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KAREN FOLEY: Good morning and welcome to the Student Hub Live induction for the Open University Business School and the Open University Law School. My name's Karen Foley, and I'm going to be presenting this programme that we've got lined up for you today. Now we've got a packed programme of some really exciting content, and I'm really, really looking forward to welcoming you to the Open University, to your studies, to inspiring you about aspects of Business and Law, telling you everything you need to know, and generally having a very good chit-chat and welcoming you to the Open University community.

Now I'm not sure how many of you have been to one of these events before, but if you've seen the trailer or if you've read anything about it, you'll know that they're live interactive online events. You might be watching the catch up, and what's important to know is that you can drop in and out as you want to. It will be available on Catch Up very shortly after the event.

And whilst we've planned a lot of really exciting content, this is really all about you. It's your chance to ask questions, to talk with each other, to tell us what you think and pretty much ask anything you want to know that's going to make your studies a lot easier to access.

So to do this, I'm joined by HJ and Mychelle who are on our hot desk for today. Good morning.

HJ: Good morning.

MYCHELLE: Good morning.

KAREN FOLEY: How are you both on this lovely, rainy day in Milton Keynes?

HJ: No. But it's good because it means that we're not thinking about outside. We can concentrate on chatting to everyone today. and we're really excited about that.

MYCHELLE: Really excited about it.

HJ: Yeah. We got lots of people already in the chat. So we got a few people doing W101, so they're just starting off, which is absolutely fantastic. So thanks for coming along. And there's a few people that I'm interested to know what you're studying as well. So Melanie, Melissa, Graham, Laura, and Osken, I really want to know what modules you're studying. But Mychelle,

you were telling me about your module that you've just done as well.

MYCHELLE: Yeah. So I did a finance for non-finance managers module, which was great. So I'm really excited to be able to be here and talk to people about what it's like to be a student online.

HJ: Cool. But anything in the chat goes, so if you've got any thoughts, comments, or questions that you have for our guests or just about anything in general, really, anything goes in the chat. And we'd love to- I'm sure our guests would love to hear from you as well. So if you have any of those, just type them in. And if you want to email us as well, you can- studenthub@open.ac.uk If there's any links you would like, we're happy to put them in there. And you can follow us on Twitter @studenthublive. So yes, we're really excited for today. Can't wait to chat to everyone.

KAREN FOLEY: Now for those of you who've been to an event before, you'll know that HJ has come to the Open University about four years ago or so, and we've pretty much locked him in here ever since and made him come to every Student Hub Live event. So he knows pretty much everything there is to know about these. And Mychelle, as well as being a student, works within the business school, so she's got lots of information and advice as well as her student experience to share with you all.

Now there are a few things you might want to know if you are new, and as HJ has mentioned before, you can connect with us on Twitter. There's the Catch Up available. But the chat can go quite fast, and there's a little pin at the top of the chat box. And if you want to hold that, you can then scroll down and see what people are talking about. It's really cool to introduce yourself, say where you're from, what you're studying. You might want to say what the weather is like or what you had for breakfast. But anything goes in that chat box, so just type a message in the chat box and press Enter to send.

You can also email us, studenthub@open.ac.uk. And there's also a livestream-only option. So if for any reason you're having problems with the interface that's there, you can just go onto livestream.com/ou-connection, and you can connect with the event there.

Now we have a range of activities and programmes for you today. Now you can see all of this on the website, but just to give you a little highlight of what we have in store for you, we've got some students coming in. We're going to be talking about things like time management, about their stories. We've got sessions about online rooms. These are the new Open University tutorial systems, so we're going to show you how they all work. And for the first time ever,

we're going to invite you into a room to talk to some of our presenters just after that session. So it'll give you a chance to try that new technology for the first time.

We've got some careers advice. We've got the student support team here. And we've got some academic sessions- things like secrets of the Silicon Valley, and we'll be telling you about apprenticeships. We've got some catch up in the afternoon as well. The chat will be open, so you can continue talking to each other then. And then in the evening, we've got some sessions that focus on law, although a lot of this will be relevant to law students in the daytime as well. We are doing learning law lightly, more than courts and judges, and then we have a moot from the Open University Law Society

So there's a packed programme, so do check out the website to find out what times they are on. Come and connect with us when you can.

