

Student Council meeting Thursday 28th May 2009

Attended

Mary-Rose Ashton, Charlotte Berry, Ben Catchpole, Maria Goodhew, Sean Graham, Jennifer Greene, Daniel Hartigan (Chair), Janice Mitchelson, Harry Pitts, Kim Reay (minutes), Karl Shaddick, Sarah Toledo,

Apologies

Joe Holder (setting up fashion show), Rebecca Pollard (exam), Lauren Rees (work placement)

Minutes

Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record

Garden Party

It was confirmed that the Garden party was to be held 13th June at Princess Pavilions and tickets were on sale for £10. There would be live bands, jugs of Pimms for sale (heavily subsidised), free strawberries and ice cream and a free buffet. Ben Catchpole confirmed he was organising the Street Team to sell tickets around campus. Tickets are also available from both FXU offices and from the Stannary bar.

It was confirmed that the music organised, particularly the main band were better than last year and that the sabb officers were aware that students should be encouraged into the main room to see the band.

Graduation Parties

These were suggested in previous council meeting and in response two Graduation Celebrations have been organised at the Falmouth Hotel:

UCF 19th June

UECC 27th July

From 7.30pm to late. First 120 tickets for graduating students will be discounted to £10; guest and other tickets will be £20. Menus for the 3-course meal are available at the FXU office and on the FXU website. FXU are also able to accept telephone bookings.

Hoodies (2009 design)

The winner of the competition to design the 2009 hoodie was Kathy Hooky. Hoodies with the new design were now on sale. Hoodies £22, T-shirts £12.

Election Results

The results from the FXU election for Sabbatical and Executive officers were confirmed as:

FXU President UCF: Taylor Worthington

FXU President UECC: Ian Pogonowski

FXU President Dartington: Sarah Gray

FXU President Welfare: Samantha Finneran

FXU ENTS Officer: Kimberley Read

FXU Sports Officer: Andy Edmonds
FXU Environment & Ethics Officer: Finn Raven
FXU Community Action Officer: Penny Tomkins
FXU Charities Officer: Gene Abdi
FXU Equal Opps Officer: Nick Jarvis

Focus Group

Sarah explained that a focus group of students had been held to discuss how FXU communicates with students, how much students understand about what FXU does and how FXU could do better. The results of this will feed into FXU's 5-year development plan. FXU have also run an on-line survey to get further feedback.

The results of both the Focus Group and survey will go on-line.

There will also be a follow up meeting with members of the Focus Group.

The FXU team will hold it's own meeting to examine the feedback and feed this into the 5-yr plan. FXU will be looking for students to take part in consultations during July, this can be done by email and any interested students were asked to get in touch with Janice janice.mitchelson@falmouth.ac.uk.

Dan Hartigan although graduating this year is interested in taking part in the consultation.

Woodlane Bar

It was confirmed that FXU had joined with TCS to submit a tender to manage the Woodlane Bar from the beginning of the 09-10 academic year. The tender has been successful and the handover to TCS/FXU will be 1st August. TCS/FXU are looking to make significant improvements to the food, ents programme and the way the bar is run as it is not currently fulfilling its potential. All UCF & UECC students are welcome to the bar and the more intimate size of the venue makes it ideal for society/ course parties.

FXU has a budget for ents for 09/10, this will be used partly to provide a regular programme of entertainment at the Woodlane bar (student DJs & Comedy nights). In addition we will try and make all students aware of this budget so they can let us know what other trips/ entertainment they would like us to arrange.

Student Council Review

Janice introduced herself to those members not present at the last meeting & explained that she started 6 weeks ago and would be a member of the FXU team for 6 months. She explained that her role was to examine the Representative Structure and communication between students and the FXU and that the Student council was obviously a large part of this. Since the last meeting Janice explained that she had been looking at the existing Rep structure; talking to current Sabbs, Execs and staff, examining best practise across other student unions and; been in discussions with the Academic Office

(UCF) and ASU (UECC). She had also been considering Diversity & Equality issues ensuring FXU remains pro-active and representative.

Janice explained that so far she had found

- there was real need to increase awareness of FXU both in the institutions and among students
- there was a need to define the role of the Student Council, making it clearer and of real substance.
- also a need to develop training, support and incentives for reps and find additional ways for them to communicate with each other outside of the Student Council meetings.
- there is also a need to communicate to students what the council & FXU are doing.
- and a need to generate more interest in the elections by increasing the number of nominations.

Janice requested that as this was the last student council meeting this year she would like to review how the student council had worked this year, to discuss ideas and get some feedback.

Membership

Janice asked whether there should be reps for Post Grads, International students and/or Mature Student Reps? Sarah explained that Post Grad reps had been requested and that there had been a Falmouth rep (not now attending meetings), but no-one for Exeter.

Ben explained that all Falmouth students had received an email asking do you want to represent your course, but that he thought it would be better for FXU to introduce themselves to each course and ask for representatives.

Janice explained that in some SUs there are several open positions – so if you are not your course rep you can still be involved in the student council. Dan & Ben again thought to get people interested, FXU needed to go to the first lecture & ask for reps.

