



FXU (Falmouth & Exeter Student's Union)

UGM (Union General Meeting) 26th November 2015

Chapel Lecture Theatre, Penryn 4pm – 6pm

- Chair:** Dean Pomeroy (Chair of Student Council) [DP]
- Panel:** Amanda Chetwynd-Cowieson (FXU President Student Experience) [ACC]
Alexa Webster (FXU President Community & Welfare) [AW]
Fred Mallin (FXU President Falmouth) [FM]
Grace Fisher (FXU President Exeter) [GF]
- Speakers:** Prof Dave Hosken, Dean of Strategic Development, Cornwall Campuses (University of Exeter)
Peter Cox, Chief Operating Officer, Vice-Chancellor's Office, (Falmouth University)
- Attendees:** 41 FXU members attended, 11 staff attended: Quorate not reached.

Welcome & Introductions

Dean Pomeroy, FXU Student Voice Chair, opened the meeting, introduced the FXU presidents and two guest speakers. He advised that FXU were live tweeting and photographing, and that there was a live twitter feed #fxuugm

Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Presidents manifesto update
- FXU Presidents Top Ten Launch
- Student Growth on campus:
- Discussion & questions
- Introduction to Executive Officers
- Any Other Business

Presidents manifesto update

Each president's manifesto can be found by following the link on their initials below.

[ACC](#)

- Climate Soc of month award is up and running. The first round will be online soon.
- We are building an online catalogue of trips experiences. This will start in January.
- We have encouraged new societies at the Falmouth campus which can be seen from the latest round of new societies that have started.
- We motivated more students to engage with elections. The latest elections have seen more candidates and more voters than ever before. There will be more info going out about presidential elections in January.
- There are three events next term to promote interest in national politics. I am working with students from both universities and both campuses on these events.
- The sports centre facility is in progress and should be ready for the beginning of the next Academic year.
- Myself and Alexa are working on access around campus for students with disabilities.
- We are discussing with both universities about learning and social spaces.
- Student car share scheme is nearly complete. We are testing it next term and should be going live at Easter.
- We are looking at holding an Accommodation Forum with a Q&A and share information with the local community, and let students know their rights when they are renting in the private sector.
- To carry on the work of the Green Living project we have the [FXU Green Fund](#) with FXPlus, and we have received two applications. I am talking with interested students about how they can apply for that.

[AW](#)

- My manifesto was "For students and with students", so I have asked students what they want and then working with them on as many projects as possible.
- Student feedback wanted us to be there when we were needed so we went to every single welcome session, and I set up drop in sessions offering 6 hours to drop in where all my time is dedicated to being forward facing, answering questions and helping out.
- We used the [#noblurredlines](#) campaign to advocate sexual health and welfare, where one of our students won the Devon & Cornwall Police competition to design posters. We put these posters in all student accommodation on campus and in town, and the campaign has gone out to the entire student population. We have condoms of various sizes and types in FXU as well as everything you need regardless of orientation. We are currently working on a sexual health booklet which will include information about consent, symptoms to look out for, and how to maintain sexual health. It will be edited by a cis-male, cis-female, trans-male and trans-female so that students can find what they are looking for appropriate to their gender.
- I was honoured to collaborate with the African Caribbean Society (ACS) to celebrate diversity. They brought Black History Month to campus. I have been collaborated with the Islamic Society (ISOC) and both societies have done so much. We have held the FXU Faith fayre to

bring all different faiths on campus together for a united cause and to promote inclusion. We have the Liberation committee, and coming up we have the second term dedicated to mental health, and then in May we are having Pride Month which is celebrating everything LGBTQus.

- We are working alongside RAD for community and charity who are doing so many things and supporting their incredible numbers. Coming up we have the 800 years of Penryn celebration next year which we are aiming to get students and the community working together on that. We have Town & Gown which is a meeting with mayors and council people of Penryn and Falmouth and talk about issues. Recently we have discussed buses, housing and parking so there is a lot of crossover with ACC. I've also supported a lot of student fundraising.
- I have been looking into support groups under the Support and Empower aim to come together and be able to talk through what they need to. We aim to get everyone who is dyslexic together and share coping strategies, and do that for all areas of mental health. We are producing a mental health booklet, and launching a "Stress Free App" which will be launching in January. This will be free to all students, and we are the first Student Union to do this. There will be ways to manage stress and anxiety, including games and guided meditation.