So to start the session, I wanted to introduce you to some guests that we have in the studio. And while I'm doing that, if you could, you'll see a whole range of widgets on the screen. These are like interactive tools. And if you could fill those in, it would be really great to tell us where you are, what level you're studying- I know you can type in which module you're studying as well- how you're feeling right now, whether you're studying business or law, and if you've been to one of these events before.

Now just a quick note of these. You open the widget or the interactive tool that you want to access, press on the thing that applies to you, and then close it, and that will minimise and send your results. When you see one of these word clouds- these things with three words in them- you need to put three things in them or it won't submit. So if you can't think of three things, just put a full stop and then at least your results for the one or two things that you can think of will submit to us. So do that now, and we'll feedback on how everyone is right now in a moment.

But let me first introduce you to, Devendra Kodwani and Paul Catley. Thank you for coming along. Devendra, you are the Associate Dean for learning and teaching. And Paul, you are the head of the law school. So I wanted to ask you both what you're really excited about right now because your schools have phenomenal things going on. There's always something exciting and innovative happening. So tell us what you're most excited about right now that you're doing.

DEVENDRA

KODWANI:

Karen, business school is going through a lot of changes and introducing new things. So things that we are excited about is creating innovative approaches to learning and teaching. We are excited about developing our new MBA programme and as well as the things we want to do for the students much better and more effectively.

As you know, university has taken a view on the way people study rather than modules as a qualification. So we are very excited about doing right things for the students so that they can succeed in their study goals. And that means we are thinking very innovatively about how we deliver. You already mentioned about the tutorial online platform that is changing, which is much more interactive. We are excited about creating new types of modules for the 21st century- how you work in digital economy and so on. So there's a lot going on in the faculty that excites us at the moment.

KAREN FOLEY:

Now in your role, you're Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching. So you're really specialising in how we deliver some of this to students. And, you know, for students who have just joined us, they'll know that we're a distance learning provider, but the way that we do that is very unique. So tell us what students can start to look out for in terms of how we're personalising some of this experience for them.

DEVENDRA

KODWANI:

Yeah. You know, the students that we attract range from young students who are in their 20s through to age group going into 50s, 60s, but most of them are in the group of 25 to 35, 40. And they are busy people. They have life, and they have expectations from their studies. So we want to design and offer them learning in a way that they feel it is personalised for them, it is flexible for them. They can work around the time that suits them. How do you fit the study into your busy time schedule for the day?

So our learning systems are being adapted that will allow students to actually customise their learning experience as they seem will be working better for them. So it's a lot more personalised experience than one would imagine in distance learning.

KAREN FOLEY:

And Paul, what about from the law school's perspective?

PAUL CATLEY:

I Think one of the really exciting things at the moment is the fact that we've got the first students on our new law degree- a law degree that we launched in 2014- who are now graduating. And they're the students who have gone through the course full time. It's really lovely to go and see them at their graduation ceremonies and things like that because I think what we have developed in the new law degree is a much more interactive course, a course

which really makes full use of the fact that it's online. So it's a mix of audio, video, and written materials.

And I think that really works as a learning experience because people learn in different ways. And therefore, having a system which offers a whole range of different ways of learning material and also interacting with the other students and with tutors is brilliant. So I think at the moment, that's the most exciting thing.

But another thing which I'm really thrilled about at the moment is that we are just in the process of launching our justice in action module. Now this links into what we call pro bono. This is effectively giving students the opportunity- and you don't have to do it as a student, but if you want to, it's there as an opportunity to get involved in actually giving legal advice to real people. And the Open University Law School is the first university in the country to offer online legal advice.

So the members of the public or students can come along with their legal questions, and those questions will go to students who will be supported by qualified solicitors. But the students will be researching the question, working out the advice, usually working at part of a team, and then giving that advice to the member of the public with the reassurance that one of our qualified solicitors is going to look over that advice and make sure that it is accurate. But it's a fantastic opportunity to really be making use of the law.

