

Secretaries and Administrators

Why do this role?

Christian leaders are called above all else to serve God's people, and I can think of no better example of this in a CU than the Secretary. Lots of work done behind the scenes that is little noticed by anyone outside the committee... but the Lord sees it all.

If at any point this year you feel yourself sliding towards negative feelings towards others, or you feel your labour is unrecognised or unappreciated, be careful to guard your heart. In those moments, remember who it is you are really serving: *'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.'* (Col 3:23-24)

The great thing about life as a Christian is that everything is spiritual, even administration! Christ redeems our lives, and therefore our lives reflect his glory, from the way we study his word and pray to the way we play sport, eat meals and do administration! Therefore your role isn't just God glorifying because you help facilitate mission on campus. Your administration – in and of itself – is God-glorifying as you seek to live out your calling as a Christian and your work as CU secretary in a way that honours Christ.

A crucial role

Whether you are writing letters, booking rooms, taking minutes or collecting post, you can do all these things in a way that glorifies God and serve others. A secretary or administrator who is willing to serve the CU will make an enormous difference to the functioning of the mission team. Administration and organisation are vital spiritual gifts God gives to the body (1 Cor 12:28). In most CUs it can make the difference between merely great-sounding visionary ideas, and actual effective action on the ground.

Your responsibilities:

1. Booking speakers

Your communication with speakers at the CU is crucial and is best handled in a number of steps:

Step 1 – Availability email

Check availability of speakers by sending them a general email the term before with a list of the dates you need a speaker for:

- Give them a brief idea of the topic/book/aim for the term
- Ask them to let you know all the dates they can do from the list
- Tell them you will reply confirming a date and the passage

Step 2 – Confirmation email

Send individually to the speaker asap telling them:

- The date they are speaking and the passage/topic.
- How long they are speaking for
- Details of the type of CU:
 1. how the talk fits into the term plan

2. average numbers
3. number of non Christians
4. whether you have a question time
5. whether you have discussion groups and require questions speaker.

- Ask for the speakers postal address.

Step 3 – Getting the DB signed

Send a copy of the DB to the speaker with a note asking them to sign the DB and why you require them to sign it. Also enclose a stamped addressed envelope so they can return it to you with minimum of hassle.

Step 4 – Final details email

This could be sent with the confirmation email about two weeks before the meeting. This email should contain:

- CU meeting time and venue (maybe send a map with parking details)
- Where you will meet them and at what time
- Directions and/or a map
- Contact details – your mobile number to call if there are any problems (eg traffic)
- Ask them whether or not they need a meal before hand or a bed to stay overnight
- Details of any pre-meeting prayer time

Step 5 – Thank you card

A handwritten card is better than an email and should include:

- Thanks for their time – make it personal by saying what you or other people were particularly challenged or encouraged by .
- A gift for the speaker and a cheque to cover their expenses.

2. Committee meeting minutes

These are to be taken at every committee meeting. Don't take down every word or argument, but try to summarise briefly what happened and clearly what any decisions are. If you're not sure, always ask for clarification from the chairperson and read back to them what you believe the committee have agreed. Do record action points and who is responsible for carrying them out.

Minutes should be sent to and read by all of the committee and agreed as correct at the next meeting.

Keeping minutes is important for accountability, for future action, and is often a legal requirement for Student's Union affiliated societies.

3. Room bookings

These are crucial if events are to actually take place! The best plan is to book places promptly and re-check a week before any one-off events that the bookings are still ok. Be clear with others on the

committee who is responsible for practical arrangements (e.g. refreshments, PA systems) so that there are no misunderstandings.

4. Post (email or print)

Collect and distribute quickly. If mail is coming in that you cannot cope with, write politely and ask for it to be stopped.

5. Liaison

You will probably be the liaison person with the Students Union, the University, local churches and other organisations. These may include responding to emails or enquiries from the CU web page. So many communication problems can be avoided if you communicate promptly. Always try to be polite and use care and tact, particularly where if the person is outside the CU.

Do not be afraid to delay replying until you've spoken to the rest of the committee. In such situations, usually a one-line email back to the person explaining that you'll be in touch shortly makes all the difference.

Top Tips

- Plan ahead, remaining as organised as you possibly can! Communicate with speakers well in advance of meetings.
- Keep a database, detailing speakers contact details and a term plan so you know who's spoken when and on what. Keep it updated frequently.
- Use a secretary email address (e.g. xyzcusec@gmail.com). This means all your emails and contacts are together in one place. When you handover or if you're away others can easily have access to this account.
- Attach a to-do list at the end of the minutes so each committee member knows what they need to do that week.
- A letter to CU members during each holiday period is also useful. These should be informative as well as fun & are great opportunities to communicate the vision & plans of the committee to the CU members.
- CU weekly email, news-sheet or facebook page is often better than making long notices that are boring and detract from the focus of the meeting. Any essential notices should be kept short, useful & easy to understand. You may need to delegate this to someone else.
- Delegation
Being secretary doesn't mean you have to do every admin job. It is ok to ask other people to help you if you're feeling overloaded with things to do and other people can help.
- Training
There will be various opportunities to receive training during the year. They include EQUIP Leaders and EQUIP. Do make the most of these times. Think about your training needs within the CU as well. Local CUI Staff Workers can make suggestions & may be able to run some of the training themselves.

Further Resources:

- *Maximum Life, Julian Hardyman* (IVP)
- *A busy Christian's guide to busyness* Tim Chester (IVP)