FM

- I aimed to get more department buy in for course reps and managed to get more regular staff/student meetings which I need to make sure all departments do this. We have just set up a Department Rep working group which is a platform for department reps to share best practice and strategies for engagement. Rep training went well and we are looking at a rep reward scheme.
- I am working with Falmouth under the support point, for new and closing courses. I've worked with Falmouth to agree more student input into cessation & suspension policy at an early stage. We are also working on the Falmouth student charter, to lay out exactly what is expected of students and what they should expect in return.
- We have the creative skills exchange, which had positive feedback and we look to develop this and include Exeter students.
- We have a new noticeboard news at FXU, and a new media team get info to students about societies and activities.
- I have been working with Falmouth to try to get more parity of facilities between campuses. We released a new suggestion on the FXU Make a Change tab which is proving popular already.
- ACC has been working on travel, so I can't take credit for her work.

GF

- Myself and Fred have a meeting with both deputy Vice-Chancellors of Education to improve academic collaboration. We are potentially looking at opening up the Exeter "Grand Challenges" scheme to allow Falmouth student inclusion. We are developing a module Fair in February/March where Exeter students can find out about modules in their own and other disciplines and encourage students to take modules that may be useful, and why they should

take them.

- We are looking at an international support system for both Exeter and Falmouth students and we are looking at the right way to improve their support.
- We are looking at better support for students who study abroad. We have received an application to set up a society for these students which would also include Erasmus students and students who come to Cornwall to study. FXU are running events throughout the year for students thinking of studying abroad and students returning from studying abroad.
- We have set up an SSLC for post graduate students to better represent them. We are also developing a post graduate research network and forum, which is holding an event next Tuesday.
- I am going to Truro once a month to ensure the medical students there get improved represented. The first Truro SSLC took place yesterday.

FXU Presidents Top Ten Launch

You can see the FXU Top Ten [here](#) and further printed copies are available from the FXU office.

The principle behind the top ten: Work with both universities and FXPlus to ensure that all students, on all campuses, from all backgrounds share an equally excellent student experience through the support of the following priorities.

#1 Accommodation: introduced by ACC who added that we met yesterday with financial team and agreed in principle to raise the hardship fund in line with rental increased to make sure people get the same benefit from the fund.

#2 Disabled Students Allowance: introduced by AW who added that we are currently doing an access audit of campuses, facilities and activities, with the aim that by 2020 both campuses will be fully accessible to all.

#3 Postgraduate & International Experience: introduced by GF.

#4 Better Academic Practise: introduced by FM & GF

#5 FXUnity: introduced by ACC, GF added that she was working with the University of Exeter to develop the Grand Challengers programme. FM added that he is currently conducting research with Falmouth students to determine what different courses they want to work with. ACC said that work started last year on the research and performance exchange and this year we are looking to get more staff and more students involved from both universities.

#6 Mental Health Support: introduced by AW, also want to improve signposting as we have mental health workers and counseling, so we want staff to know where they can send people to. We have been given the chaplaincy to run nightline. We are looking to start training in the second term and hopefully be running at nights by the third term.

#7 Financial Transparency: introduced by FM & GF

#8 Sustainability: introduced by ACC, we would like the sustainability internship to continue

after its current funding is completed.

#9 Facilities, Space and Resources: introduced by ACC

#10 Employability: introduced by GF, FM and ACC.

Student Growth on campus

Chair Dean Pomeroy introduced speaker **Dave Hosken** (Dean for Cornwall, University of Exeter)

Overview

- The University of Exeter wants to keep attracting top students so the overall main driver is the global top 100, along with an increase in research power and delivery of exceptional student experience.
- Student numbers are planned to grow by just under 100 students a year to 2020: increasing from 2069 in 2015/16 to 2,541 in 2020. A significant proportion of this is PG, hence there is a need for PG space, so we are going to convert the current gym space into one for PG which would provide relief on UG space.
- We know that investment in infrastructure has to run alongside increases in student numbers and realize the impact of NSS. We are aware of need for more space and are exploring ways to improve space with Falmouth, and looking at the relatively simple things we can do now.

