

These Minutes will remain subject to approval until the next meeting of the SLT



SLT 04/27/M

**STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)
26 - 28 April 2024**

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Student Leadership Team (SLT)
held online via Microsoft Teams on the 27 April 2024.

PRESENT

Margaret Greenaway – President (Chair)
Mark Walker – Deputy President
Natalie Baker – Vice President Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)
Michael Bryan – Vice President Administration
Nichola Connolly – Faculty Rep. for Wellbeing, Education & Language Studies (WELS)
Cazz Flowers – Vice President Community
Isabelle Hoyet – International Representative
Matt Porterfield – Student Member of Council
Jack Flaherty – Faculty Representative for Arts and Social Sciences (FASS)
Kelly Coker – Vice President Student Representation
Stephen Hughes – Ireland Representative (morning only)
Nigel Patterson – Faculty Rep. for Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM)

IN ATTENDANCE

Gabriella Cull – Head of Executive Support & Staff Welfare (live tweeting)
Beth Metcalf – Chief Executive (morning only)
Samantha Smeraglia – Executive Support Administrator (minutes)
Jessica Smith – Associate Director: Projects & Services
Paul Holmes – Business Services Administrator
Ciara Linehan – Projects Officer

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

A. PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

The President welcomed the SLT to the April meeting, the penultimate one of the SLT term!

B. ABSENCES

Lou Robinson – Vice President Engagement (apologies received)
Kaz Murphy – Faculty Representative, Open & Access
Pauline Robinson – Faculty Representative for Business and Law

C. MINUTES

- C.1 The minutes from the meeting held on the 10th February 2024 were approved via the Teams space.

D. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

- D.1 Action 9.1 from the February minutes was for the SLT to review and approve the proposed changes to the byelaws by Monday 19th February 2024. This was completed.
- D.2 The remaining actions relate to the student issues section so these are outlined under the student issues section.

SECTION A: ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Taken on the Teams Meeting space between 19 – 26 April 2024

1. NOTED: REPORT OF AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

SLT 04/24/1

- 1.1 An SLT member queried the low attendance of societies and clubs at the Societies and Clubs Fair held during Freshers 24B. The Head of Student Community confirmed that there were only four societies and clubs in attendance but emphasised it was well advertised.
- 1.2 SLT members recognised that whilst clubs and societies cannot be forced to attend, attendance can be incentivised. An SLT member further suggested taking attendance into account for the distribution of the left-over grants at the end of the year.

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- 1.3 To encourage more societies and clubs to attend, an SLT member will check whether any of the ideas from the project to encourage more hosts to organise events could be used to improve attendance at Freshers.

2. RECEIVED: EDI & STUDENT WELFARE UPDATE **SLT 04/24/2**

3. RECEIVED: REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES **SLT 04/24/3**

SECTION B: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Taken at the meeting on Saturday 27 April 2024

4. GROUP UPDATES **SLT 04/24/4**

- 4.1 Gaurang Ghare, the OU BAME Chair, was in attendance later in the meeting but suffered technical issues, so there was no formal update provided.

5. CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS **SLT 04/24/5**

The Chief Executive presented the SLT with a number of resolutions for Conference, which they were asked to review or discuss, before they go to the Board of Trustees (BoT) meeting for approval on 30 April 2024.

5.1 Special Resolutions

Three Special Resolutions will be taken to Conference to amend our Articles of Association and require 75% of the student membership delegates for conference to vote for, if the changes are to be approved.

5.1.1 The first resolution (A), is to approve an official change to the name of the elected student team from Central Executive Committee to Student Leadership Team.

5.1.2 Resolution (B) is to amend Article 26, which will allow the Association to introduce an additional three to five Equality Diversity and Inclusion representative positions to the elected student team to provide better representation for the active groups of the Association. The additional roles would currently be for the BAME group, the Disabled Students Group and the Pride Group. Allowing for three to five representatives provides flexibility to accommodate any future need for additional group representation.

5.1.3 Finally Resolution (C) is to implement a change to Article 20 which will allow the student leadership team and trustee elections to run in alternate years. Student trustees would be able to run a term of up to two years, which allows us to then switch elections to one year student leadership and one year for trustees.

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RESOLUTION: All three Special Resolutions were received without additional comment or issue.

5.2 **Standard Resolutions**

These are presented at every Conference, with some additions and require a simple majority to be passed, rather than 75% of student delegates.

