The concept of partnership is deeply embedded within the University of Exeter’s philosophy, strategy and ways of working. As illustrated below, the University, the Exeter Students’ Guild, and FXU work in partnership at every level of our institution, and in numerous ways.

**Partnership through University structures**

To further support an already outstanding reputation in the context of student engagement, the University has invested this year in two new senior posts with a focus on partnership - a Director of Student Education and Engagement and a Head of Student Engagement and Skills. These posts accompany continued investment in a full time Student Engagement Officer, co-funded by the University and the Students’ Guild.

In addition, every academic College in the University now employs staff with a remit for engagement and partnership work. They support Student Staff Liaison Committees and develop College-specific student engagement strategies, employability, peer support and ‘Students as Change Agents’ projects.

**Student representation as partnership**

Student representation within University processes is central to partnership, with two representatives on University Council and six on Senate. A dedicated ‘Student Exchange’ allows regular decision-making meetings between students and University senior managers. The Students’ Guild and FXU also have a major role in financial planning processes and spending decisions through a specially created Budget Scrutiny Group.

The student voice is highly respected by the University because of its legitimacy. Our election turnout is amongst the highest in the sector: 36% of students voted in the Students’ Guild sabbatical elections and 54% voted to elect the FXU sabbatical officers this year. As the infographic below highlights, Students’ Guild and FXU sabbaticals are supported through College, Subject and Programme representatives as part of our academic representation system.

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1 Sean Mackney, Elisabeth Dunne and Will Page
A Partnership for Excellence

Partnership at Exeter is not a short term fad. It is central to institutional strategy for promoting change. It has been future-proofed and embedded through the collaborative creation of a new Education Strategy to promote excellence (2015-2020). An innovative scenario-planning approach gained comment from over 400 students and staff. The strategy was written by an editorial board with University staff and student representatives from the Guild and FXU.

The student-led, evidence-based College ‘Visions for Education’ (2013) also embed requirements for change and development, and Colleges are currently drawing up action plans to be delivered in partnership.

Exeter was the first University in England to run Teaching Awards, recognising excellence of staff across our campuses. This year, 2601 students nominated 550 staff members (a sector record, according to NUS). This was complemented by the FXU awards where 271 students nominated 73 staff. Both events were co-funded by the University, the Students’ Guild and FXU.
HEA and NUS Students’ Union and Institution Partnership Award 2014

‘Students as Change Agents’, started at Exeter in 2008 as a driver of change, has a record 76 evidence-led enhancement projects being run by students this year, without payment. These include 16 projects on sustainability, 12 on employability, 8 on module choices, 6 on peer support and 4 on assessment and feedback. Further, 47 pairs of students and staff have undertaken the Mirror scheme over the past two years, with pairs spending a day learning with, and from, each other as they go about their normal business. The Vice Chancellor and the Chief Operating Officer both participated this year, demonstrating high-level commitment by the institution to the principles of partnership.

To further promote engagement with issues of excellence, the institution provides the Guild and FXU with its analysis of the NSS, PTES, PRES and ISB, as well as running the annual ‘University of Exeter Student Experience Survey.’ Survey questions for the latter are specific to each campus and agreed with the Guild and FXU; results are shared with both unions and presented to the University. In response, the institution has recently committed to abolishing hidden course costs, and started a student-led review of the personal tutor scheme, demonstrating the value the University places on evidence-based student representation.

In another co-funded initiative, we have expanded our student-led ‘Research Uncovered Scheme’ this year, ensuring opportunities to recognise and promote outstanding research. 1197 student nominations were split between 75 outstanding research projects, with the most popular seven presented to an audience of 750 staff and students.

The Students’ Guild also identified that postgraduate research students failed to engage with Student Staff Liaison Committees. On adoption of Research Student Liaison Forums by the University, 140 postgraduate research students have aired their views. As a result, the Students’ Guild reviewed the working conditions of Postgraduate teachers, with recommendations for standardised, institution-wide employment processes being adopted by the University.

The benefits and impact of our partnership

The University benefits significantly from partnership with students. Exeter is among the leaders for student satisfaction, never having been outside the top 10 in the National Student Survey. This is largely because we change and improve what we do in a co-ordinated and explicit partnership from which every individual student benefits.

The Student’s Guild and FXU also benefit significantly. Both unions receive access to institutional data which is unsurpassed in the higher education sector, and receive project specific funding in addition to substantial block grants.

We believe the sector-leading level of student participation in partnership work, the amount of change delivered by staff and students in response to the student voice, and our investment - both strategic and financial - in how we work together promotes a community wherein partnership is at the very heart of what we achieve.

Alex Louch
Exeter Students’ Guild VP Academic Affairs

Chaz Malyon
FXU President (Exeter)

Sean Mackney
Director of Student Engagement and Education, University of Exeter
New education strategy for 2015-2020. This new plan was based on scenario testing, feedback from over 400 students & staff.

36.14% voted in the Students’ Guild elections and 53.6% voted to elect the FXU officers.

Student’s Guild and FXU are given a major role in making spending decisions through a specially created Budget Scrutiny Group.

Exeter has always been among the leaders for student satisfaction, never having been outside the top 10 in the National Student Survey.

In the first term of this academic year 140 postgraduate research students attended student specific liaison forums to air their views.

‘Students as Change Agents’ started at Exeter in 2008 and this year has seen a record 76 enhancement projects being led by students.

47 pairs of students and staff participating in the Mirror scheme over the past two years. This included the Vice Chancellor and the Chief Operating Officer.

FXU awards where 271 students, 15.9% of their student population, nominated 73 numbers of staff.

This year 2601 students nominated 550 members of staff which, according to NUS, is a sector record.