Research

- Our strategy aims to grow research in Cornwall – so we will need new research facilities. Hence the SERSFs 2 needs to be developed as soon as resources available.
- International research links are crucial, so we will be looking to encourage international research collaborations, including overseas academics coming to Cornwall and industrialists/business people to input our experience.

Education

- Student experience is a key priority, and resourcing facilities to support this will be central. We have had some of the most satisfied students in the country and for 3 of the last 4 years Exeter Cornwall students more satisfied than Exeter Devon. We want this to continue.
- Part of this clearly to do with the excellent teaching and programmes here, part of this is the environment provided by the students and part by the wider environment. We want to ensure that all of these elements remain excellent. So we are exploring resource implications of various expansion plans – to social and study space – to see what we can do and when we can do it.
- NSS results are critical to sustaining top 10 UK league table position.
- There is a continued push for more international and students. They will need facilities and PS staff to support this.
- PG growth – a dedicated pg space will alleviate pressure on other study space on campus.

We are also looking to attract more international students to campus.

Infrastructure

- There are two up-coming projects – i) SERSFs 2 as soon as we can resource it to support research power strategy (this building will include study space); ii) refurbish gym space as home for PG students and some additional space for FXU.
- We are very aware of housing pressures – and we are working with all our partners to ensure sufficient student housing fit for purpose.
- We are looking at ways to provide
 - i) additional housing on Campus
 - ii) working with authorities & providers for more off campus housing – we also have to consider the local communities and their needs.
 - iii) more social space on Campus.
 - iv) more learning space on campus – refurb of old gym space will help with this in the shorter term but we are exploring additional options.
- Increasing staff numbers will lead to a need for more staff space. This depends on freeing up resource for new serfs building which would provide you with more research space and lecturers
- There are fewer pinch points in Truro than here.
- Social space increase plans include where you have lunch and increase study space. Some will happen due to the addition of a dedicated PG space.

Chair Dean Pomeroy introduced speaker **Peter Cox**, Chief Operating Officer, Vice-Chancellor's Office, (Falmouth University)

Why growth?

- Falmouth drivers and positions are different to Exeter, but we share a passion and obsession with excellence and student experience.
- Falmouth growth is focused on undergraduate students. Nearly all growth is coming from new courses.
- Falmouth growth is driven by demand and extension of portfolio. We have introduced more courses over the last few years and will be introducing more courses in the next few years.
- We look at skill gaps in the creative industries and create courses to fill those gaps and get our students great jobs in this expanding sector.
- Growth is a financial imperative: 99% of our income comes from student fees, which has been fixed for four years. Yet costs increase each year and funding is being lost, along with funding being withdrawn from government means that cuts into any surplus. So we are being squeezed. We need to run at a surplus to generate capital for funding for new buildings, new kit, etc.
- There are only two ways to grow our surplus; either reduce our costs, or increase the volume of students. We have chosen to go for student growth.

- But not growth at any price, neither in terms of academic quality and not growth at the expense of student experience.
- We launched project 8000 last year which is our target for total student numbers by 2020. The biggest part of that is through partnership with students studying in Bodmin, Detroit, and blended learning with students distance learning around the world. Growth in Cornwall aims to move from 4500 to 6500. This is about a 50% growth of students on campus.

Implications

- The main challenge is accommodation. We are actively pursuing new accommodation on campus, aiming for approx. 1000 extra beds on campus. This would cost £60million so we are looking for a partner. We are about to go out to procurement, but with the procurement and construction processes these would not be available until 2018.
- We are also working with the private sector to encourage purpose built student accommodation in Falmouth and Penryn. There is not a lot of this at present, but there should be purpose built accommodation for 2017.
- We are sure the private sector is coming to build in town and we are talking to the council about unlocking sites.
- There are short term challenges and we are looking at all options including shared bedrooms on campus, and we are looking at this on a daily basis. Our commitment remains to guarantee 1st year accommodation on campus.
- The challenge for facilities is to increase social and teaching spaces. We have a new lecture in Peter Lanyon; we've been tweaking rooms top floor DDM to make them more flexible, and we are looking at works this year to combine lecture theatres. In a month we will get a report on the options to expand the Stannary. Both universities have broad provision in our capital plans for this sort of expansion to provide social and teaching space.