5.2.1 Resolution (D): To approve a motion to hold the OU accountable for supporting students to gain diagnosis for a range of neurodivergent conditions where it would support their studies.

5.2.2 Resolution (E): To rebrand the OU Students Association to be identifiable as a student's union.

5.2.3 The Trustees have not yet made the final decision on whether to present Resolution E at Conference because they are awaiting some legal advice, costings and the results of the student consultation. The consultations showed a mixed student response, but it was clear that newer students felt that being called a Union would have helped them find us and know what we did.

5.2.4 Ireland Area and STEM Reps agreed to provide their project update earlier (Agenda item 6.13), so the debate of whether to change the name from Association to Union could be discussed at this point in the meeting. The reason behind the proposal is because engagement with the Association is low and we need to think about what can be done to improve that.

5.2.5 A rep outlined that the consultations showed a clear majority in favour of changing the name to Union, due to two main reasons:

- a) People knew what a Student Union was and therefore if they were looking, it would be easier to find us.
- b) People did not know what an "Association" was and did not necessarily think that it would be of any interest to them, so did not search further.

5.2.6 An SLT member confirmed the responses came from the Student Voice Festival consultations but iterated that the numbers of students who took part were very small.

5.2.7 The recommendation was that the Association would be in a better position to increase engagement if the name change went ahead but the decision was whether SLT support one of four options, to put to the Trustees:

- a) **Pursue a full legal name change, which would require a further vote in conference in 2026.** This would mean putting the proposal to delegates now and then bring back in 2026 for a final vote on a full legal name change.

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- b) **Pursue trading as a rebranded “Union” at this year’s conference to provide an indicative vote.**³²¹
- c) **Pursue trading as a rebrand without a vote at Conference** but the name change would still be up for debate.
- d) Finally, **take no further action.**

5.2.8 **RESOLUTION:** Based on the evidence from the student consultations, the SLT favoured a vote at Conference as the best way to take the issue to the wider student population. The SLT voted unanimously to support option two (b), to pursue trading as a rebrand, with Conference 2024 providing an indicative student vote.

5.2.9 **ACTION:** The Chief Executive will take the SLT recommendation back to the Trustees as the proposal supported in principle. The Conference vote will then provide Trustees with a steer as to whether students do, or do not want, a name change.

5.2.10 Should the resolution be passed at Conference, further investigations can take place and rebranding work start straight away, so that the Association is in a position to “trade as” as soon as the consultation is complete and everyone is happy with the name change. The purpose of the rebrand is to also use it as an engagement opportunity to promote Association awareness. The Trustees will then consult around the specifics of what name to trade as, how to rebrand, and how to launch that trial.

5.2.11 The Chief Executive thanked the SLT for receiving online the next four Standard Resolutions to be sent to Conference for approval:

Resolution (F), **Receive the Trustees report on Association activities since the last Conference.**

Resolution (G), **Receive the Central Executive Committee (CEC) report on Association activities since the last Conference.**

Resolution (H), **Receive the Association’s accounts for the years 2020-21 and 2022-23.**

Resolution (I) **Approve the appointment of Hays Macintyre as Auditors.**

Resolution (J) **Ratify the minutes of the previous Conference 2022.**

Approve the continuation of the Association’s membership of:

(K) the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO);

(L) Charity Finance Group (CFG);

(M) Association of Voluntary Managers (AVM);

(N) WonkHE.

5.2.12 The next Standard Resolution to be discussed was (O), with three policy options to be taken to Conference for vote. There was low engagement for each, so SLT was asked to give their student views and decide which policy they would support being proposed to Conference. The three options were:

a) **Annual face-to-face event open to all students;**

b) **Making industrial placements possible for OU students;**

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c) **Urge the University not to reduce the current curriculum, even when making financial cuts but wherever possible preserve or extend it.** [This could be achieved in part by offering some Level/Stage 3 modules on a biennial or cyclical basis.]

5.2.13 There was debate around the option of holding face-to-face events regionally, which is already being trialled more at Freshers and throughout the cyclical calendar.

5.2.14 **RESOLUTION:** The SLT decided by a majority (7 votes “For”), to support option three (c) above, to be put to a vote at Conference 2024 for a wider indicative student vote. At Conference, delegate students will vote by a simple majority, to indicate what they really want Association Reps to discuss in the room with the University.

5.2.15 **ACTION:** The Chief Executive will lead work on the policy wording to present to students for option three (c). If supported it will then be a stance that we, as an Association, would take.

