2nd Annual Conference
Meeting Student Expectations
Academic progress, reputation and complaints

Thursday 27th May 2009

Meeting student expectations and maintaining university reputation

Prof. Janice Kay

Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), University of Exeter; Chair 1994 Group Student Experience Policy Group

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Summary

- 1994 Group Universities and Student Experience
- Student Expectations and Experience of University
  - Better Information, Advice & Guidance
- Maintaining University Reputation
  - Students as Partners (Exeter Students' Guild)
  - Students as Agents for Change

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

1994 Group Universities and the Student Experience

- 19 Small to Medium Size Research Intensive Universities
- Research-Led Teaching
- Strong Emphasis on Student Experience
- High Levels of Student Satisfaction (7/10 Universities in 2009 NSS were 1994 Group)
- Student Experience Policy Group (SEPG) set up in 2007; Policy Reports and Annual National Student Experience Conference

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

The 2007 Context

- 1.3% GDP against OECD average of 1.5%
- Student numbers almost tripled over 20 years
- Previous Decades of Under-Investment Beginning to Be Addressed
- Increased Variable Fees
- Growth in Capital Investment Fund
- Emphasis on Value for Money (Contact Hours, Teaching Quality)
- Students as Consumers, as Co-producers, as Partners?

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Enhancing the Student Experience Report 2007

- A requirement to provide transparent and accurate information around the student experience
- Towards the 2020 Workforce: Promoting the well-rounded graduate
- Promoting the student voice
- Engagement with schools and colleges
- Student-focused resources
- International strategy and internationalisation
- Excellence and enhancement in teaching and learning

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Financial Sustainability Strategy Group Report 2008

- "Recovery towards a position of sustainability will take time, and meanwhile new costs and pressures are impacting on the sector. These include some desirable challenges, including a more diverse student population; raised employer expectations; new government social and economic agendas; but also some less desirable (including pensions deficits, and operating costs rising much faster than funding)

- Institutions have developed some "coping strategies" to manage these pressures, and to protect the quality of the student experience, but the present situation is unsustainable, i.e. there is a real risk to the system and its outputs"

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

The 2010 Context

- Public funding is in a dire state
- Cuts announced last year left universities in England with £449 million less than they had expected for 2010-11
- An additional £600m cuts were proposed between 2011 and 2013
- The new government has acted quickly by seeking on Monday to accelerate the reduction in the deficit by £6bn this year
- This includes a £200m cut for Higher Education. The planned additional student places for this year have been cut from 20,000 to 10,000, saving £118m

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

The 2010 Context

- This latest round of cuts comprises a reduction in the Modernisation Fund from £250m to £132m and a further £82m reduction in core funding
- This £82m reduction represents a further 2% cut in the teaching grant and, against a background of rising demand for places and rising student expectations, it will represent a tough settlement for universities
- Forecasts by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, based on Treasury figures, show there could be cuts of up to 6.3% a year over the next three years
- Valley of Death

The 2010 Context: Students & Graduates

- Hard Times
  - ‘Double Whammy’ Students
  - Graduate Loan Repayment of Student Fees
  - Graduate Vacancies dropped 18% in 2009 (29% in Oz)
- What Will Students Expect?
  - Perceived Value to Them of Additional Fees
  - Perceived Impact on Them of ‘Cuts’ (worsening SSRs)
  - Rising Expectations: Satisfied or Less Than Satisfied?
  - Unprecedented Demand (22% Rise in Applications)

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Better Information for Prospective and Current Students: Higher Ambitions

- Better Information for Students
  (Spotlight on Employability: Statements §6 and §7)
- Standard Set of Transparent Information
  - What Students Will Learn and Access to Facilities
  - What Direct Contact With Academic Staff Will There Be
  - Their Own Study Responsibilities
  - Access to External Expertise incl. International Experience
  - Graduate Prospects and Salary Information by Course

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Better IAG for Prospective & Current Students