Discussion & questions around student growth

Question: What improvement(s) to the Woodlane facilities is/are planned?

PC – The new windows in the illustration building is the start of a larger scheme to cover the court yard and add a new floor on top of the refectory building that would double up as both a social and study space. We aim to get approval in January on the whole scheme. Although the budgets and thought processes are the same across campuses, plans are made in proportion to student numbers and 1/3 of Falmouth students are at Woodlane and about 2/3 are at Tremough.

Question: The working space required varies considerably from course to course. The computer room is a lot smaller than it was and there are limitations to space available for our course now. More courses have had their space cut. I came to Falmouth because I was offered my own workspace, but it is getting smaller. Have you considered this space and facilities impact?

PC – things will change; they have to. While things won't be the same they have to be equivalent and we provide the things you need to get you your qualifications and your job. We have to balance the provision of facilities and we do not always get them in the right order. We are having a meeting about mitigating the changes to reprographics in the meantime before next summer. Space generally is a big cost on courses and we are driven by the principle of financial convergence so that

students on one course do not over-subsidise other course costs. This means that some space-hungry courses e.g. fine art need to reduce the space they use. We have got to make courses work within the boundaries of cross-subsidisation, which explains some of the things you talk about. While I can't answer each point, we are committed to equivalence and delivering the same employability outcomes for you. Sometimes we don't get the order of work right, and sometimes we have to do work in an order that is not perfect, but we will get those under control.

Question: Printing is a great problem, and it is frustrating as we can't meet deadlines because printing was cut from Woodlane. Had we been informed of limitations in advance we could have planned our work better.

PC – I can't answer individual points. We can't afford to duplicate identical facilities on both campuses. We sometimes have to provide services on one campus and then figure out how that service is provided to all students.

Question: A lot of Exeter's growth plans are driven by its position in League tables. Do you think students from outside looking in see your obsession with league tables as a bad thing?

DH – we think that continued access to research funding will be limited to those institutions that stay near the top of research league tables, so that is why we look at those tables.

Secondly, student experience is a major factor in those tables so if we are not doing things that are good for you then we have shot ourselves in the foot. I don't think if we explained why league tables are important that potential students would see them as a bad thing. It boils down to do you want to be taught by people who are writing the text books or not? If you want to be taught by people who are driving the knowledge, who are on the cutting edge of their discipline, then you should be going to the institutions at or near the top of these sorts of league tables.

Question: Is there a backup plan if the building works scheduled over Christmas are not finished ready for when we come back in January? We have deadlines in January and you have cut back on finishing room yet expect more students every year to access less facilities.

PC – The works planned are not major and so delay is not expected and the risk to students is low. Part of the building will be open over Christmas to help if students want to work then. If the worst was to happen then we would have to make alternative arrangements; either move deadlines or facilities.

Question: We are concerned that you have already cancelled building work before. The room you are working on includes the main facilities we need for our course; dark room, printing, etc. Can you guarantee deadlines would be extended?

PC – no; I can't guarantee that now as I am not close enough to the details in each department, but I can take this away. We have to look at if we can provide the same facilities somewhere else or look at deadlines.

Question: In the long term you are planning a 10% increase in students every year and yet the institute of Photography have cut room size and work space sizes for students which increases the pressure on students when increasing social space. Will photography work space be increased?

PC – I can't answer how this decision was arrived at and why one space was swapped with another. It has come from the institute to decide how to use their space.

FM – meeting with the director of the institute of Photography next week so please send me details and I can raise it with him.

Question: How will the growth of students affect relations for both universities with the local community?

PC – we talk to Penryn town council, Falmouth town council and the unitary authority all of the time. There are a few people who will never be happy that there are any students here. The vast majority of people recognise that there are benefits. There are more houses going to HMO (Houses of Multiple Occupancy) and we need purpose built accommodation in town and parking. We are looking at parking on campus as it is an issue now and we are looking at how we might extend that. It is a constant challenge for us to maintain that relationship. It's not generally bad, it's generally a good relationship; we are seen as having a positive impact but we can't be complacent and the biggest issue is accommodation, traffic and parking.

DH – the only thing I would add to that is a lot of people are aware of what universities and students spend in the local economy. The relationship between the universities and the towns is not just our responsibility, it is also your responsibility to act like good citizens in the town. For example get yourself on the electoral register which increases the funding for the local council. We do our best, and you need to help by being good citizens in the town you live.