6. PRIORITY AREAS UPDATES

- 6.1 The first priority area to be discussed was **EDI & Accessibility**, with updates provided on the EDI and Accessibility projects.
- 6.2 **Assessment for ND students and support for ND students** –VP Student Representation, one of the Project Sponsors, outlined that the feedback from a Neurodivergent students focus group has been collated and used to design a survey that will be sent out across the OU, to neurodivergent students. The feedback from the survey will enable the Association to better support and engage with Neurodivergent students and provide evidence to the OU to support improvements to the learning experiences for neurodiverse students, irrespective of diagnosis.
- 6.3 **Action plan for General Accessibility training** – An update was provided by the Faculty Rep (WELS), one of the project sponsors, based on a written report from the Head of EDI. AbilityNet contractors provided three Accessibility training sessions, with all staff members completing at least one sessions, and with many doing all three. This means this action is completed.
- 6.4 The Accessibility session recordings have also been shared with SLT, who can watch the training to learn more. The Accessibility Standard Working group are using this learning to create an action plan for improving the Association’s accessibility for all students.
- 6.5 **Action plan for Trans Students** – VP EDI outlined that a Trans inclusion statement has been published, alongside an interim freedom of speech statement to keep things balanced. Discussions are still being held with the OU around some of the Jo Phoenix learnings and how we can better support trans students.

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- 6.6 Moving forward, the intent is to provide some student training for bystanders etc and once we have the capacity to organise some focus groups with our trans students, to understand where we are now versus where we started from. The hope is that the Aluminate platform will help provide a more dedicated space for our trans students to engage and build that community.
- 6.7 **Present at Conferences on EDI/Distance-Learning issues** – FASS Reprovided an update on the slow progress to date. Requests to present have been made but have not yet yielded any response. However, the President has been asked to present and sit on a panel at Westminster Insights graduate employability conference on 20 May 2024.
- 6.8 Wonkhe's Festival of Higher Education due in November has shown interest in having an SLT speaker attend. WELS Rep attended the Secret Life of Students conference in November 2023 and agreed the importance of being represented at Wonkhe's event.
- 6.9 The second priority area to be discussed was **Association Awareness**.
- 6.10 **Update 'Being an OU student' OpenLearn course and add to Study Planner** – the Student Member of Council confirmed the Association presence on "Being an OU student" as complete.
- 6.11 Rather than trying to get on to the student study planner, the idea now is to make a new Induction video with cooperation from the PVC students to go in to Open Ready. The new module will be going out to all new students in October 2024, so should mean better exposure for the Association.
- 6.12 More details were created and shared in a PowerPoint from the Head of Digital Communications and the last slide, requested suggestions about what exercise to include.
- 6.13 **Grow the Hoot and introduce Module Reviews** – Project sponsor, VP Student Representation, gave a presentation showing the initial focus on fixing any problems with The Hoot. The DigiComms team are reviewing in May all Hoot images in articles published after 2023 to check none breach copyright laws and replace or delete any that would incur a fine. Articles dated before 2023 will be unpublished for now then checked after the first phase.
- 6.14 **ACTION:** Module reviews - The project team to identify which modules should be covered and identify potential students to create them and then look in to the promotion of them.
- 6.15 **Build Tutor Awards and Volunteer Recognition Events into the Association Cyclical Calendar** – The International Rep confirmed that Tutor Awards nominations opened last week and will close on the 13 May 2024. 44 nominations have already been received and the Awards have been advertised via social media. A post has been added to Student Home, been shared in the forums and will be in the next newsletter to all students. There has been engagement around quotes from previous

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winners and judging commences the week starting 24 June. Winning tutors will then be notified mid-July.