- What Is the Right Kind of Information?
  - Lots of Data but Much of It Not Accessible (DLHE)
  - Or Not Well Used (e.g. Unistats)
  - The Wrong Kind (e.g. Not at Course Level)
  - Poorly Joined Up (Prospects/UCAS/Student Finance Direct)
- External Providers
  - Non-Profit Bestcourse4me.com

Better IAG for Current & Prospective Students

- IAG Must Be Provided (TQI/NSS Steering Group)
- HEIs Must Consider What They Publish
- Student Charters
  - Feedback
  - Contact Hours
  - Accommodation

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Student Expectations and Experience of University: 1994 Group/JISC Project

- "A requirement to provide transparent and accurate information around the student experience"
- 1994 Group / JISC project
  - High-quality, interactive, online resource
  - Help manage expectations of university learning
  - Better inform the decisions of applicants
  - Better explain the nature and type of academic contact on offer at university

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Maintaining University Reputation

- Sustaining High Quality Academic and Social Experience
- Enhancing Graduate Prospects
- An International Student Experience
- **Promoting the Student Voice**
- **Improving partnership with Student Unions**

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

About Us: Exeter Students' Guild

> Independent, member-led organisation

> Led by elected student officers and external trustees

> Turnover of £2.7m

> Support and represents students

> Critical partnership with the University

students guild

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

About Us

Representation & Support

Elected representatives,
Student Listening Services
Financial Advice, Housing Advice,
Academic Advice, Job shop