Question: Falmouth is a very small town compared to other university towns. You are trying to grow the university very fast. Do you really think you can build that number of houses that quickly?

PC – We do think we can encourage the private sector to build what we need. You don't need many sites, just a few sites with 500 beds. There are those sites in town, and a few other small ones that have already been installed. We think the first ones will be on stream by 2017.

Question: It seems that Exeter's priority is student experience while Falmouth focusses on student numbers. These two things seem diametrically opposed so how will Exeter mitigate the damage caused by Falmouth growing? How will Exeter make sure that our student experience isn't affected?

DH – don't think the two things are opposed; while Falmouth expansion plans more rapid and larger growth than Exeter's, but both universities agree student experience is of key importance. We are in discussion all the time about the work we need to do, and what we need to put in place to mitigate the stresses and we may have to roll out some measures faster than planned, but we don't see that they are opposed.

Question: what tangible benefits does growth mean for Exeter students? Are there plans to extend the library? Are there plans to grow student facing resources?

DH – There is going to be new student facilities ready for 2017. We are discussing between the two universities how best to manage an increase in the Library and have yet to decide between phased change to help increase space now, or a one off larger change to get it over and done with. Facilities and mitigation is being thought about, but there is always a question of how and when to do them.

There are a number of choices of how best to use the Stannary, again the question of how and when matters. There are a number of factors but we are acutely aware of space and facilities issues, but not keeping you in the happiest group of students in UK would be cutting our own throat.

Question: The university is at capacity now; there are no available sites on campus or in town. The master plan has a cap on the permitted number of students as well. You knew that you wanted to grow so quite apart from the housing, where is the infrastructure? Why weren't growth, accommodation, and parking planned for? I don't believe you are able to deliver accommodation targets. The university has taken away accommodation in the town to give to first year students. Where are returning students going to go now? By your own figures, you are about 1000 beds short, including the 1000 beds you plan to build here on campus at some point in time.

PC – there are conversations happening around town. There are sites in town that will deliver campus accommodation requirements.

Questioner: Events square was recommended for refusal so it was withdrawn in order to resubmit with fewer students; in town there is really finite space so can't we have third campus to alleviate some of this stress?

PC – there are sites in town that will deliver the in-town purpose built accommodation, and we believe some of them will be built by 2017. Ultimately if no new accommodation is built we are going to have to revisit growth numbers.

Council update on progress of Exec Officer

Executive Officers who were present introduced themselves:

- FXU International Officer - Mathilde Baade
- FXU Sports Officer - Robbie Bartlett
- FXU Undergraduate Education Officer Exeter - Tom Murray-Richards
- FXU Undergraduate Education Officer Falmouth - Will Elliott

No questions were posed to executive officers.

Any Other Business

ACC – because I get a lot of queries, here is an update on transport. I meet regularly with FXPlus and First bus, Fal river and train company representatives. One issue was capacities so they are looking at more buses at peak times (8.00 am to 9.30am and 3.30pm and 5.30pm), on routes including from Falmouth Moor to Woodlane and back to Falmouth, and one from campus to Penryn High Street then into Falmouth. We are working more with train company reps now and are looking at a mussell card and looking for more ways to make it affordable.

Good news about buses, especially for post-graduates is that the £1 bus fare is being extended over the Christmas holidays, and we are actively looking to extend it over Easter as well. First Bus are looking at pre-paid systems such as travel cards, and they are also looking into a smart phone pre-payment app. They are receptive so please keep me informed of your issues.

ACC – carparking – there is obviously a squeeze on this campus. It is not the fault of any one

individual but we have lost 120 spaces for the new sports building. We have reclaimed 30 spaces and have now got another 12. I am pushing to make more spaces available. Another win is if you were parking on campus the week the tickets were issued, they will not be charged.

AW On Friday the 13th November, the world was shook when the bombs went off in Paris. I want to use this chance to say “thank you” to all of the student reps and mentors. I didn’t know what to do; I knew we had students in Paris. I turned to the only two groups I could think of who were the student reps and mentors and they were up all night. I had messages coming in until 5am in the morning as they waited to hear back from their students, so I want to use this chance to say thanks to them for everyone’s hard work and both schemes which was absolutely incredible.

