

FXU Union General Meeting (UGM)

Wood Lane Lecture 2: 22/11/2016 3pm



1. Welcome, Introductions, Apologies

from Ben Roswell (Chair)

Present:

AW	Alexa Webster	(FXU President, Community and Welfare)
ACC	Amanda Chetwynd-Cowieson	(FXU President, Student Experience)
TMR	Tom Murray-Richards	(FXU President, Exeter)
AT	Anne Thorn	(FXU Mature Students Officer, Minute Taker)
MRB	Matt Blewett	(FXU Student Voice)
GP	George Perry	(FXU Student Voice)
BR	Ben Rowswell	(FXU Student Voice Director, Chair)

35 students (quorate of 50 not reached)

1 member of staff

Special Guests

Tony Sanders (FX Plus Interim CEO)

Ken Johnson (Director of Estates Falmouth University)

Apologies:

CS Chris Slessor (FXU President Falmouth)

2. Joint Presentation from Ken Johnson and Tony Sanders

Tony Sanders gave a presentation on the future of the University Campus.

There will be consultation on campus and some open consultation on the plans via surveymonkey.

Tony joined FX Plus at the end of July with a main task to review what FX Plus does.

FX Plus was created when the Universities came together to provide all services to the campus.

Ken Johnson works for Falmouth Estates and works closely together with FX Plus.

In FX Plus there is also an Estates Team.

The Campus is changing quickly, the speed of growth is fast and continues to be fast.

Tony gave an overview of the planning process.

Behind the scenes, FX Plus spend a lot of time researching and planning.

When Tony arrived he found:

Key points

- Lack of communication about planning and growth was causing a problem.
- The campus 2020 plan was around but people were unaware of what was going on.
- FX Plus brand is confusing to people.
- The decision was made to take the brand down, so it is behind the scenes and not visible. There is now a process ongoing to reduce the branding of FX Plus as they just work for the University and don't need to be a separate brand.
- FX Plus are reviewing the signage as there are lots of different signs for the 2 Universities, the result should be a much better joined up experience for students.
- Capacity and queueing in restaurants and car parking.
- Car parking was a key area of concern, so a survey was done on car parking and it was found there were 75 spaces available on campus for every hour. It was felt that people's perceptions did not match the reality.
- IT – NSS scores are good.
- Challenged on timetabling, more works need to be done.
- Need to get better with communication to students, externally etc.

Falmouth – Ken Johnson Director of Estates

Responsible for buildings, presentation, courtyard project, apologies for chaos and builders still on site in September.

The new space at Wood Lane campus has transformed the environment and very important for growth and future.

In terms of refectory – far more seating 130 – 290 all helps to ease pressure points.

Reduced queueing and a lot of thought has gone into it.

New seminar rooms on 1st floor and quiet space, part of a big project to improve the Falmouth campus.

There will not be another project on that scale in the near future.

Two major projects on Penryn Campus

- Project Launchpad
- New main Falmouth building – away from main campus

Tony Sanders

Hears lots of questions about planning.

Tony outlined that they do a lot of planning and measure the amount of social space and academic space per student.

Social space will be the same in 2019 as now.

Academic space going down a bit but Uni is trying to make better use of the space they have.

Penryn Campus – map

Tony gave an overview of the buildings and mentioned the recent building of SERSF (EXETER) and the Sports Centre and The Heart.

The new building work outside reception is a new Exeter research space SERSF 2 and 3

Launchpad is an extension to the AIR building.

Exeter Masters Suite where old Sports Centre was, is opening in January.
Where car park F is, a new road is being built down to new accommodation.
New residencies will be built in this area another 1,049 beds and there will be a social space and catering.

Key things – social space new residencies will have a restaurant.

By Easter there will be an extension to Koofi to double the size and new ovens and new tills and coffee machines to reduce queues.

A big consultation will be done on how best to utilise the middle space on the campus. £11 million budget has been agreed, need to agree the best way to spend it to make the middle of the campus a better space. Questions such as should the upper level of the Stannary be opened up to make the most of the views (where snooker tables are), how does Stannary connect to Tremough House etc.

Could the courtyard be utilized where Textiles and Fashion are?

Walkway to Amata will change the way the campus functions and we are looking forwards to the 2025 plan.

A consultation will be carried out to ask students, so encourage students to get involved in how the middle of the campus can be improved.