You know, you're studying law as an academic subject, but this is really showing its practical application, and I think that's really exciting. And that module is launching in October.

KAREN FOLEY: No, absolutely. We've got some lovely videos to show the students later in the day about some of the exciting things to do with that module. But it is one of the things, I think, that sort of is something common across both of the schools, is that you are working in innovative ways to deliver online learning in an appropriate way that gives people a chance to really put that learning to use. And so I wanted to ask you about some of the partnerships that you're working on developing as well.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yeah. I mean, ethos of our learning and teaching, both in the business school as well as in law, is that what we offer the students and what they learn, they should be able to apply to their day to day job or in their life or actually go out and help people out in their respective fields- management, leadership, and law.

So, obviously, if we are to design something which is practice-based, we need to be working with people who are in practice also. So we have very good partnerships with institutions, such as Chartered Management Institute, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, both in the UK. We have also a relationship with Chartered Institute of Public Finance. And in addition, we work with several other professional bodies and non-government organisations to help inform because we do research with them also. So that actually helps us design the module, which is much closer to the practice, and we work with [INAUDIBLE] directors and other such partners.

So a key cornerstone of our learning design is that you should be able to apply what you are learning. And the way we design learning, therefore, requires that you take something from your studies, be able to apply in your practice on day to day basis, and behind that lies our close working with our partners. And that's the key thing from our partnerships purpose. Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Thanks. Now Paul.

PAUL CATLEY: And for law, I think one of our really exciting partnerships is with the BBC. And there, we've been working- last year we were involved with working with the BBC on the production of a programme- a series of programmes- called *The Prosecutors*. And that was the first ever programme which had really sort of got into the Crown Prosecution Service and worked with them to follow some cases but really see what it took to bring a successful prosecution. And it was great. That got fantastic reviews. It was BAFTA nominated, et cetera.

At the moment what I'd say to people is BBC Two, 9 o'clock Wednesdays, there is *The Detectives: Murder on the Streets*. And that, again, is a BBC cooperation with the Open University. And you can watch episode one on Catch Up, episode two for this week. But what that is looking at is working with the murder squad in Manchester investigating a really horrific killing, but really sort of seeing how detectives operate in that way.

And one of the things that I think is great for the academics is these partnerships really give you an idea of real life, what it is like in practice in these different roles which students might decide that they want to go on into in the future using their law degree. But also I think what it provides us is fantastic material which we can then incorporate into our courses. So we really make use of the material we got from *The Prosecutors* and now from *The Detectives* as part of courses that we are developing.

KAREN FOLEY: It's a brilliant relationship and one that I think many students are not really aware of. I mean,

we used to have the videos in the olden days, and we'd put them in, and there'd be a lot of programming. And I think, you know, the OU, sort of back to its heritage, you know, reminds us of those sorts of way of learning.

DEVENDRA

KODWANI:

Yeah, I think you're absolutely right, Karen. *Detectives* reminds me of another partnership that we have forged with College of Policing in England. So business school has set up a partnership with College of Policing. We have set up a research centre around policing, and a consequence of that is we are not only working with the practitioners in the police forces, but also to co-design with them the learning. And that's going out as MOOC for the police forces, but it's also available to public as a public free MOOC.

So, again, focus is on practise. We are learning from the professionals, working with them to bring the management theories into practise in different domains of practise or its leadership in policing. We have worked extensively with the National Health Service in England to train their clinical leaders. And similarly, we are now working with several voluntary organisations, and we have set up centres. So I think the key things of all the faculty is that both the School of Law as well as School of Business has this unique model of creating centres for excellence in research around practice-based pedagogy, around influencing and learn from various professionals, be they in health sector, be they in legal, be they in defence forces and policing. But we're learning from them and co-creating a lot of learning.

And this all also goes into what our regular students are studying. So a lot of students who are joining law would benefit from some of this, and students who are in business courses will also see things coming out of those centres and informing our learning teaching materials. So there a lot of- almost a 360 degree view of learning, which is practise, knowledge, creation. Knowledge goes back into practise and then comes back. So we hope that our students will enjoy that and benefit from it.