- 6.16 Volunteer Recognition – the International Rep updated SLT that after feedback, this is likely to be a separate event. Reiss Miller on the staff team has just returned to start the project and has created a draft programme.
- 6.17 **Share the Association on module websites and the OU study app.** Part covered under item 6.7 above. The WELS Rep updated the SLT that this is almost complete and an initial trial has ended and been documented for the benefit of the DigiComms team. A suitable contact in FBL has been found to facilitate posting on their module websites. FBL and other faculties have posted about Conference 2024, although the message generated fewer click-throughs than the Annual Membership Survey, which was incentivised. Some module shares appear largely motivated by messages specific to their module, so the approach for Elections comms is to tailor the messages on module news and make relevant to the students who will be voting.
- 6.18 The third priority area to be discussed was **Representation.**
- 6.19 **Campaign on Student Finance** – the President outlined that the previous University Minister had responded positively to the Association email regarding the lack of access to maintenance loans and grants for students in England. He has since resigned and the new minister, Luke Hall, has not yet responded to the Association or the OU.
- 6.20 **ACTION:** The President to check if the team are still looking into the issue and gathering information and if there are any areas they would like our support with e.g. access to student engagement on the issue.
- 6.21 **Engage with students around the General Election** – The Deputy President confirmed the project is at the stage of finalising the final draft of the manifesto and working with graphic designers to make the document look as engaging as possible. If a general election is called soon after the May local elections, we can get the document published quickly to hand out.
- 6.22 If there is an October general election, the Association will work with all government and external affairs teams to find the launch date and have a longer-term engagement plan, to create a page on the website where we can direct candidates and students to the different ways they can support the manifesto and get involved. We also have a direct engagement plan to contact as many candidates from all the main political parties, to share the manifesto as soon as possible.
- 6.23 **Consult on changing name to ‘Union’** – already discussed under item 5.2.4, Standard Conference Resolutions.
- 6.24 The final priority area to be discussed was **Community and Engagement.**

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- 6.25 **Aluminate Chat Platform Development and Pilot** – The VP Community thanked the Head of Strategy & Insight for a succinct summary and confirmed that Societies and clubs will be the next group to be soft launched onto the platform and due to go live in May 2024. Society leads have already been invited to test the platform and give feedback. The project team has completed moderator training and a Code of Conduct has been drafted that will initially be moderated by members of staff.
- 6.26 In a massive achievement, the issue of single sign on is now complete! Next steps are a final meeting with Aluminate to check the platform is ready to go live with the groups, complete communication of the Code of Conduct to the groups and then continue reaching out to students for ideas on the platform name.
- 6.27 **Community events focused on Faculty/School/Theme** – The International Rep confirmed the biggest challenge is to have event and meet-up hosts to actually host events, so a meeting was run with meet-up hosts and also a survey created and shared to receive their feedback. Using this feedback, the Community staff team is trialling some of the ideas including some shadowing of new hosts.
- 6.28 The Community team will also shortly try a different kind of recruitment in order to get hosts hosting from the beginning and get them more motivated and engaged from the start. The Community team reached out to the clubs and societies as well and are getting more responses, with more events advertised on the website as a result.
- 6.29 The FASS Rep provided an update on use of FASS Connect, which has had some ups and downs. One event was attended by one person, but the most recent one was encouraging because it was the first online event some students had attended. Numbers were small, but hopefully it will increase post-TMAs. The intention is to keep trialling into summer and place comms on forums etc to encourage more student numbers. Once bigger, it should be possible to get more meet-ups within FASS Connect. New events and meet-up hosts are being recruited and with the project on schedule, there are no discussion or decision points needed at the moment.
- 6.30 There was Rep discussion about the opportunities to piggyback on the face-to-face course choice events that some schools have started holding. Where appropriate, it should be possible to encourage societies to get involved in those events as well. These regular meet ups are held each week and are well attended in contrast to the regional meet ups less so, so worth trying other things like a presence at Arts and Humanities day schools, where students learn about what we, as an Association, offer. If we can get included from the start that would be brilliant exposure.

7. STUDENT FACING ISSUES

- 7.1 The previous student facing issues discussed at the February meeting were:
- Reachability of the Student Support Team in case of problems
 - Online tutorials and day schools.
- 7.2 Reachability in case of problems
The International Rep provided an update, covering **Actions 7.6 – 7.8** from February's minutes.

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A senior manager in the student support team confirmed the call-back option is available for international students, but the functionality is not routinely placed in all areas of the Help Centre. It is embedded within specific types of queries, related to struggles with studies, or cancellation/ deferment of/ or withdrawing from a module, and mental well-being enquiries. The manager was not aware of any plans to return to pre COVID operating hours or any discussions about potential use of other means of communications e.g. via MS Teams, WhatsApp, Skype, or Adobe Connect.