Beyond the Boundaries

Fields opposite main entrance and road. There is a solar farm proposal and the Exeter research field will be relocated.

There are still a lot of decision to be made.

Questions

Amata – should we provide more catering and can the space be used more effectively? FXU Education officer noted that there is not enough room for equipment, café overcrowded.

A survey is being done, this needs to be sent to Ken Johnson and this will be fed into the planning process.

Library overcrowding and not being able to find seats in library

Tony – we are looking at study space and recognize there are peaks.

Student noted that you can't find seats at any time

Tony – a room has been added at the back for quiet space and it is never full.

Student noted the access is very limited and people don't use it as it does not have easy access

Ken/Tony – will look at access- that is something that can be looked at quickly

Alexa, noted that the door was blocked due to need for Help Desk but disabled students can get their swipe card updated to gain access

Another student mentioned moving books in the library to make more room for students, was done about 2 years ago, was previously the Journals room. Ken noted that they did surveys to show the room was not well used so decided to take books downstairs to

meeting room that was not used. Ken noted that having a library on both campuses is not a given right and Ken has fought very hard to keep library on both campuses and space for students is more important than space for books.

FXU Sports Officer - Are there any plans to expand sports facilities.

Tony – we should continue to be pushing the boundaries but we have little flat space but we need to look at what we can do with that space. The cost of a pool is a real challenge but there will be a consultation. What else could we do in the community.

Padlet question - Do you think The Heart of the Penryn campus is being utilised by students?

Ken – the shop is definitely being used.

Tony – It is a challenge, when the Heart project was put together there was a big plan to refocus the entrance but it hasn't linked into anything else, It is a little bit disappointing,

Ken – it is a work in progress – there is more to come in that area

Padlet question - Is it possible to prioritise the use of industry specific software?

If someone asks us we will consider it but would need to understand more about what software is required. Need to know more about the problem to answer fully.

Padlet question - Can something be done about queueing?

All tills in the Stannary have been changed so they can accept contactless and there is an extra till

It is much better than it was, we have timed it.

Koofi is being refurbished.

Amata needs to be looked at and something needs to be done.

Suggest more students use ESI.

It is something we are continually reviewing

Question from Kieran Cutting

Car parking seems worse and to us the Stannary seems much busier than last year.

Tony – I go round at lunchtime to see what is happening and certain days are worse than others, other days there is no queue. If you really can't get served at Stannary go and try ESI.

We are trying to spread the load.

Ken – longer term we are looking at the core area to see how we can physically improve the building so it would be great if students can feed into the consultation process on this.

Tony – I have just put in place a weekly report of the number of people going through each outlet, we are trying to put in systems to capture it.

Question – The Chapel Lecture theatre has been changed. The president of the choir pointed out that the access for disabled students is now limited. Why have steps been put in, reducing access?

Ken – it was a mistake and this will be rectified really quickly and it will be fixed.

Question – I work in the bar- is there a way tills could be programmed and notify people where the queues are not as bad.

Tony – it is an area we are looking at but at the moment the tills are not linked up. We have some money in the budget this year and we should be able to upgrade all the tills. We are trying to resolve it this year.

Question - What stage is the new residency building at?

Ken – planning has been submitted and it is in for consultation about 2 weeks ago. Fully designed and ready to go. The Uni is providing the site and a consortium is working with us as the developer. There was a competition and we are now finalising the terms with that developer.

What is being done to make it sustainable?

Ken – we are building in a clever ecology system to recycle water. There are some boards that people can look at.

Question – the statistics on academic space – new buildings are predominantly Exeter buildings – are these included in the stats.

Tony – no that is not included.

Tony will share the details of the consultation

Question – first year Fine Art students are experiencing a lot of stress due to lack of studio space

Ken – Fine Art students tend to have more space than anyone else

The Fine Art course has to be sustainable and cannot be subsidised from other courses. We have inherited a historic situation that is unsustainable so we have to look at better ways to keep the quality of the course high but sorting out the space problem and it has meant we have had to take space away from Fine Art and be more creative about how we use the space we have available.

We are still generous but we have to be efficient.

Student – first years are hot desking you only get a desk 2 weeks out of the month

Ken – that is down to timetable. The reality is we cannot sustain the level of space we had historically.

Compared to other Unis Falmouth is still generous.