KAREN FOLEY:

Now absolutely. And it's very important, I think, for higher education providers to be able to have this symbiotic relationship, where you're feeding in and out, so that we're- and showing that things are accurately portrayed in the media, for example, and also informing, you know, how our research can have an impact on the public.

DEVENDRA

KODWANI:

Yes. And I think that, as a distance learning, but very online-intensive learning experience, that gives us a unique opportunity among the sector- higher education sector- because we can update the materials. We can bring things to life very easily, what's going on in the world, so

we are not so much dependent on a textbook because everything we are creating is based on our own knowledge and practise. So that gives us up opportunity to be quite at the forefront of what's going on in the practise and bringing it to the advantage of all the students at the earliest possible opportunity.

KAREN FOLEY: Now absolutely. It's really unique. I mean, there's been this thing on Facebook lately with OU students saying, I'm sick of people saying that an OU degree is not a real degree. And actually here we see evidence that not only is it just as good, it is, in fact, better because of some of the ways that you're doing things and some of the ways that- for example, you're using virtual reality in a way that you couldn't get at another university. It's really taking the key of innovation and learning design to a different level.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: Yeah. I think- and other people have views, obviously, on the distance learning, but one thing which is lost in sometimes translation in these discussions is that when you become a student at the Open University, you become part of a global community of learners. So from business school itself, we have, in our 30 years, about 100,000 students have studied with just business school- about 40,000 now in the law school. Now these students come from 120 countries. They come with diverse cultural backgrounds, national backgrounds, their work profile, come from all sectors of the economy and society.

Now being part of such a diverse community in itself is a huge experience, educational experience. So to question distance learning in that sense, I think, is a little simplistic because there are things that happen in online and distance learning which are simply not possible to replicate in campus-based learning. You know, you're part of a community of a very large group of students, and I have seen- I have myself been a student in distance learning with Open University, and I can see the diversity of the students, and that experience for the student is quite extraordinary.

PAUL CATLEY: And I think in terms of sort of studying law, the perceptions that you get from working with students who've actually come from different jurisdictions. So it starts challenging some of the assumptions that you might have because that's the way we do it to then realise other people do it differently. What are the advantages of their alternative approach? What are the disadvantages?

One of the big differences between the English legal system and the system operating in most of Europe is that England and Wales have an adversarial system, so it is- essentially, in a

court case, you'll have both sides arguing their point in a criminal case. In most of the continent, you have what is normally termed an inquisitorial system, where effectively the judge is running things, and he's trying to get at the truth. Now there are advantages and disadvantages in both of those approaches, but I think only when you start exploring it- and it's fantastic if you can explore it with people from different backgrounds- can you really start to see, yeah, in some ways this works better, but in other ways, perhaps that works better. And that sort of idea of learning from others, I think, is really crucial.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Then Now we'd asked everyone at home- and you've all been filling in your widgets as well, which I'm delighted to hear- how you're feeling and what you're studying, et cetera. And I just sort of wanted to fill you in on where we're all at home. So most of you are at level one, 76 per cent, I think, at the last count. And hello, Dave, who's doing his second year, and to all the other second year students as well who have also joined us. Welcome. There'll be plenty of information here to inspire you as well. So whilst this is really an essential guide for new students, also it will have a lot of exciting things for you as well.

We've got some students doing business right at the morning session, which is expected because a lot of our sessions are loaded towards the business side, but again, very relevant material for you as well. And most of us starting part time, although some are studying full time. And we're going to be including some things about study intensity a little bit later in today's programme.

And the majority of you have not been to Student Hub Live events before, but some of you have been. So welcome back those of you who have been. Please make everyone else welcome in the chat. And I know you've been doing so, and you're talking about your studies, and you're very excited about things. So I'd like to go to HJ and Mychelle and see what you have been talking about.

HJ: Well, We've be chatting about quite a bit, haven't we? There's loads going on, which is really exciting. We've had some lovely comments as well.

MYCHELLE: Yeah. I just wanted to raise something that Petra said was, "In regards to what is being said at the moment, I have my first degree from the OU of Business, and no employer ever thought it was worth less than from a red brick." And I think that's really true. I myself have come recently from outside, and everyone said, you're going to the OU. It's absolutely brilliant, such a high value degree, so really, really good.

