Working with College Sabbatical Officers: Developing Professional Relationships

**7th October 2013**

**McDonald Rooms Conference Centre,**

**95 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS**

**Aim**

The overall aim of the day is to explore a range of approaches to working effectively with elected officers in college students’ associations, leading to a student led professionally supported culture.

**Programme**

**10.00: Arrival**

We will arrive from 10.00 onwards, tea, coffee and refreshments will be available.

**10.20: Introduction to the Day**

In this introductory session the approach and structure of the course will be explained. You will have the opportunity to articulate what you hope to gain from the day and we’ll get to know each other a little better. By the end of the session you will have:

* Agreed how we will work together over the day
* Expressed your personal expectations for the event
* Got to know other members of the course a little better

**10.40: The Effective Officer**

This session serves both as an icebreaker and an underpinning for the day as a whole. It is part of our role to work with elected officers; the challenge is that they change every year. To help us provide appropriate development opportunities it’s worth exploring what skills and qualities we would like to see officers have or more importantly what areas they can develop during their year in office. By the end of the session you will be able to:

* List the skills and qualities of an effective elected officer
* Outline any concerns you may have with working alongside officers

**11.35: Short Break**

We will take the opportunity to take a quick break

**11.45: How do we describe the relationship between staff and an officer?**

Having discussed what an ideal officer looks like, and accepted that officers will not always arrive in an ideal state; we will now examine the nature of the relationship. The key question is how do we ensure that our students’ associations are genuinely student led and professionally supported? We will trigger discussions on this by using some clips from “popular culture”. By the end of the session you will be able to:

* Describe how you see the relationship between elected officers and staff
* Evaluate a variety of suggested models
* List behaviours that will help the relationship with your officers to flourish

**13.00: Lunch**

We will have a light lunch. There will be an opportunity to take a quick tour of the NUS/sparqs offices for those that wish to do so.

**13.45: Empowering officers**

A key skill we all need to be able to develop is to work with officers in such a way as they feel empowered and able to articulate their concerns and views, and critically those of their member students at all levels of the college. We will take some of the discussions about the shifting relationship we have with officers and look at ways of making these a reality. By the end of the session you will be able to:

* Describe approaches to officer handover and induction
* Develop an approach to mentoring electing officers

**15.00: What if it all goes wrong?**

With the best will in the world things can go wrong. College students’ associations have been somewhat marginalised over the past twenty years, however the recognition of the importance of the student voice means that an effective students’ association with good leadership and professional support can be an asset to a college. In this session we will be looking at the status of a sabbatical officer in particular, what to do if they cross a line or do not carry out their role; equally we will discuss where that line might be! By the end of the session you will be able to:

* Identify issues relating to the employment status of a sabbatical officers
* Examine ways of describing the status of a sabbatical officers
* Discuss issues around officer accountability

**16.15: Evaluation**

An opportunity for you to say how you felt about the course, and to give us suggestions on ways to develop it.

**16.30: Close**

**Facilitators**

The course will be facilitated by **Mike Day,** Director of Nations for NUS. Mike has over thirty years’ experience of working in the student movement both as an elected officer himself and staff support for teams at college, regional and national level. Mike is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Personnel Development (CMCIPD). He will be joined for part of the day by **Al Powell** who is currently working as the Head of NUS Scotland Development and Charitable Services. Al is currently seconded to NUS Scotland and normally works in the NUS Strategic Support Unit specialising in Democracy and Governance. He has previously worked in the entertainments industry, charitable sector and as a staff member in a students’ union.