- 7.3 The project team ran a survey in March/April, seeking student feedback on how and when they would like to contact the student support team. This was advertised on the Association website and in the March and April monthly student newsletters, the International Students newsletter and in the forums, with 51 responses.
- 7.4 **ACTION:** The next steps would be to meet with Student support to discuss student feedback and three items:
1. The call back option to be made more widely available, so it is easier for students to find a way to contact the OU. Particularly for international students since they incur the most cost when contacting student support.
 2. To explore alternative means of contacting student support and see if that can put into place
 3. To discuss expanding student supporting opening hours, possibly via staggered shifts if budgets are a constraint.
- 7.5 An SLT member agreed a lot of students find it difficult to contact student support outside hours, or at weekends, and receives student enquiries around contact support. OU students often work and study full-time and these include apprenticeship students, those in paid work and teachers, all busy throughout the week.
- 7.6 An SLT member raised that the OU justified closing the regional student support teams on the basis that the money saved would then be used to provide SST support over longer hours, including evenings and at weekends.
- 7.7 **ACTION:** The Head of EDI has a regular meeting with various heads of student support, including Mikaela Robertson and Susie Hancock, and will use the feedback to support opening a discussion on this at the meeting on Monday 29 April 2024. She will report back into the SLT team space and that might mean a further meeting, with SLT colleagues, as appropriate.
- 7.8 Online tutorials and day schools
ACTION: Having been taken ill, the Chief Executive will update off-line via SLT team space, re February's **Action 7.10**, to follow up with Josie Fraser on the progress of online tutorials and Adobe Connect as a platform.
- 7.9 WELS Rep fed back on **Action 7.11:** To gain feedback from students on online tutorials and day schools. Earlier in the academic year, students were turning up to tutorials and there would be no-one there but some of the IT issues appear to have improved more recently.

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- 7.10 The feedback for day schools has been completed for the language schools residential.
- 7.11 The Associate Director of Projects and Services confirmed that **Action 7.12** has been completed. The Chief Executive collated all student feedback on online tutorials and day schools and a document of the evidence was shared in the SLT teams space.
- 7.12 **ACTION:** The Head of Executive Support will follow up with the Director of Engagement on February's **Action 7.14**, to develop a position statement on online tutorials, with the Deputy President.
- 7.13 The next section was discussion of the two most voted student issues. These are:
- OU's platforming of BAE systems.
 - Peri/Menopause.
- 7.14 **OU's platforming of BAE systems** – there was a lively discussion around the ethics of support for armaments companies but the approach from the OU Careers Office is that they are impartial and they allow students to make their own decisions about potential employers, without limiting student career opportunities. Ellen from the Careers Office presented to the Environmental and Sustainability Working group meeting and discussed with the volunteers and staff that are part of that group. Careers see very good engagement from students with all kinds of employers and shared some statistics showing strong engagement from recent attendees at BAE Systems events.
- 7.15 The Careers service also shared the work being done on green careers, to balance some of the connections with the arms and fossil fuels industries. We haven't seen a lot of student voice to pursue the issue with the OU and VP Engagement shared a detailed response in the SLT team space. The Careers service also drafted a specific response to the student that raised the issue, which was shared in the SLT team space. To avoid an institution versus student argument online, the decision was made to not place this in The Hoot.
- 7.16 **ACTION:** Associate Director:Projects & Services to ask the Careers Office to meet with interested SLT members and provide an insight on the OU's position and see if Ellen has a contact at BAE who would be willing to present the facts of what they offer, so SLT can have a more informed perspective.
- 7.17 **Peri/Menopause** – This was raised by a student who was seeking advice or written guidance from their tutor and then contacted student support without success, on how to deal with the study impacts of some of the side effects. These include brain fog, lack of concentration and other symptoms, including mental health. There are things in place for many other issues but not this naturally occurring stage that women have no choice but to go through.
- 7.18 The SLT agreed on the urgency of such issue and there were various suggestions put forward on what should be done. One proposal was to train specialist advisors to whom students could be signposted when contacting the student support team or tutors/staff. The Open University has a menopause support space for students on

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Facebook but it is a private group and students may not be aware of it currently, but could be an area to raise awareness about.

