WHO'S THE BOSS?

ROBERT FOSTER: VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION, NUS SCOTLAND

GAVIN QUINN: PRESIDENT, CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

VICTORIA BLAIR GARDNER: HEAD OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

Context

- Students' Associations strive to be autonomous yet the **key to success** is working **in partnership** with their institution.

- Colleges/Boards/dependencies on funding, and college employment contracts, can make full autonomy challenging.

- Elected Officers (voluntary Exec and paid Presidential team – mix of sabbatical and part time depending on institution and Constitution).

- Staff support - having staff with the right skill set, and a **shared vision** regarding the ethos of the SA is crucial to success.

- Elected Student Officers are **accountable to the student body** – so really, **the students are the boss.** Not everyone seems to know this...

- Q. *How can we build an effective Students' Association model that allows elected officers to flourish and develop as individuals, foster a sense of autonomy, promote institutional buy-in and, most importantly make a positive difference to our students?*

A team approach…

So, who **is** the boss?

- Elected Officers are the leaders and they are accountable to the student body – this should be clear in the Constitution.

- While there is a line management structure in place, CitySA strives towards a non hierarchical team experience with clarity around roles and responsibilities as the focus.

- Allow the leadership role to move within the team, depending on situation.

- Mentoring/Advisor/Critical Friend/Civil Service approach. Staff provide well researched ideas and balanced options and let the Elected Officers decide, seeking approval from Student Body.

- Experienced staff should look at the skills of the elected officers and provide opportunities throughout the year that let them develop, grow and build networks and links for their futures Transition Guidance (NUS).

Inspire and Innovate

- Leadership roles within the team should inspire the students and Elected Officers around them to achieve.

- Provide structure and support to let ideas and creativity flourish.

- Encourage clear systems to be set up allowing the Student Executive team to feel accountable to their **voters**, not just College Management, or indeed their 'line manager'. Always refer back to the Constitution and associated Schedules for clarity.

- Once structures and systems regarding Finance, weekly meetings, information sharing etc. are clarified, visionary ideas can emerge and become a reality.

- Promote the ethos of inspiration, innovation and leadership amongst the team. Never underestimate the power we have to be a positive influence on someone's life. Remember the power of 'Lollipop Moments'…!

- [TED Talk: Drew Dudley - Lollipop Moments](#)

Training

- Building the skill set of the Elected Officers through training is key.
- Staff experience and feedback from previous Exec Officers helps to create training programme for the new team.
- 2 full days at the end of June with Team 12-13 (reviewing and preparing handover notes for new team)
- 2 full days at the start of July with Team 13-14 (facilitated by college staff and external partners e.g. NUS Director of Nations, sparqs etc.)
- Since July 2013, Team 13-14 have been involved in a wealth of training opportunities:
- College Governors (NUS)
- Diversity and Equality
- 'Turning your Manifesto into a Reality'
- Presenting a Professional Image
- Chartered Management Institute
- Leadership Challenge
- 'Respect Me'
- Time Management
- On-going training and support planned for session (Careers workshops, CMI Leadership etc.)

Celebrating and evidencing success

- Encourage Exec Officers to showcase their achievements on behalf of the student body i.e. tell the membership about the SA wins – both big and small.

- Use all avenues (Facebook, e-mail, Twitter, CitySA website, Plasmas, VLE, Staff Intranet, President's Column in City Life, Student Radio/TV/Magazine etc.)

- Encourage Exec Officers to communicate effectively with their membership – ask the students/Class Reps what works for them.

- Encourage Exec Officers to present their achievements and experiences at various workshops events, both in College and nationally i.e. today!

- Encourage Exec Officers to work towards publishing an annual report they can be proud of CitySA Annual Report 12-13

Values and Behaviours

- Know and adhere to the SA Values agreed by the team and call each other to account if things slip.
- Present a professional image at all times.
- ❑ Some good advice for Exec Officers – before taking a decision or embarking on a course of action, ask yourself:
- Is it helping students?
- Is it legal? (check the Constitution)
- How would I feel if it was published by national media?
- Have I taken advice from others in my team or external partners/advisors (e.g. NUS) before I make my decision?
- Am I comfortable defending this decision if it is challenged?
- Is this my role, or someone else's within the team?
- Should I work with others on this project?
- This is where the critical friend/mentor/advisor team work approach works well.
- Staff team working in partnership with Elected Officer to achieve a shared vision is crucial to success.

- **When recruiting staff teams, think carefully about the skill set required to allow your SA to flourish.**

CitySA: Core Team 13-14

(Gavin, Sandra, Matt, Victoria, Will, Michelle, Sarah)

Hierarchical order **not important**

Clarity and understanding of the importance of our individual roles and responsibilities **is.**

Each of us are leaders and can create 'lollipop moments' everyday in different ways, **depending on the context.**

Any Questions?