Question: As an EU student I am in limbo as I am paying fees but being EU means I lose access to hardship.

DH – speak with Grace afterwards and raise this with both universities as it does not sound correct.

Question: I am really happy with DSA support, but I’m really sad it will be cut. Happy to see implement easier access on campus because it is one big hill. I am on the top floor of illustration which makes the printing issue particularly apparent. I can’t afford a laptop so for any printing I’ve got to go through block, up and down flights of stairs, it is apparent to me that to have one printing unit for each course would not cost too much. Having a printer in each department is crucial. It is a really hot topic at Woodlane and would improve student experience.

PC – It’s the same point about reprographics in general. We have ten academic departments, but we can’t have ten of everything; it would kill us. It is a constant battle to try and make those decisions where to change and whether to make services central or disperse them.

ACC – Myself and AW are on the accessibility working group who audit the accessibility of both campuses. We haven’t been down to Woodlane yet because the audit here is taking a lot longer than initially planned. We provide feedback from students to both universities, including queries and comments, and it is one of our priorities so please send us information on your issues.

AW – we are also working on a survey around DSA asking what do you find most useful and what changes you need to be made so that we can find out all of the information for all areas of student life.

Question: I understand you want to make changes, but it really does feel that the student experience is being compromised and it can be felt. It worries me that I am in my second year and it does mean a lot to us. I’m not saying illustration is more important, but art subjects are completely different by definition and the priorities are completely different.

PC – Agreed in principle, but all Falmouth subjects are creative arts.

Question: What is happening for visionaries to bring spaces to life? Space available is shrinking down to half a wall so what will happen if there is no room for us to grow as artists? By adding more students, and spending on your own priorities while ignoring our demands for things like space and printers, and then increasing the ratio of students is detrimental to the student experience. We could do with extra printers rather than canteen space.

PC – we need both within reason. We can't buy printers and put them everywhere, its not either/or choice we have to find a way to increase social spaces and make them flexible across the day, spaces used for different purposes across the day. We mentioned print services, and we do need to look at that.

Question: How is Student Experience, and student satisfaction going to be maintained if artist space is being shrunk and compromised?

PC – we have to plan, and have to work in phases, and will not get the build for accommodation without courses to go on. We do have to protect student experience, but square metres of space is not the be all and end all; there are all sorts of things that make up the student experience.

Question: Why wasn't it thought that if you limit/take away printing facilities at the same time as expanding that it might just decrease the student experience? Why take things away which are needed, and then add more students?

PC – The driver for changes was to get illustration into one building. The particular issue around reprographics was not totally understood. I can't give an answer now, but we have to address that.

Question: house prices are high, while rent expensive and increased. Are there any plans to improve transport links to Truro to tap into rental markets there?

PC – Yes, we are specifically looking at Truro.

DH – Exeter already has accommodation in Truro, so we can house all of our students on campus now. Can house are students in our growth plans and overflow space in Truro. Looking outside Penryn and Falmouth would be clever. The train link is faster from Truro. Convincing students that Truro is the place to be may be tricky. Encourage more PG in Truro. Think you are right – we need to expand into other towns around the area, convincing students they are there is harder.

Question: how 3 week turnaround policy affected by growth? Staff less inclined to set course work, and less complex, with more students is difficult to meet time frame. Will there be extra staffing, or changes to 3 week turnaround?

DH – can't talk about detail, but can talk about principles – net ratio of staff to students should go up as planning staff growth. So don't see a problem. Part of job as staff is you have these turnaround times.

GF – happy to take forward if students prefer shorter turnaround or higher quality feedback.

Question: We don't need major resources, for us student growth and loss of space is a major issue, especially as we work in groups so often. We can't get space, and as there are so many of us, but lack of space provision for us, we perceive we are subsidising other courses. What are you doing?

DH – Exeter making sure Student Experience remains very high. The PG facility will have seminar rooms. The Serf2 building will have interactive space and meeting space, freeing up space in other areas.

Questioner: Being selfish, but we are 3rd year now and we don't have space now.

ACC – The universities will free up rooms for block hours, student groups are able to book rooms for 3 or more hours. Universities will have more of a grip in January.

DH – we can find space for you.

Dean closed 17:59