- 7.19 The OU has a whole network of menopause champions and a lot of resources for staff, so the question was raised regarding whether the support could also be helpful and useful for students. Students could be supported through any of the reasonable adjustments put in place for disabled students, or anyone going through a chronic illness with similar symptoms, such as fibromyalgia. Like the gender identity champions for trans students, if a couple of specialists were trained within the student support team, they would know the policies that are applicable and where to signpost students to.
- 7.20 VP EDI advised that as an Association, we have a lot of relevant information but that it is not collated or labelled as for people with peri/menopause. The Association could work on an engagement piece, similar to other health issues e.g. “How to study through the menopause”. The Association could also repurpose tips used to help students cope with brain fog, since they will be the same for someone that is menopausal and someone who suffers a flare of fibromyalgia. If collated and set up as one central web resource, SLT can promote via Hoot articles, newsletter items and social media.
- 7.21 There are also promotion opportunities via menopause information talks, with a speaker such as Carolyn Harris MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Menopause. Carolyn is a passionate advocate about changing the way society thinks about menopause and has offered herself as a speaker.
- 7.22 Deputy President, (as VP Student Welfare) proposed a wider central help and support resource (possibly web-page), to cover not just menopause but different marginalised women’s groups. Hopefully it would go further and support other Association initiatives and campaigns by helping to fill in the current gaps in student advice.
- 7.23 **ACTION:** Deputy President and WELS Rep offered to lead the project to promote a central help resource, with the support of the Head of EDI.

SECTION D: ITEMS TO NOTE

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Elections

The Deputy President praised the positive response to Elections from candidates and students voting but raised two issues.

1. First is the lack of flexibility to get appropriate candidate/s in each position, with no mechanism to allow candidates to move between roles once everybody has attended the mandatory sessions. Candidates might be more appropriate for other roles rather than the one first applied for.

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2. Secondly, there needs to be a process to assist the writing or rejection of manifestos if they're not up to par, as well as checks done on what they contain. Candidates that do change the role they stood for, should have an updated manifesto that corresponds with the new role that they are in.
- 8.2 VP EDI raised the issue of ever-changing Elections processes, which confuse candidates. Furthermore, it is clear from applications and manifestos that students don't understand what the SLT does or what each role involves so the role requirements need to be made clearer from the start. Productive role insights will make students question if nominating themselves is the right thing to do.
 - 8.3 Candidate briefing posts could act as a screening tool to determine whether someone is going to commit to their role, should they be elected. This could help prevent the big drop offs the Association commonly sees at the start.
 - 8.4 There was significant debate around whether prior Association or OU experience should be required for paid roles, such as President and Deputy President, and how lived experience counts. It was also raised that given the difficulty of removing paid employee appointees it would be appropriate to require some previous knowledge and experience, as an important indicator of commitment. Experience need not be limited to Rep roles and could be as little as involvement in a consultation. Something that indicates an interest in the Association and a willingness to get involved with the University was discussed by some of the SLT.
 - 8.5 Prior experience was agreed to be very important for the role of Student Member of Council given it is the University's governing body and a more significant role than a school council. Improved exposure to roles should help answer the question for potential candidates of whether they have the right skills and experience.
 - 8.6 An SLT member raised the suggestion of separating Election roles, to reduce the number of candidates in the field at one time and the number of manifestos to be read.
 - 8.7 An SLT member raised that from the candidate's perspective, it can be difficult to understand which roles particularly require Association/OU experience. It could help to mark some roles with a small notice saying "This role will be really good for new starters, or people with limited exposure" to present it in a more positive way and encourage candidates that want to get involved but do not know where to channel their experience.
 - 8.8 The Associate Director Projects & Services thanked the SLT for their suggestions and feedback on Elections experiences and confirmed that while some of the issues are already being addressed, a substantial Election Review is planned this time and will be led by the Head of Strategy and Insight. It has been recognised that there are benefits to setting a time annually for Elections to take place, both in terms of awareness, staff team resources and to allow for improvements on a continual basis.
 - 8.9 **ACTION:** SLT student insights will be fed back to the elections team via the Chief Executive and Director of Engagement initially, with the opportunity for SLT to input further to the Elections process.

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8.10 Library open on Saturdays

An SLT member raised the issue of different student groups no longer being able to hold meetings on campus on a Saturday e.g. Fusion, the Physics society, due to a fire warden and a first aider presence required.

8.11 The President confirmed that library hours are being reviewed and discussed at the highest level in the OU, given that many OU students work 9am until 5pm weekdays and cannot study 9am until 4/5pm, so there is work ongoing in the background surrounding this.

8.12 There was debate that students should be able to use a campus and resources for students, with potential benefits from other students using the library as part of the reciprocal SCONUL Access system. This allows university library users to borrow or use books and journals at other libraries within the scheme. Students would have opportunities to mix, celebrate passes and gain a sense of community//support with students able to see and meet other students. The President re-iterated that SLT should keep raising the issue with people in different spaces, since not everyone is aware.

