

## Students Union Democracy Review – Presidents

### Why are we doing this?

The project to review the roles of the four full-time Presidents at the Students' Union has been in place since the 2019/20 Academic Year. This work began as the SU's Board of Trustees commissioned a project into a review of the roles and portfolios, as well as a wider Democratic Review. This was paused at the time due to the impact of the Covid pandemic and lockdowns, but the issues that were raised at the time, around the portfolios of the Presidents, the role descriptors for the Presidents and the fact that the roles had not been reviewed for a long time, impacted the effectiveness of the 2020/21 and the 2021/22 teams.

In 2022, the previous President team brought a new paper to the Board of Trustees seeking to amend the roles following research, ongoing analysis of the issues, new challenges for both individual President roles in their current form, as well as collectively as a Sabbatical Officer team alongside reoccurring feedback from 3 x successive Sabbatical Officer teams.

The main issues are:

- President Exeter and President Falmouth are viewed as the primary roles by each respective institution. These roles take the Student Governor seat, along with the highest-level academic meetings. The broadening of the discussion within high level academic meetings can lead both roles to be ready to articulate with regards to the focus on the President Wellbeing and Inclusivity and/or President Student Experience roles.
- Wellbeing and inclusivity forms part of a complex myriad of meetings, forming part of all roles whilst being unmanageable for one President. A team working approach with a clear identified lead for high level / high priority meetings has been identified as a positive way forward.
- Student Experience is a very broad title which can lead to confusion amongst students, stakeholders within the Universities and FXPlus, as well as internally within the staff team. High-level non-academic student experience matters, for example sport and sustainability are often a key focus within meetings attended by President Exeter and President Falmouth, including at Governor level.
- Distribution of workload is currently not as equal as it could be, leading to overwhelm and overload within some roles more than others.
- Generally moving the Sabbatical Officer role beyond operations, we have a role descriptor which was sat within previous.

The 2022 paper to the SU Trustees had one potential solution, which was to change the roles of President Student Experience and President Welfare and Inclusivity into two Vice-President Roles. These VP roles are not defined by university, which means the team can be made up of a blend of students from both Falmouth and Exeter. Presidents Exeter and Falmouth will remain and voted by students from the respective universities and will be able to delegate authority to the VPs. President Falmouth and President Exeter remain within Student Governor roles and allied high level academic meetings within the respective University. Student Priorities, ongoing student feedback and institutional priorities will be shared across the President team, depending on the make-up of the team, and will be refreshed every year.

## Next Steps

Our next steps are to find out what our members think about this. That means we want to talk to as many of you as possible to find out how you feel about this proposal, the refresh of the President roles, or anything that you'd like to say what could be related!

Over November, we will be putting on a whole range of sessions to gather this feedback, starting from the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, with a discussion group held on the Penryn Campus, followed by an online discussion group and another on the Falmouth Campus on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

These sessions are just the tip of the iceberg, and across the month different sessions, events and polls will be taking place, so keep an eye out! This will be shaped by your feedback, so the more feedback we get from you, the more we can do. Of course, we will be able to provide food and other incentives!

## The Future

This review of the President Roles is part of a wider piece of work that we are doing at the Students' Union. The next stage of this, which will begin in 2023, is our wider Democratic Review. This will be looking at the democratic models which we use at the SU, for our student-led democracy.

## Contacts

If you have any questions about anything covered in this info pack, or you want to know how you can get involved or maybe you already have feedback that you want to share with us, please send an email to:

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