Janice asked if the council thought there should be a rep for disabled students or for students from a minority. It was generally agreed by the council that the FXU Equal Opportunities Officer should fulfil this need and also that course reps would represent anyone in this position from their courses. It was suggested that the FXU Equal Opportunities Officer ran an Equal Opps Council. It was asked if there had been any issues in the past, the council thought not but with the number of students growing and becoming more diverse there may be issues in the future.

Janice asked if the council would like a representative from TCS to attend meetings – general response was that it would be useful to be able to invite a rep from TCS for part of some meetings when relevant.

Janice asked about how the chair was chosen. Sarah T explained that this year there had been a rolling chair to give everyone a chance. Last year only one person was interested in chairing and so they had chaired every meeting of the council. Janice explained that chairing was a transferrable skill and that some SUs gave students training in how to chair a meeting. She also

explained that this could be an open position to open another opportunity for students to be involved. Generable opinion was that next year a chair and deputy/vice chair should be elected at the first meeting and that the elected chair should also become the spokesperson for the council if required.

Purpose

Janice asked the meeting what they thought the purpose of the council was. Dan thought the Student Council was there to report any issues affecting the area represented and to get feedback from the FXU. Harry thought that there needed to be a clearer differentiation from course committees, he would have thought course related issues would be taken to the course committees rather than the student council. Dan agreed but would bring up issues even if course related if he thought FXU could help.

It was agreed that it is not made clear in training/ induction of UCF course reps what issues should be taken where. Dan thought the SSLC for Exeter were not at all aware of the role of FXU and the student council. Sarah thought that the Student Council was necessary for the accountability of FXU but that it needed to be stronger. Ben thought that the majority of students were unaware of the student council, its role or its members. Sarah thought maybe minutes could be put on the website. Janice thought it would be good to big up the council on the website. It was said that if any History students had complaints about their course they would bring that to the attention of the History Society and more links could be developed between the societies and the Student Council.

Janice pointed out that in the FXU memorandum of Understanding (the governing document) the role of the Student Council is Political Decision Making and Accountability. Janice's understanding was that this made it a steering group and watch dog for the FXU. Janice asked whether political policies had been discussed. Sarah replied only in respect to the possibility of a No Platform Policy. Janice informed the council that in other universities policies included everything from Sports to Anti-Harassment. Ben thought there was a place for on-line surveys or even single questions, that they should be much more frequent; every week rather than every term. Dan thought there was a problem with too many surveys and that students now treated them as spam. Mary-Rose thought that one-question at a time was OK, but that most people ignored surveys. Harry thought that surveys by-passed the role of the rep., that the rep should assess the issues and opinions of the group they were representing. Ben suggested that FXU used twitter. Sarah mentioned that FXU had tried Vox popping (ie walking around campus, and posing just one question to students when researching student's opinions of the Woodlane Bar) and it had worked quite well. Sarah suggested the exercise was repeated regularly as it was a good way to increase interaction with students. Janice asked whether it would be possible to evolve this involving media students, filming, radio... Dan and Harry suggested having a 'confession booth' in the Stannary (& Woodlane bar?) once a week. Janice returned the focus back to policy decisions and suggested that FXU policies needed developing.

Induction

Janice asked whether an Induction process for new reps would help reps understand their role and introduced the possibility of a Handbook/Guide for

new reps. She suggested that FXU became more involved in the induction of new reps. Maybe making it more of a social event to allow reps to get to know each other. She also asked whether Training for reps would be useful such as Equalities, Disability Awareness, Event Management, Promoting Events. Harry thought it would be an incentive for reps if they received training and valuable skills they could use – but also thought this should be open to all students. Janice also suggested that each FXU Executive had a member of staff to liaise with and that each Exec/Staff partnership prepared an action plan at the beginning of the year. Ben thought this was a good idea as although Execs receive a job description at the beginning of the year – this is just a ‘lot of text’. Janice thought that the ‘Student Rep Handbook’ could be used to link the whole system together and could be available on the website with links to the relevant Academic departments. It could explain all the relationships with NUS, the Guild, Reps, Exec, Sabbs, Elections etc. Ben thought it was important to use the forums & to set up a section for Student Council.

Janice also suggested that other ways for the reps to meet up outside of Student Council were organised or that socials were organised after each/some council meetings – it would be hoped that this would make the council more cohesive.

Janice wondered how school reps were nominated. Dan said that if a student had a course related problem this should be reported to the course rep, which if necessary is fed up to the school rep, then if necessary this is fed up to the student council. He noted however that anyone was able attend a SSLC (not just reps). Dan thought that FXU reps & SSLC should be more aware of each other. Ben said that students tended to by-pass the rep system. Harry wondered if Exeter students reported more problems through the rep system because they had more problems because the courses here are new/ still developing/ had just relocated.

Janice also suggested Sabbs Surgeries, Suggestion Boxes & more focus groups (eg. the Environment & Ethics officer could hold an Environment Focus Group).

Incentives

Incentives for students to take part in the rep system suggested by Janice were:

- Recognised training (to improve CV & job prospects)
- Skills
- Knowledge
- Feel like making a difference
- NUS discount card
- Rep award scheme

She asked for any feedback and generally members of the council said that students became reps to improve their CV so that any incentives which would improve their CV would be good. Some members of the council agreed that the Rep Award Scheme would be a good incentive.

