

How to Set up a successful society.

For some people, attempting to set up a Youth against ID society at their university will be the first time they have undertaken the task of trying to attract people at a freshers fayre, and to gain that competitive edge over other groups and clubs.

This is not easy, but set out below are a few tips to help you get started. If you have any questions on these, or any other ideas to run past us then feel free to contact us!

Good Luck!!

### **1) First Contact**

It is important that you think carefully about what first impression you will give out to students coming into the room. Think about using a variety of materials such as posters, banners, flyers and make sure they are all clearly visible from afar and are not crammed full of words. Keep the message clear and concise. Having an image which is diverse will help to attract different people who may not want to read the leaflet, but may see the website address and log on later! Try to get a few people to help out at the stall, and make sure you are smiling and approachable and not just sitting in one corner together reading the newspaper! This is really important as it prevents people feeling intimidated, and they are more likely to come over and find out more.

Outside of the Freshers Fayre, try to get some publicity around campus. This can be simply putting posters up in departments, asking to publicise in lectures for related courses, like Law, Politics, Sociology. Get in contact with your student newspaper and ask if you can write a piece for them on ID cards, the same goes for student radio or even other local papers, such as Metro which is often read by students on the way into campus. Another way to get publicity is through word of mouth in other organisations. Take a look around for other political groups who have a presence and are likely to be anti-ID (perhaps even Labour!), and let their members know about your existence.

### **2) Keeping Interest**

Make sure you know quite a bit about ID Cards!! You do not have to be a genius, but make sure you can present to people a few of the issues involved. Set out to them the goals and aims of your society, what you plan to organise over the year, make yourselves sound incredibly diverse, interesting and fun to be with! Similarly, get them talking to you, see if they have any questions. Nobody wants to be bombarded with 10 minutes of information from you on your high horse! This is what lecturers are for! If you can get a two way conversation going then they are likely to remember more about your stall than the one next to you, which is simply handing out leaflets.

### **3) Special Ingredients !**

The something extra is what all societies are out to get in order to achieve maximum return of students. It is often quite and individual, wacky idea, for example having somebody dressed up as an ID card and walking around the area. Other ideas could be to give free things out, maybe sweets!! This is always a great way to grab peoples attention and try to get them interested. The more imaginative, the more people it will pull in. How about running a petition on the day of the freshers fayre in a different area

of campus. This could help to maximise the number of students you manage to get into contact with and this is obviously the main aim. Instead of setting a target for how many members you get, try to set a target for how many people you will reach in freshers week! This will help you to diversify and not sit for the whole week in the union bar drowning your sorrows.

### **3) Following Up**

Right, so you have collected a few hundred students names and email addresses, but what good is this if they never come back! Useless. So, the next stage is to make sure they are aware of the next group event or meeting. Try to organise something shortly after freshers week, which hopefully involves either free food or drink. Why not invite some local councillors along who are anti-ID, and go for a couple of beers? Or if the budget is limited, simply arrange for a meeting to get to know more about the issue of ID Cards. Print some flyers off for those who seem keen and let them know the time, place and event.

### **4) STICKING AT IT !!**

You will always find that no matter how many email addresses you collect that not 100% will turn up to the first meeting. However, keep pestering those people from freshers week. Keep pestering the members who do turn up to tell their friends or families. Even if the start of the fayre does not go greatly stick at it. For every person who tells you that ID cards are brilliant, there will be one who shares your concerns. Keep thinking of new ways to get support, be imaginative, be approachable and be successful!!

Good Luck!

Matthew Cormack  
President (Newcastle University Liberal Democrats)