



Welcome

Welcome from the Regional Forum especially to new students, for whom this will be their first contact with the Students Association.

This is our Annual newsletter for 2007 where we try and inform you of the services available to you as a Student.

Region 06, as many may be aware, spans a large distance. As a result there are many towns within the area that have OUSA Branches. These Branches in turn send representatives to the Regional Forum, where we can meet centrally and discuss items that affect us all as students and to try and improve the studying experience of all students.

(Further details can be found on page 2)

As well as meetings we also help to or-

ganize events and raise money for OUSET (see back page)

Major events include Graduation days. At Ely Graduation day last year alone the helpers from the Regional Forum managed to raise £3472 for OUSET.

Regional Forum members also attended Summer Schools in other regions, helping run Discos, Social evenings and merchandising the new range of Open University goods as well as selling past Exam papers etc. This merchandise can also be found at

www.ousa.org.uk (see below for more details). As individual Branches we aim to do all we can to help you in your studies while you are with the Open University. The OUSA handbook

breaks this main objective down into 5 parts. They are:

A) To foster a corporate identity for its members and all students of the Open University;

B) To defend the principles of equal opportunity and of open access to the University regardless of academic qualifications or financial circumstances;

C) To co-ordinate the organization of social and welfare activities for its members and all students;

D) To promote and represent the educational interests of all students as members of the University;

E) To promote the influence of students upon the operation and development of the University.

What would you like us to do for you ?

Do you have any thoughts on future courses or any that are running now?

Do you need special help and are unsure of where to get it?

Would you like to help out or get more information from your local Branch on events in your region?

Use the form on the back to get in touch, with any comments. Or contact a Regional Forum Member, details of which are on page 3.

Please remember, we are students as well with T.M.A. deadlines and lives outside of the O.U and give up our time voluntarily.

Inside this issue:

New OUSA Web Site

Lots of work has been going on with the new revitalised web site. The site has had a major overhaul with an emphasis on first impressions.

The new OUSA logo "asset" has now been published and now provides a fresh contemporary look. One aim of the new web site will be to provide

important documents including documents for the Annual Conference. The website can be found at www.ousa.org.uk

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You may wonder what this "OUSA" is and what it has to do with you. Well, OUSA is the Open University Students Association and all Open University students are members unless they opt out.

Locally, there are Branches, which may or may not be active, depending on the interest of the students in that area. The Executive Committee would like to see all Branches active, so that all students get regular newsletters and other information. Unfortunately with the changing student population a Branch may lose some of its Officers – there have to be at least 2 to keep the Branch open. The officers for Branches are Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Branches may choose to put on social or training events or just to issue up to 3 newsletters a year. Each Branch has a conference on First Class (FC), which, to use, currently, each student has to send a message on FC to OUSA Controller asking for access.– (although this is changing and a lot of branches are becoming open to all)

Representatives from Branches may attend a Regional Forum where collective views and opinions from the Branches are discussed. The RF has 4 officers - Chair, Secretary, Treasurer & Communications Officer. There are various other roles from Student Support Link, Student Academic Links (SALs, more later), representatives to various Open University committees which include the Course Presentation Sub-Committee and the Central Consultative Committee amongst others.

These representatives, apart from the SALs, are appointed by the RF from those people who have been nominated by their Branch to attend the RF. SALs apply and are elected by a postal ballot at the moment, with any vacancies being filled by casual election at the RF.

In each Region, there is an Executive Committee Member (ECM), elected by the various activists in the Region – generally Branch Officers and people serving on the Regional Forum. The Executive Committee meets several times a year and comprises one ECM from each Region, one ECM for the OUSA affiliated Societies, an ECM for Student Academic Links (SALs), various Vice Presidents, the Deputy President (DP), and the OUSA President.

Once a year, usually in April is the OUSA Conference, where motions put by Students across the whole OUSA population are debated and the various Vice Presidents, DP and President are elected. Each Branch can send a specified number of delegates to the Conference which runs from Friday evening until Sunday lunchtime. Motions can be anything from "We want the OU to get our mailings to us in time, every time" to "SALs need to be replaced with SFLs (Student Faculty Links) because the current system is not working". Simplified, I know, as the motions are usually in much more detail, which brings me to the structure of OUSA.

The structure of OUSA is

currently under review, to streamline it and make it easier for students to use it and be a part of it. One example of this review is the SALs. At the moment we can have 8 SALs per Region, one per faculty, for the students to contact if they have any kind of academic related problem with their study. This equates to 128 SALs in total. It has been found to be very difficult to fill these roles within every Region. There have to be different SALs per faculty due to the very diverse nature of each faculty and how they work within the OU. The proposal is to have a much smaller central pool of students who have experience, often several years, of study within a faculty, with one Regional Faculty Link for the student to contact. This will go to the Conference as a motion. If the majority of the Conference attendees vote yes, then this motion will be included in the Register of Decisions and, where needed, the Constitution will be amended.