Student – what about Falmouth being the No. 1 Arts University. I am on digital media which is closing.

Ben – would it help if Ken came to talk to you.

Ken – yes I will do that, as it is quite a deep subject.

Tony – we are aware you get stresses and strains, we are not blasé about it we do try and make sure you the best experience you can. All courses have different requirements, sometimes we get it right, sometimes we don't get it quite right but we are trying to respond to research, we do listen and we are held to account, I have the presidents in my office and we try and work together. There are areas that are changes but in some areas we have added space. There are some pinch points our job is to try and make sure we respond.

Ben thanked Tony Sanders and Ken Johnson for their contribution.

3. Presidents Update

Alexa Webster – Community and Welfare

- Accommodation – working on new project #thisismyhome
- To make sure students know their rights on deposits, council tax etc. launching January
- International students – right to rent
- Mental Health
- I am now on all the working groups, chaired the disabled students forum
- Meningitis jabs are going well, please all have your jabs
- FXU Nightline will be a 10 pm to 6 am phone service, peer to peer support and signposting
- We have funding and location confirmed, training confirmed and now need students to run it.
- If interested let Alexa know
- Tell me service launched to report hate crime
- Trans officer position is permanent now representing Transgender students
- FXU Faith and Liberation Committee have a Facebook page
- Full accessibility audit of all campuses
- Will all be on my Facebook page later

Amanda Chetwynd-Cowieson – Student Experience

- Communications, review into all the joint services and how they communicate, this included getting FX Plus brand removed from campus
- Spending the whole day tomorrow with the senior communications team
- Reviewing website to make it mobile friendly
- Make FXU people better known on campus, who is responsible for what
- All FXU presidents now have FB pages
- Clubs and Societies are more up to date
- More course societies
- Trialing anonymous questions to presidents
- Trying to do more on Falmouth campus
- Accommodation negotiations about rent in halls ask for no rent increase
- Different options in halls
- Facilities – all student consultation launched around social space and studio space – will be going to all student reps and presidents of societies next week or in next couple of weeks
- Union partnership – we learn a lot from other student unions so have made an effort to be more involved – we need to make NUS work for us

Tom Murray Richards – FXU President Exeter

- Current Exeter review – how they communicate with student body

- Looking at how I spend my time aiming to be more accessible to students
- Academic Excellence – U or E have shared more data will help to improve retention and student experience
- Examples of essays and best practice being shared across campuses
- Financial transparency -how best to communicate to students what financial transparency looks like, need information easier to understand how we spend your money
- TEF – Teaching Excellence Framework Fees more than likely going up and we need to know where extra money is going
- FXU does not support rise in tuition fees but if it does happen we need to know where that extra money is going and make sure it is going into the student experience
- NUS are running a democracy consultation – FXU have fed into it and students can feed into it too – link on FB page so students can comment
- Continue to represent students in an absurd amount of meetings which I am trying to reduce.

4. Questions on top 10 priorities from Padlet

Is this meeting going to be recorded, will you do FB live and show faces? (Alexa is very good at this).

Alexa – we are asking Unis to do lecture capture so I think we need to do the same.

Amanda – agrees, would need someone to record it.

We will aim to record the next one.

Tom – people have different requirements

Suggestions from audience.....

Could there be a collective FB page? – too much for presidents to juggle

Could do RSS feed to pull all 4 FBs together into one feed.

How can we better get Falmouth students involved in FXU campaigns?

Suggestion

Less on social media – more meetings

Amanda – It is a union priority to do more here and at Truro. It is difficult as decisions made at Penryn so hard to go to Falmouth campus on a Friday.

Alexa - There is an AGM and 2 UGMs and we alternate locations

Amanda – yes we can look at having more if we have time

It is hard for student to find out where money is spent, I keep getting shut down – what is the procedure?

Amanda – ask your rep or Chris – there are physical copies of it annually. We are doing a review of our website will help to address this.

Tom – it has to be in the public domain

What is the deal with the new proposed accommodation?

Risk of losing small campus feel.

Students have been involved and there was a focus group and a consultation.

Alexa – we built a simulation of an ideal student flat using The Sims – but it worked. The benefits of it being on campus are twofold, when you survey most 1st year want to live on campus all the events are here and it is about security when you are new.

If more 1st years live on campus it frees up accommodation for second years in town, i.e. Maritime, the View.