Activities and Volunteering

Raise And Give (RAG),
Community Action (volunteering),
Societies,
Student Media

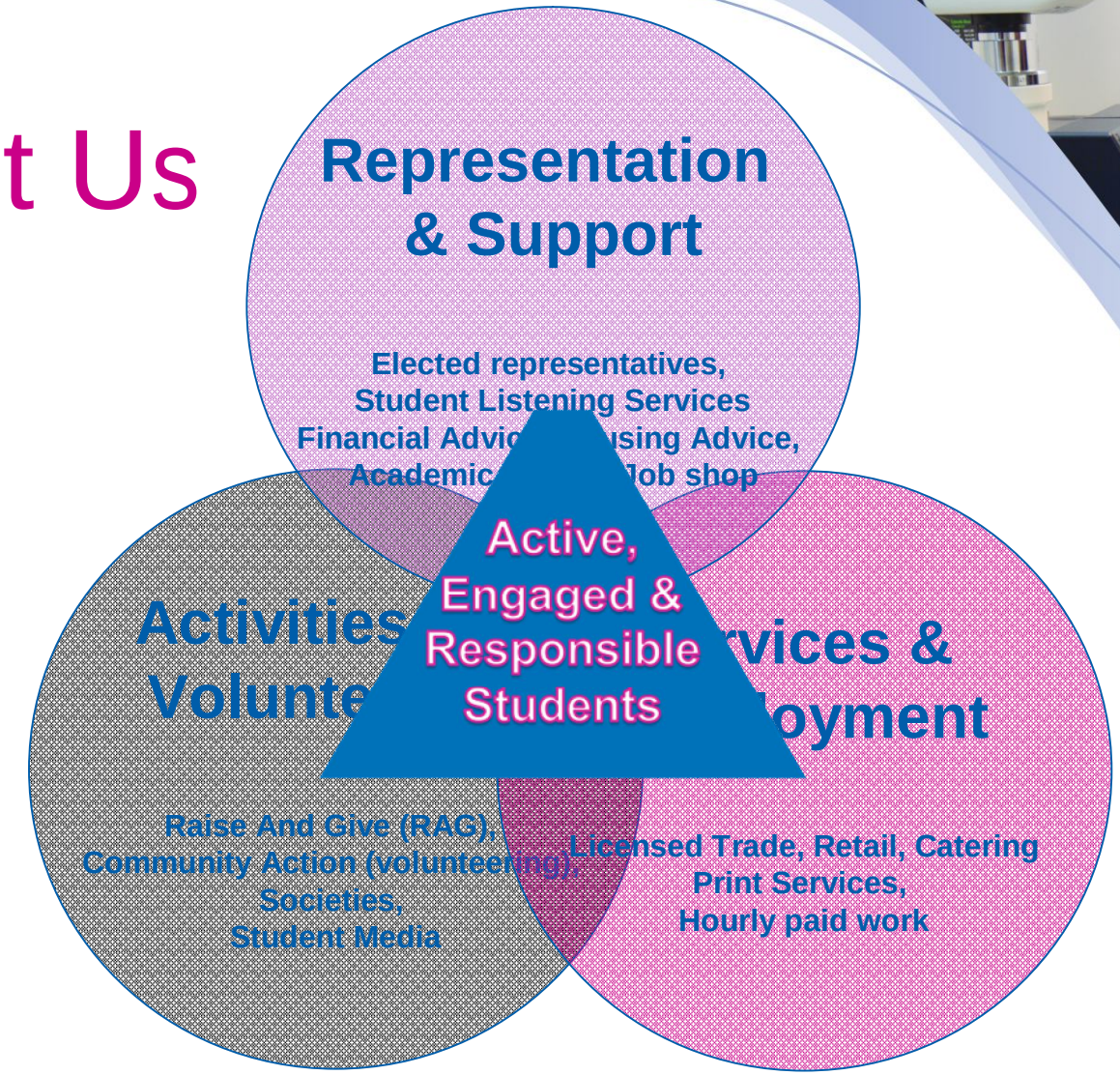
Services & Employment

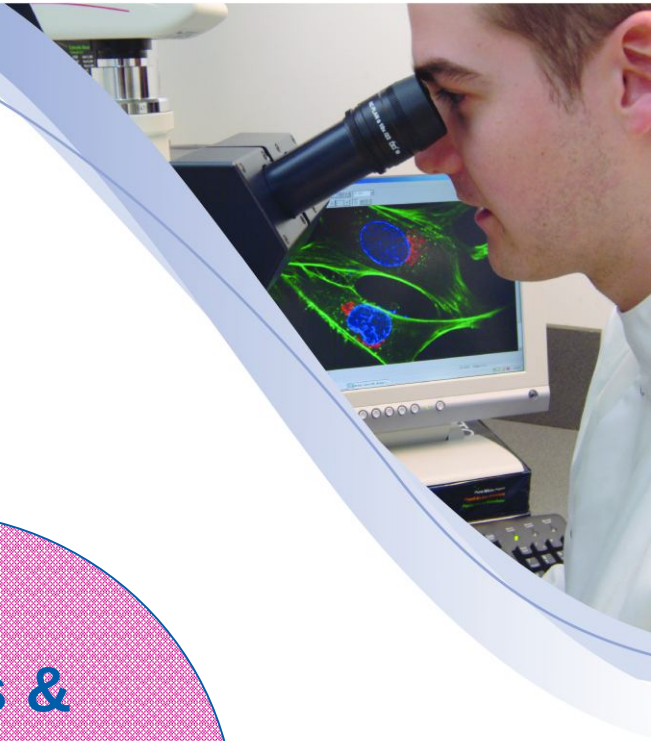
Licensed Trade, Retail, Catering
Print Services,
Hourly paid work

students guild

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

About Us





students guild

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Engaged Students

> Highest election turnout across all UK universities

> Over 7,000 society members

> Teaching Awards

1844 nominations by 1166 students

> 12,815 students engaged in Guild research

Winner
★★★★★
NUS AWARDS
2009

NUS Participation Award

students guild

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Active in the community

> Supporting local charities
> RAG on target to raise £100k this year
> 100's of Volunteers giving 1000's of hours
> £148k economic value to the local community
> 6,000 students registered to vote

INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS

students guild

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

With the Community

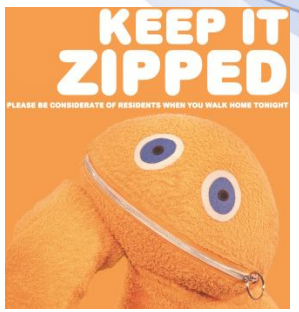
> Chinese New Year celebrations

> PPC debate

- o "Largest political debate in Exeter in over 13 years"

> 65% of residents have seen an improvement in relations

> Responsible approach



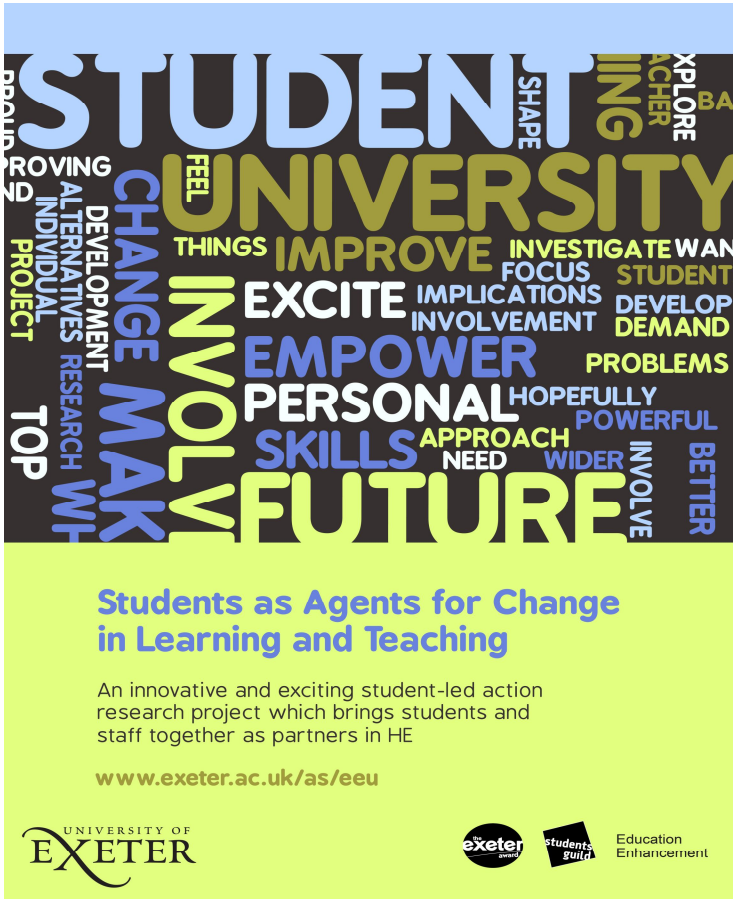
BEST BAR NONE

Gold Best Bar None Award

students guild

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Students as Partners - the Exeter SE involves Students as Agents for Change



UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Students As Agents for Change 2008-09 Research Topics:

- Students lead small-scale action research projects
- Making Theology Students More Employable
- Quality of Seminar Provision in History
- Cross-Campus Video-conferencing and Personal Tutoring in Law
- Recommendations are embedded through SSLCs, Teaching Committees and Programme Managers
- Tangible outcomes: 4000 interactive voting tools in Business School; £5000 funding won from Alumni Fund to provide academic writing support in Geography; Podcasting Lectures in Psychology (spread to Biosciences)

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

Conclusions

- Prioritise and maximise the student experience
- Provide transparent and accurate information around the student experience
- Enhance advice and guidance about interpreting the information available
- Shape students expectations of university
- Work in partnership with Students' Unions – Dividend of being able to do this
- Encourage active student engagement

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group

2nd Annual Conference
Meeting Student Expectations
Academic progress, reputation and complaints

Thursday 27th May 2009

Meeting student expectations and maintaining university reputation

Prof. Janice Kay

Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), University of Exeter; Chair 1994 Group Student Experience Policy Group

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

1994 group