SLT |
| 2. | Priority Projects Updates | |
| 2.1 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Support – GJ gave an update, referencing the Best Practice document that SLT approved, this will be launched on the <i>What We Believe in Hub</i> early next week. 2. Wellbeing Weeks – CG gave a shout out and thank you to Reiss Miller, for all their hard work in this area. 3. Academic Student experience – LH noted the best practice document is going to be launched early next week. This has been well received by stakeholders. 4. Apprentices – DM gave an update that this project has slowed down due to limited capacity of the OU stakeholders. AS noted, that there has been an increase in Apprentices accessing the advice service. 5. Protecting the Curriculum – JF noted the best practice document SLT approved a couple of weeks ago, will go on the website in due course. This has also had a lot of positive feedback from OU stakeholders. | |

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| | <p>6. Menopause hub – NB noted that this project can close. The Drop ins meetings have not been well attended, so to save time and resources these will be paused for the foreseeable.</p> <p>7. Neuro Diversity project – CG informed us that they are lobbying for the OU to use recycled paper for printed packs, as not only is this more environmentally friendly, but it is also more ND friendly too. Noted the ND Drop-in sessions are having consistent attendance. Series of events are being organised for ND week, including guest speakers from the OU.</p> <p>8. Student Community – MJ gave an update; a questionnaire is being shared with students, which will close at the end of the month. NB urged SLT to share this questionnaire with students so we can get as much feedback as possible.</p> | |
| 3. | Position Statements Website walk around – Gareth Jones | |
| 3.1 | <p>GJ presented the new website area, titled “What we believe in” hub, where all position statements can be shared with students and beyond. This will become the go-to space for Reps, SLT, staff and students to access Open SU’s standpoints on key issues. This space will go live on Tuesday. This will be a living space where we can add to, edit and remove sections as and when needed.</p> <p>NB & BP highlighted how well received this has been by key stakeholders at the University.</p> <p>GJ reminded SLT that although these are organisational viewpoints that does not mean that SLT need to agree these views personally.</p> | |
| 4. | Advocacy Action Plan Workshop - Jazz Simpson | |
| 4.1 | <p>JS opened the workshop with a quick presentation on the elevator pitch; what they are, how they are structured, why they are useful to have to hand. Attendees then broke off into smaller groups and had 15 minutes to prepare a quick pitch on an issue that has been discussed at previous SLT meetings.</p> <p>Nominated SLT members then gave their pitches to the room.</p> | |
| 4.2 | Action: Investigate an AI workstream, as a potential extension of the Academic Experience Priority Project. | GJ/ JS/ KD |
| 5. | SLT Consultation session - Kate Dungate | |
| 5.1 | The Student Policy and Insights Officer delivered a workshop on the upcoming Student Consultations, allowing the Student Leadership Team and Staff present to go through the consultations like the students will soon. | |
| 6. | Student Issues Reporting Tool – Discussion | |

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| 6.1 | <p>Review of Academic Conduct Referral Process (score 11, 11 voters)</p> <p>Summary of issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are experiencing severe delays after being referred for an academic conduct review, with little to no communication from the OU. • This is causing a lot of stress for students and is negatively impacting their motivation & trust in the OU. <p>Discussion on issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NB noted the work that is being done in this area but opened discussion on any areas we can campaign more, or gaps in our work to resolve this issue. • CG noted the wording of the initial letter that students receive • JF inquired about data break down between faculties. | |
| 6.2 | Action: Collect data on the number of students impacted by this | AS / VR |
| 6.3 | Action: Advice service to collaborate with SLT, to get more information out to students surrounding this topic. | AS / VR |
| 6.4 | Action: Query the OU as to whether the time constraints set on students (10 days) compared to the leniency for OU staff (3+ months) is fair. | NB |
| 6.5 | <p>Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students (score 10, 10 voters)</p> <p>Summary of issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This student has not been supplied with reasonable adjustments; printed materials, on their computing course. • The solution suggested by the OU is not fit for purpose; the content that needs to be printed is not suitably formatted to print at home. <p>Discussion on issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NB gave insight that the STELA group previously agreed to let faculties exclude themselves from printing responsibilities on the condition that robust alternative support would be in place. NB hypothesised that since the disbanding of the group, these conditions have not been upheld. • SLT members empathised with this student, and noted that providing disabled students cannot be considered giving them an 'unfair advantage'. | |
| 6.6 | Action: Lobby the OU to ensure all course materials are available in a printer-friendly format. | SLT |
| 6.7 | Action: Lobby the OU to communicate clearly and early with students about how their printing needs will be met. E.g. in the Help Centre. | SLT |
| 6.8 | Action: Explore whether Open SU can put out informative content to bridge the gap in communication regarding printing course materials. | EC |

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| 6.9 | Action: JS to get back to the students that raised these issues with an update. | JS |
| 7. | Any Other Business | |
| 7.1 | <p>Wales student panel (MJ & GJ) A new Wales Student Panel has been developed with the OU in Wales; the recent pilot went well. A review of previous (unsuccessful) attempts and updated documents will be shared on Monday. A 12-month trial (April–March) is planned. Depending on success, there is potential for future expansion to other nations. The panel will ensure geographical representation across Wales and focus on Welsh students discussing Welsh issues. Terms of Reference and volunteer opportunity will be sent to the SLT for approval.</p> | |
| 7.2 | <p>Commercial update (HB) Following a tendering process, the working group decided to go forward working with a supplier called <i>Streamline</i>. Team interviewed candidates for the Head of Commercial Operations role, the top candidate accepted the role and is excited to get started!</p> | |

The meeting concluded at 4pm.

The next meeting will be held online Saturday 25 April 2026.

| ACTIONS: | | Action holder: |
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| 6.2 | Collect data on the number of students impacted by this | AS/VR |
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