

UCC Direction 2012

A collection of opinions by Ash Tyndall, written in December 2011

Moving beyond the Clubroom

While the clubroom is certainly the heart and soul of the club, the club would do well to investigate further what areas around campus it can begin to start participating in.

Getting more involved in Guild run events, participating in charity activities such as Relay 4 Life and inter-club events like Prosh Olympics would both work to raise the club's profile, and provide opportunities for club members to interact in further social settings.

Regular Events

Member retention is a huge issue for most clubs; while O-Day usually has a huge fresher sign-up, there is a large drop-off in club participation the next couple of weeks hence.

One way in which this problem can be mitigated to a degree, is to ensure events are run frequently and – more importantly – at regularly intervals. If you can get a new member to incorporate club events into their normal routine, you've earned yourself a valuable regular participant.

Shared Responsibility

A pervasive problem in the current committee is the current mindset of people "owning" events, and the attitude that "you suggested it, you do it". While this attitude does help stop criticism without useful alternative suggestions, it also quickly burns out any member who becomes assigned to a frequently occurring event.

This attitude, as it stands, would make it nearly impossible to move to a regular event schedule as discussed above.

An obvious solution is to encourage the rejection of this attitude within the committee and instead foster the understanding that with the amount of people the committee has, if everyone shares the workload of organising and running events, no one committee member will be left with a "burn out level" workload.

Advertising to the wider student population

The club currently only extends strong welcomes to non-members on O-Day in semester 1 and Club Carnival in semester 2. After these times have elapsed, the club becomes almost a closed society.

We have very little advertising or promotion outside of our own circles and for a student who did not attend O-Day or Club Carnival, it would be 1) unlikely for them to know of our existence and 2) unlikely that they would take the initiative to join a club that does not project a particularly welcoming exterior.

The club should strive with future events to make sure that they are appropriately advertised to the wider UWA community. This strategy would hopefully generate a small but steady influx of members all year round, and would continue to increase the club's profile in the wider community.

Targeting the faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics with poster material related to events, as well as utilising the Guild's rotunda advertising system, could serve to draw many people who would otherwise not know about our events.

Furthermore, the committee should be encouraged to consider that somewhat subsidising non-members at an event (through their share of free pizza for example) can be advantageous to the club in the long run, as it can serve to "bribe" people into joining the club.

LANs

In line with the suggestion for more regular events, LANs should become a more regular occurrence in the Cameron Hall loft and possibly at larger venues. There is generally a small but constant demand for more LANing opportunities, and the club should endeavour to fill this demand on a regular basis.

Running monthly LANs at a similar time, place and interval (exams and other events permitting) could be an easy way to encourage new memberships and current member participation.

Monday Night at the Movies

Yes, the event that just won't die permanently! One of the primary problems with the event was that while the screening was going on, other activity was continuing in the clubroom. This served as a constant distraction. Coupled with the fact the furniture was always arranged so awkwardly in relation to the screen, this served to severely detract from the experience.

A solution to this problem would be to close the clubroom to non-movie watchers during this time and rearrange the furniture to be more suitable to a movie watching experience. This, coupled with the committee sharing the responsibility of hosting the event, would lead to a lasting event.

UCC Talks

UCC Camp demonstrated that within the club's membership, there are engaging speakers who can speak on intriguing areas of computer science and there are plenty of people willing to listen to them.

Furthermore, the club's profile as a large body of potential employees could easily lead to the club recruiting speakers and representatives from a variety of computing organisations to speak about their technological innovations and experience in the industry.

Bring the Talks back as a monthly or bi-monthly event would serve to draw potential new members to the club, and would educate current members on some of the rapidly developing areas of the computer science industry.

Technological Investment

In years past, the club used its funds to provide club members access to technologies and resources that they would otherwise be unable to utilise. In the late 70s and early 80s, given the newly developing technologies of the time, this was of course the computer.

In today's world, computers are ubiquitous and – for the most part – inexpensive. So while the club does still provide a valuable service to its members, the value of this service has unfortunately diminished.

To remain relevant in a constantly advancing technological landscape, the club needs to begin looking to the future and start using portions of the club's funds to investing in newly available technologies. In a similar way, the club should also begin perusing sponsorship by large technology organisations to decrease the cost of these technologies in exchange for promotion of the organisation in question.

New Clubroom

It appears that in the near future, perhaps even next year, the club will be migrating to a different clubroom on the Guild Administrator floor of the Guild building. This will be one of the most important events to happen to the club in the last 20 years, so it's important that it is handled correctly.

The club needs to ensure we are allocated adequate space to ensure the club continues to have room for now and for the future. Funding for the necessary renovations to the room will need to be pursued from a variety of sources, including a large contribution from the club's current fund pool to ensure that the job is done right.