

THE RUSKIN FELLOWSHIP - 'CLAUSE 4' OF THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

MEMBERSHIP OF THE FELLOWSHIP: PROPOSALS (DRAFT 5)

1. Problem: The numbers and types of courses now run by the college are significantly different from what they were in the past. To ensure that membership is open to all 'appropriate' ex-Ruskin students the membership category or categories need to be re-considered.

At the Fellowship Executive meeting held on 17 April 2011 we agreed that the section on "The membership of the Fellowship" should read:

- 4.1 All past students of Ruskin College
- 4.2 Members and past members of Ruskin College staff

It is with 4.1 that we have our concerns. We were asked by the Fellowship Executive to consider whether 4.1 still described potential membership in an appropriate way taking the variety of courses into account. We have decided to address the problem in two ways:

- i) By reviewing what advice the history of the Fellowship might provide. In the process we will identify what is the *current* Fellowship policy on membership. Item 2 below.
- ii) By considering the issue in terms of length of study and by talking about duration of study *in hours* rather than by using more ambiguous terms such as 'short courses' or 'long courses'. Item 3 below.

We also address the issue of members joining the Fellowship as a group, which is a current issue. See Item 4 below, and the question of Associate Membership. See 5 below.

We would ask members of the Executive to take into account the current context of membership applications. The then Membership Secretary reported to last year's AGM that there had been a 'trickle' of members into the Fellowship during 2009/2010. Recruitment in the current year, since September 2010, stands at 8 new members. *We need to take a policy decision that enables us to increase our membership on a regular basis.*

2. Proposal 1 – advice from our predecessors in 1913, 1923 and 1982: The history of the Fellowship points the current Executive in a particular direction. The College Report for 1911/1912 announces the establishment of the Fellowship and the inauguration of annual meetings from 1912 onwards. The Fellowship first addressed the definition of possible members as early as 1913. In that year the Fellowship Constitution was changed to allow Correspondence students to become members. This change led to a near doubling of the number of Fellowship members being reported in 1914. In 1923 a significant change was proposed. The College report for that year says the following:

Last year the Fellowship was revived and reconstituted. Membership, which was formerly confined to past and present members of the staff and past and present residential and correspondence students, has now been extended to *all* men and women who accept the constitution of the Fellowship and agree with the objects of the College. During the year groups of members have been formed in different parts of the country, with the object of making the College better known in their areas and of carrying on educational work where opportunities arise.
(College Report for 1922/23: 4. My italic.)

The quote suggests that 'present' students could be members of the Fellowship, which is not the case now of course. However, the broader point that membership is open to **all people who accept the constitution of the Fellowship and agree with the objects of the College** provides us with a form of words that *could* be used to define who can join the Fellowship. It

has the distinct benefit of being inclusive but raises the issue of whether there should be a requirement to be an ex-student.

The minutes of the AGM held on 18th April 1982 record the following:

“Membership of Fellowship: It was suggested that membership of the Fellowship be extended to people on short courses, e.g. students doing at least one-month full time trade union course and considered to be full members of the student body. It was also suggested that others connected with the College, e.g. staff, should also be accorded membership.

The following motion was carried, four members voting against [from a total attendance of 28].

‘That full membership should be accorded to students on short residential courses of at least one month who have been considered full members of the College.’

Arising from this motion it was suggested the E.C. should consider the creation of an Associate category.”

(Minutes of the 1982 AGM held 18 April at Ruskin Hall, Headington).

Once again, this is an inclusive definition and, as far as we can see, this is the current policy of the Fellowship.

We offer this form of words as our first proposal:

That membership is open to all ex Ruskin students who accept the Constitution of the Fellowship and agree with the objects of the College.

3. Proposal 2 – based on the length of study at Ruskin

The curriculum of the College now provides for courses from 18 hours of study to 1080 hours (and possibly more for placements associated with the Social Work qualifications). At the Executive meeting held on 17 April the length of study appeared to be an issue (eg should people on short courses or on the Ransacker course be offered membership?). The table below provides some guidance on different types of courses and their length.

Course	No enrolled 1st Nov 09	Length of course in (taught) hours		Course	No enrolled 1st Nov 09	Length of course in (taught) hours
Cert HEs	101	360		Ransackers	36	150
Dip HEs	39	720 (2x360)		Short Courses	961	3 day = 18 5 day = 30
BA Year 3s	27	1080 (3x360)		Union S/Courses	2230	St 1 Reps and H&S = 60 St 2 Reps and H&S = 60 Union Learning Reps = 30 Bespoke for affiliated unions = from 12 to 30
BA Soc Wk	133	Tutorials etc plus: FT = 5 day placements PT = 3 day placements		TUC Dip Em Law		216
BA Youth & Comm Wk	72	1080 (3x360)		TUC Dip Occ H&S		216
MAs	25	252				
TOTALS	397				3227	

There is a variety of course lengths shown here. 'Long courses' could be deemed to start at 150 hours or 216 hours or 252 hours or 360 hours. Any of these could be used as the defining number of hours for a potential Fellowship member. In addition, if a person was to attend several short courses they could study for enough hours to qualify them for membership (eg if they studied 5 short courses of 5 days they would have studied for 150 hours; if they studied 12 short courses of 5 days they would have been a student at Ruskin for 360 hours - and there are actually 12 short courses in the current short course leaflet).

The benefits of this proposal are that potential members will have had a 'substantial' Ruskin experience of the College.

The dis-benefits of the proposal are that it is exclusive.

We offer the following as our second proposal and an alternative to proposal 1 above:

That membership is open to all ex-Ruskin students who study a course or courses for a minimum number of 150 taught hours.

4. Group membership of the Fellowship: We have been asked to consider the costs of membership to individual members who join as a group. It seems appropriate to discuss this at the same time as we discuss the above.

We would propose that, if 10 or more members want to join the Fellowship as a group, the lifetime fee be reduced to £20 per person.

There is also an issue related to those people who study a course elsewhere but then attend Ruskin as a significant part of their ongoing studies that needs to be addressed. This situation arises in the case of Ransackers for example. The Executive may want to consider the possibility of providing an 'Associate' category to enable such members to join the Fellowship. Please see Section 5. below.

5. Associate Membership of the Fellowship: At the 1998 AGM it was agreed to change the Constitution to admit 'Associate members'. This amendment to the Constitution, which was moved by Bob Matthews, seconded by Bill Purdie and carried unanimously, appears *never to have been subsequently written into the Constitution*. The amendments were as follows:

(d) Other person not meeting the above criteria may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, join as Associate members. Associate members shall be granted speaking rights during debates, but shall not be eligible to stand for election to the Executive Committee, hold any Fellowship office or have voting rights

(d) Associate membership of the Fellowship shall be subject to either an annual fee or five yearly fee. The level of associate member annual or five yearly fee shall be prescribed by the Annual General Meeting.

6. Conclusion: We agreed at the Executive meeting on 17 April that the proposals would form the, major part of the business at the final Executive meeting of the year on July 2nd. This is the last part of the Constitution to be finalised so it is important to agree a way forward on this final aspect so that the draft of the proposed Constitution can be written ready for the AGM.

Prepared on behalf of the Executive by:

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May 16th 2011