

Student Faculty Board Members

Introduction

Being a student member of a faculty board is undoubtedly one of the most important *rôles* for student representation within the university. The influence students can have during faculty board meetings and the topics which are discussed are often of greater importance than anything which is dealt with by college JCRs and MCRs. Faculty boards have the greatest influence on the education we receive at the university and, as the primary reason that most students are at the university is to study, it is of great importance that educational

Basic information

Faculty Board Meetings-General

The Faculty Board will usually meet fortnightly during full term, including during the exam period. If necessary, emergency meetings may be called, during both the full term and the vacation. Should any meetings be held outside full term, it is not unreasonable to expect the faculty to give plenty of notice and to have travel expenses paid.

Apologies

If you cannot attend a meeting, you should send apologies to both the chairman and secretary in advance of the meeting. Similarly, it is good practice to inform them in advance if you will have to arrive late or leave early.

Minutes, Agendas and Papers etc.

You should receive a copy of the agenda, previous minutes and any relevant papers in advance of the meeting. They may be posted to you at your college or place in a pigeon-hole in the faculty. If you have not found them a couple of days before the meeting, it is worth contacting the board secretary to find out where they are. Reading through all the papers is usually worthwhile, even if they might not seem immediately relevant to the students. Sometimes something important will be buried in the middle.

The faculty will have copies of old minutes and papers which you should be able to read if you want background information on a issue which started being discussed before your time in office.

Reserved and Unreserved Business

Most meetings in the university where students are present are divided into two sections: “Unreserved” and “Reserved”. Students are only allowed to be present for the unreserved business. According to Statute K, 20, the following matters are to be reserved:

- “(a) the employment or promotion, or any matter relating to the employment or promotion, of individuals by the University;
- (b) the admission and academic assessment of individuals;
- (c) such other matters as may be specified by Statute or Ordinance in respect of any particular body or class of bodies;
- (d) any other matter at the discretion of the Chairman.”

Naturally, CUSU objects to part “d” which gives a *carte blanche* to faculty chairmen to stop students precipitating in anything which he or she desires. In the better faculty boards, the majority of business will be unreserved, whilst in others some chairmen do, unfortunately, attempt to reserve almost all business. If this is the case, then it is worth speaking to the chairmen privately, to try and encourage him to allow greater transparency. CUSU is also actively campaigning on this issue.

Most faculty boards in Cambridge are quite large. As of 2006, the smallest was Music, with 18 members, and the largest was Clinical Medicine, with 42. The average is 25. Each member of the Faculty Board is appointed, co-opted or elected into a specific class (out of seven in total), with the majority being elected by the academic staff of the faculty.

Departments

Departments are subdivisions of faculties. There is great variation in their size and importance throughout the university. Several faculties are composed of just one department (e.g. Education) or have numerous small departments (e.g. MML). This results in the Faculty Board being the main decision-making body. In others (such as Physics and Chemistry), the departments can run almost autonomously, with the Faculty Board taking a minor part.

If there are departments within your faculty, it is worth lobbying for representatives to sit their boards, if this is not already done.

Other Committees of the Faculty Board

Most faculty boards will have a number of committees answering to it. Some of the most commonly encountered ones will be as follows:

Degree Committees:

This committee is responsible for academic issues concerning graduate students in the faculty. Most tend to deal with issues on a case-by-case basis, rather than making general policy.

Library Committees:

As might be expected, Library Committees usually deal with the workings of the faculty library, although most changes they have to suggest need to be ratified by the Faculty Board. Particularly in arts subjects, organisation library resources can be a controversial. It is therefore worth trying to ensure that there is student representation on this committee, if it does not already exist.

Staff-Student Committees:

Several faculties set up informal meetings (about once a term) involving the faculty chairman, course co-ordinators and any students who wish to attend. If there is sufficient student interest these can be very successful they allow smaller issues to be discussed, which might be impossible at faculty board level.

I.T./Website Committees:

As with Library Committees, these oversee the use of I.T. Resources and the faculty website. In science subjects and others which involve a great deal of I.T. work, it can be useful to seek student representation.

It is also worth looking out for committees which manage other important faculty resources (e.g. museums or concert halls), discuss specific issues (e.g. education) or deal with the fabric of the faculty building or the site in which it is located.

The College/University Distinction

The distinction between the education services provided by the university and those provided by the colleges is becoming increasingly blurred. Colleges are now most important for the early years of undergraduate courses, particularly in larger subjects, whilst more specialist and advanced (including graduate) study is now often organised centrally by the faculties.

For practical purposes, Faculty Boards have three main educational responsibilities: setting examination papers; organising lectures for these papers and setting regulations for the courses or trips on offer.

The main responsibility for the colleges is organising supervisions. Even if supervisions are organised centrally by the faculty, they will be arranged in the name of the individual student's Director of Students and paid for by his or her college. Faculty Boards are therefore often unwilling discuss supervision provision, unless there is an acute problem.

Appendix A:

Faculties and Departments

Archaeology and Anthropology

- Archaeology

- Biological Anthropology

- Social Anthropology

Architecture and History of Art

- Architecture

- History of Art

Biology

- Anatomy

- Biochemistry

- Experimental Physiology

- Genetics

- Pathology

- Pharmacology

- Physiology

- Plant Sciences

 - Biological Garden

- Zoology

 - Animal Behaviour

Business and Management

- Judge Institute of Management

Classics

Clinical Medicine

- Clinical Biochemistry

- Clinical Neurosciences

- Haematology

- Medical Genetics

- Medicine

- Obstetrics and Gynaecology

- Oncology

- Paediatrics

- Psychiatry

- Public Health and Primary Care

- Radiology

- Surgery

Computer Science and Technology

Divinity

Earth Sciences and Geography

Earth Sciences

Geography

Scott Polar Research Institute

Economics

Education

Education

English

Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic

Engineering

Engineering

History

Law

Institute of Criminology

Mathematics

Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics

Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics

Statistical Laboratory

Modern and Medieval Languages

French

German

Italian

Linguistics

Other Languages

Slavonic Studies

Spanish and Portuguese

Music

Oriental Studies

Philosophy

Physics and Chemistry

Institute of Astronomy

Materials Science and Metallurgy

Chemistry

Physics

Social and Political Sciences

Politics

Social and Developmental Psychology

Sociology

Veterinary Medicine

Veterinary Medicine

Independent Departments:

Department of Land Economy

Institute of Biotechnology

Department of History and Philosophy of Science
Centres of International Studies and Latin-American Studies

Other Institutes