8.13 An SLT member queried why library access could not be extended when postgraduate students have already been moved to the library and have 24-hours access. The President confirmed that there has been hiccups with access to various things, but also that postgraduate students have their own passes to access the library on their own terms. Due to the feedback from the postgraduate students, VCE are overseeing access but it is a work in progress and there has been a lot of back and forth.

8.14 **ACTION:** Associate Director Projects and Services and STEM Rep will raise the question with the Estates team and find out all of the reasons and if there is anything we can do about that.

8.15 **ACTION:** Given how much OU staff value opportunities to connect with students, the Associate Director, STEM Rep and Head of Community will think more creatively about whether staff might volunteer to open up for a student event or support student events.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

9.1 The next meeting will take place **in-person at the MK Campus** over the weekend of the **12 – 14 July 2024**. This is last meeting for this SLT and it will be face to face.

9.2 The President expressed the hope that everyone can attend, as the last official time that this elected SLT will all be together. Important that as many people as possible attend, to come together and make the last SLT a really good meeting.

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Action Log		
Item in the Minutes	Action	Action holder
5.2.9	<u>Standard Conference Resolution E</u> SLT voted to support option two to be put forward to the Trustees, (b), to pursue trading as a rebrand, with Conference 2024 providing an indicative student vote.	Chief Executive
5.2.15	<u>Standard Conference Resolution O</u> The Chief Executive will lead work on the policy wording to present at Conference 2024 for option three, (c), urge the University not to reduce the current curriculum, even when making financial cuts.”, to student delegates for a vote. If supported it will then be a stance that we, as an Association, would take.	Chief Executive
6.20	<u>Campaign on Student Finance</u> The President to check if the new University Minister, Luke Hall, and his team are still looking into the issue and gathering information and if there are any areas they would like our support with e.g. access to student engagement on the issue.	President
7.4 & 7.7	<u>Reachability in case of problems</u> The Head of EDI has a regular meeting with various heads of student support and will use the feedback to support a discussion on opening hours at the next meeting on Monday 29 April 2024. She will report back to SLT.	Head of EDI
7.8	<u>Online tutorials and day schools</u> The Chief Executive will update off-line via SLT teams space, re February’s Action 7.10 , to follow up with Josie Fraser on the progress of online tutorials and Adobe Connect as a platform.	Chief Executive
7.12	<u>Online tutorials and day schools</u> The Head of Executive Support will follow up with the Director of Engagement on February’s Action 7.14 , to develop a position statement on online tutorials, with the Deputy President.	Head of Executive Support Director of Engagement
7.16	<u>OU’s platforming of BAE systems</u> The Associate Director Projects & Services will ask the Careers Office to meet with interested SLT members to provide an insight on the OU’s position and check availability of a BAE representative who	Associate Director Projects & Services

These Minutes will remain subject to approval until the next meeting of the SLT

	would be willing to present the facts of what they offer, so SLT can have a more informed perspective.	
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7.23	<u>Peri/Menopause</u> Deputy President and WELS Rep offered to lead the project to promote a central help resource, with the support of the Head of EDI.	Deputy President WELS Rep Head of EDI
8.9	<u>Elections</u> SLT student insights will be fed back to the Elections team via the Chief Executive and Director of Engagement initially, with the opportunity for SLT to input further to the Elections process.	Chief Executive Director of Engagement
8.14	<u>OU library opening on Saturdays</u> Associate Director and STEM Rep will raise the question with the Estates team to learn the reasons it is not open and if anything be done about that?	Associate Director Projects & Services STEM Rep
8.15	Given how much OU staff value opportunities to connect with students, the Associate Director, STEM Rep and Head of Community will think creatively about whether staff might volunteer to open up for a student event, or support student events.	Associate Director Projects & Services STEM Rep Head of Community
Outstanding items from February 2024 minutes		
7.1	<u>Student Facing Issues</u> 1) Incorrect module descriptions on website - the STEM Rep and VP Academic Voice were tasked to discover who is responsible for publishing module descriptions online and an update on this will be provided in the Teams space. 2) Last minute errata changes on assignments -the President and FBL Rep volunteered project ownership due to the complexity and number of parties involved. The President will seek further clarification on the current guidance concerning changes to module materials and TMA/EMA questions.	Head of Digital Communications