Article 4 is being implemented in Falmouth that will limit Houses of Multiple occupancy for students.

Alexa can take more questions afterwards.

Student – new building – if Uni keeps expanding it will be a problem that comes round again.

Alexa – right now the growth finishes in 2020 – Tom – difficult to predict where higher education is going.

Last year there was a motion to stop growth.

Amanda - The cap on student numbers was to do with travel and accommodation etc. the council had to do a survey but they did it in the summer which was not representative of term time – so it was not relevant which has delayed the decision.

Question – what is being done about mental health this year is there anything new?

Alexa

Working with student support services

Carrick MIND sessions – students can learn skills

Pet Therapy

3 big projects

1. Overhaul of Welfare section of website – aiming for a database of support including mental health page with one click access, you can book appointments and instantly reach out and get support
2. #mindyourhead – stressbusting in different areas, travelling road show Amata, Compass ESI, Upper Stannary with sofa and tea
3. Make you smile – handing out sweets at hand in etc.

Also trying to be there when needed and monitoring social media

What do you mean by Academic Excellence?

Tom – the key point is that it is student led so we can formulate what it looks like.

Are both Universities aligned in their goals in this respect? – No - but they are aligned on a lot of stuff that matters to students. One example they both have research strategies even though strategies are different. It is important that we work as a

collaborative student body.

What is the FXU stance on the Art Foundation course being axed?

Chris the Falmouth President is to do a LIVE video to address this. He has been talking to current foundation students and that will feed into any review as the wording was that it had been suspended so Chris is ensuring all current students feed into that review.

Student – communication was really poor, tutors found out in a meeting, perhaps this could be fed into the communications meeting.

Alexa offered to take down comments at the end of the meeting and pass to Chris.

Celebrating diversity and fighting back

Why is it that Falmouth University ask for preferred name but use legal name?

Alexa this is especially relevant to transgender students who shouldn't have to see their legal name on registers, Alexa is working with registry to use preferred name and use gender pronouns and this should be fed into register and student documents

Facilities

Is there a plan to being a gym to Wood Lane?

Amanda – a proposal was put forward last year to have a small gym - it was turned down so no long term plan. Advise students to feed that into the consultation

Cost of living

Are we doing anything about this – can we lobby for rent caps?

Alexa – yes we are working on it and we already have something to put forward

A national campaign to work with other unions and for the next two months there is an open letter to government and councils about local regionalised caps.

What are we doing to ensure parity across campuses?

Amanda – Chris has been leading on it i.e. Art Fair. We are working on it but it is difficult as important decisions are made at Penryn campus but planning more events at Falmouth. Will start to become more evident next term.

Alexa – Student support services access is limited at Wood Lane, hopefully next term we are going to organise a meeting to collect feedback and make sure there are enough people at Wood Lane.

Thank you to Presidents for Top 10 updates

General Questions

Communication

What was built does not match what students opposed (Wood Lane).

Note: There are additional questions that need to be addressed to Ken Johnson

There is a general sense that the tradition of being an Arts University is being lost and it is losing respect of an Arts University. What can the FXU do about this especially considering the Arts

Foundation Course announcement?

Amanda – Chris have heard this from a lot of students – Chris will communicate more about this as he goes to all the meetings. There is a lot going on behind the scenes. The FXU can use the rep system and have drop in sessions so people should use their reps to get feedback across, or talk to your lecturers and encourage them to feed it back. They have a staff union so can also feed it back via this. FXU are very aware of it, we encourage Falmouth Uni to talk to their students, but they are not very good at it. Main advice is to use the student rep system.

What is the relationship between FXU and the chaplaincy?

Alexa loved the chaplaincy and especially Becky. They are independent from both universities. It is a great space and Alexa meets Becky regularly.

Could the FXU arrange for Ann Carlisle and Alan Murray to talk to students to let students ask them questions.

Amanda – we can try but they are not keen.

Alan Murray will be at the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) meeting next week about fees and about the changes to higher education. A good opportunity to come and ask questions. It is in Exchange lecture theatre Thursday Dec 1st at 5 pm

Meeting closed 17:00

Next general meeting – AGM Friday 17th February 2017
4.00pm Old Chapel Lecture Theatre, Penryn Campus

Additional questions were posed via padlet which we did not get asked in the meeting. We have asked Presidents and our guests to follow up with answers to these additional questions.