That is a potted version of the structure of OUSA and some of the things that happen. If you would like to be able to help to make an improvement to the way things work, you would be very welcome. Of course, you may get the chance to develop your debating and public speaking skills if you want, at the Conference.

Regional Forum Members & contact Details

<u>Who</u>	<u>Job Description</u>	<u>E-Mail</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Asha Wolfe-Robinson	SAL for Social Science	Server 1	N/A
Babs Yeldon	Communications Officer	ousanhl@hotmail.co.uk	01438 729077
Bill Willows	SAL for Maths & Computing	wgw3@student.open.ac.uk	01954 200521
Carey Shaw	Treasurer	ncs46@student.open.ac.uk	01485 520646
Caroline Hands	Disabled Student Link	ousabedford@yahoo.co.uk	07879 497604
Karen Scott	Chair + SAL for Science	chair@ousa-nhl.org.uk	N/A
Keith Ward	Vice President Representation	keitha01@hotmail.co.uk	01702 303498
Michael Magarinos	SAL for Technology	mm3453@student.open.ac.uk	N/A
Peter Canning	Senate Reference Group Rep	pcanning@ntlworld.com	01223 502537
Roland Darvell	SAL for Arts & Humanities+ SSL	roland@darvell.net	01702 476161
Steve Blake	ECM for East of England	ousao26@guest.open.ac.uk	01362 850130
Sue Hissey	Secretary + Regional Directory Co-ordinator	treasurer@ousa-nhl.org.uk	01462 490966
Wendy Davies	SAL for Health & Social Care	N/A	01245 222956

Open Learn

The Open university's Open Learn £5.6 million project has just opened up on the 25th of October and can be found at <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk>

The project is designed to bring the Open University study materials free on the internet and open for learners and educators around the world to study in their own time.

This is particularly handy if you

have an interest in a topic but are unsure or do not wish to commit until you have had a taster of the course.

The open Learn courses do not have Tutors assigned to them but do have a discussion board for course related discussions to share views, Ideas and questions with other Students.

The open Learn courses are being translated into other languages,

with more courses being added soon.

The main technology for the site is Moodle. This is an open source course management system designed to create online learning communities

The project is currently funded until April 2008, when it is expected that over 5,000 learning hours of content will be available online

O.U Discount / I.D Card

Open University Students have the benefit of two Student Discount cards.

The first is available through the partnership with the National Union of Students and can be purchased for a cost of £10.00. Forms can be obtained from from the card hotline on

0870 242 3458 (stating that you are an OU Student), or online from

www.nusonline.co.uk/associate
The cards are valid until December 2007.

Alternatively, The Open University has its own which is free and can be obtained from the

Communications Officer at 150, Raleigh Crescent, Stevenage, Herts., SG2 0EA

Please remember to include proof of studying with the Open University, a passport size photo and, most importantly, a STAMPED addressed envelope.

Regional Forum Newsletter

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**OU Students
Association**

Website Addresses :

Regional Forum : www.ousaeast.org.uk from here you will be able to gain access to your local branch website if they have one. If not why not get in touch and help produce one for your Branch. The Regional web site is run by Tricia Higgins, you can contact her at tricia@rainbowcottage.org.uk Any information will be gratefully received for the web site.

Main OUSA website : www.ousa.org.uk See the front page for further information

NUS_OUSA Associate Card : www.nusonline.co.uk/associate

The Open University's Open Learn (see page 3): <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk>

OUSET

The Open University Students Educational Trust (OUSET) was set up by OUSA to help students in financial need who do not qualify for assistance from elsewhere. The Trustees look at each individual case on its merits, and any OU student can apply to OUSET for assistance.

OUSA organises fund raising for OUSET and relies on the generosity and ingenuity of OU students, whether simply making a small donation, buying a raffle ticket, or getting involved in running or promoting a fund raising event. Contact your local branch or see the OUSA website for more details. www.ousa.org.uk

There is a new Financial Support leaflet available from the OUSA office. P.O Box 397, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes Mk7 6BE. 01908 654326

Leaflet reference SUP 903357.

This details the help that is available with OU fees for people with a gross household income of up to £25,645. Financial help is also available from the Open University for assistance with paying for a computer and internet connection where needed.

Please remove and attach to any correspondence.

Name:

E-mail Address: I would like make the following comments

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Phone number:PI number.....

Data Protection – the personal data you provide will be held by the Regional Forum, for the purposes of contacting you in relation to OUSA activities and events. Your details will not be passed to any third party without your prior consent.

Send any correspondence to the Communications Officer at 150, Raleigh Crescent, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 0EA or e-mail :ousanhl@hotmail.co.uk