We've had another comment in from Miroslav who said, "Because English is not my first language, I'm afraid of my writings." So it was really good that, Dev, you were talking about the different countries that the students come from.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: I'd like to pick up on that. So this is just for any student. For me, English is fourth language.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow.

[LAUGHS]

DEVENDRA KODWANI: So-

KAREN FOLEY: Not that you're bragging.

DEVENDRA KODWANI: No, no, no.

[LAUGHS]

DEVENDRA KODWANI: No, I'm not. It's just to say- and then I had full honours degree with OU after becoming employ here. So not to worry about language. There is enough support that we will be providing on the study skills. Actually, and now we're trying to build the studies skills into the module learning itself. But also there's free learning resources on the OU's library which are about study skills, so do not worry about that. There's plenty of support for you.

Other thing to note about language is that when we mark assignments- so if students write assignments, I'm also a tutor. So English doesn't stop you from scoring well. So long as you made your points clear, then it's not going- unless you're doing a degree in English, obviously, where you are learning about English, then people will be assessing you on the scale in English. But in a business degree- and I don't know to what extent, Paul, in law- it's not going to be a huge disadvantage.

But obviously, knowing good English is going to be, professionally, a big advantage anyway. So it's worth putting effort into picking up where you think you are going to struggle on language. But believe me, you are not going to suffer because you think it is not your first language. You will sail through smoothly. The student community will be great. The tutors are

going to support you. And just ask a question, Okay? When you are in a forum or talk to your tutor that you are struggling with something, we have fantastic student recruitment and support team, SRSC centre, who will also give a lot of advice on study skills. If they are struggling, please call them. They'll be very happy to support them.

KAREN FOLEY: People want to pick your brains about some more stuff, so let's see some of the questions.

HJ: We've just had lots of great comments coming off about- I think it just shows the diversity of the OU. So Laura's saying that she's got a three-year-old and a one-year-old. And Miroslav said he's just finished working the night shift, so he'll be sleeping after this and watching some on Catch Up as well. So I think our session at 10:30 about fitting it all in will be very suitable for all of us, and I'm looking forward to that one as well.

MYCHELLE: We've got a couple of students coming up in the next session who can tell you how they fit it in because they have crazy lives, and I can't believe what they achieve. They are- really excited to talk to them. We did have a question for you, Paul. Sarita asked, "Why are there no hard copies for W101?"

PAUL CATLEY: Right. I think this was a difficult decision. We recognise that many students do want to have hard copy, but when I was saying earlier about how we designed the courses, it was very much to be an online resource. And therefore, what we were looking to do is to integrate a mix of different resources, whether they were particularly sort of video or audio or whatever. And the danger that we have felt in discussions with students is if we produce hard copy, the risk is that students just omit all that extra material, and that would be, I think, a real shame because they would lose out on a huge amount of valuable material. Yes, you can print stuff off if you want to, but that's not how it's designed to be studied. And the students who've gone through it studying it online have really, I think, benefited from that.

KAREN FOLEY: Wonderful. Paul and Dev, thank you so much for coming along. I'm sorry. The time always flies when you're having fun. Thank you all for filling out all of our widgets and tell us what you're doing. I just want to end with how you're feeling because you'd all put in some wonderful words. So I just want to show you the results of the words cloud to see how you're feeling at this Monday morning on the 25th of September. Excited, happy, apprehensive, adventurous, revved-up, geared-up, fit as a fiddle, just woke up, tigger-like, excellent. So thank you very much for filing those in.

I hope you're happy in the chat. We're going to show you a short video. We've been making

some videos around the Open University because whilst we've got all these wonderful academics and students, et cetera, coming along to talk to you today, there are a lot of other people who make your learning journey so superb. And so we're going to be meeting some of them in our ad breaks throughout today's programme. And the first one is with Sophie and Steve, so I hope you enjoy this video. We'll be back next to talk to these mad students about how they fit it all in, and I'll be joined by Libby and Richard in a few minutes. So we'll see you very soon.

[MUSIC PLAYING]