



Open University
Students Association
Frankfurt Branch

OUSA Conference Report

1st – 3rd April 2005

Devonshire Park Conference Centre, Eastbourne

This year's conference was held in Eastbourne, England.

This is the first time I attended the OUSA Conference which was held in Eastbourne. I had no precise idea what to expect and was impressed not only with how well organized the event as such was, but also what a huge machinery the open University is and what can be done by OU students to try influence it in their favor.

Basically, OUSA Conference is an active event at which students get together and present, debate and vote for or against motions set up by the various branches in England and the rest of Europe. The motions cover educational, administrative and, most importantly, student support issues. If carried, they will be presented by OUSA to the Open University in order to be implemented accordingly by the Open University; depending largely on its possibilities. Therefore, the conference has given me a very good impression of what the student can do in order to try to influence matters affecting them directly.

Below are some of the motions presented by the Northern Europe Regional Forum (including Frankfurt Branch), even though Mr. Erich from Belgium dominated the presentation of the motions. These motions are as follows:

- This Association believes that fees for overseas students are getting beyond the reach of many who would otherwise be to study with the OU, and calls on the university to organize a through investigation of all costs.
- The Association asks the OU to publish more transparent information about the structure of student fees explaining in detail differences in fees b/w UK, Rep. Ireland & Continental Europe
- Also the OU to investigate the feasibility of pricing courses in euros as well as in sterling to encourage an expansion of the OU across the Europe.

Other motions were also tables and carried out while some were defeated, (for example, 145 Motion Policy). Whether these motions will be put into practice remains to be seen, yet the Open University has been made aware of some of the students concerns.

Preceding conference, a training session was held for the Northern and Southern Europe branch Members and delegates as well as new attendants on what OUSA is and does. The OUSA is a body independent of the various areas within their respective branches. OUSA's main concern is the representation of educational interests of its members (every OU student automatically becomes a member of OUSA), but also the promotion of influence of students on the Open University policy affecting them. The main benefit obviously is that every student can have his say on certain matters and thus take influence in favor of all students.



Open University
Students Association
Frankfurt Branch

It is therefore a vital aim of OUSA and the respective branches to reach more OU students in order to become active members within their branches.

From my personal experience at this year's OUSA Conference in Eastbourne, I can only recommend to fellow students to participate actively in OUSA. It is a good opportunity to make a difference on behalf of all students and above all, one gets to meet a lot of interesting people as well.

More information on OUSA can also be found at ww2.open.ac.uk/ousa.

Thanks
Faustina Madukanya
(Frankfurt Branch)