

FULL SCORE Project

Report on Parallel Sessions II - Q&A with the Students

Glasgow -13/11/2015



PARTICIPANTS

Discussion between representatives of AEC member institutions and the FULL SCORE Students
Working Group Members:

- Ruth FRASER (Royal Conservatoire The Hague, The Netherlands)
- Sylvain DEVAUX (CoPeCo Master Programme)
- Isabel GONZALEZ DELGADO (Conservatorio Superior de Murcia, Spain)
- Saara LINDAHL (Sibelius Academy - University of the Arts, Helsinki) and

Ankna AROCKIAM, President of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Students' Union

REPORT

First session (16:30 - 17:30)

The Students introduce their activities in the Working Group during the last year, and convey that participating in the AEC events and the Polifonia boot camp for entrepreneurship has been very helpful, opening their views to issues about which they had never reflected before. Besides helping them individually, it has been also very constructive regarding their own work as student representatives at their home institutions.

The student WG members invite the representatives to give their feedback on the Student session at the Congress. The students would like to know whether the activities carried out by the WG so far are stimulating, and what are the expectations that the AEC members have from this group.

As stated during the Student Session in the Congress, it is stressed that the level of student representation differs from one institution to another. **How could AEC help its members to guarantee student representation in each member institution?**

- It is suggested to create a **common document setting the minimum standards** for student representation in AEC member institutions. The AEC Chief Executive is happy with this idea and the FULL SCORE Working Group will work on it.
- The Student Working Group could also work on **guidelines explaining how to set up a student Union** (including legal and bureaucratic matters).

- The Student Working Group could make a mapping of student representation in Higher Music Education, highlighting good practices and areas to improve in the different countries.

Even if the institution does not have a student body, it is important that the managers and teachers **communicate** with them and listen to their opinions and needs. It is crucial to make them feel at home, make the students feel that they belong to the institution and that they have a voice on how the institution is run.

The students acknowledge that there is **apathy** among the students themselves regarding student representation. This might be due to a **lack of communication** in both ways: between the institution and the students and also between the student union/body and the students themselves.

The student voice should be heard when shaping curricula. Ankna Arockiam, President of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Students' Union explains how beneficial it has been for the RCS to listen to the students when creating study programmes. It is crucial to know what the students want and what they are expecting, and make them aware that they are allowed and even asked to make decisions.

The student's role in Society: The students feel that they are currently living very special times, everything evolving extremely fast. It would be great if the institutions would encourage the students to stop and reflect on their role in society, on their level of engagement. In this regard, the representatives feel that their students are more and more engaged.

The students would like to invite AEC members to reflect: What has your institution brought in place to open the horizons of students? It could be a module on entrepreneurship, other tools?

To end, the students ask the managers to promote the Student Working Group and its work among the students of their institutions. The AEC Chief Executive and the Students WG commit themselves to, during the second year of the project, set up **mechanisms that ensure the sustainability** of student representation in AEC.

Second session (17:30 - 18:30)

Question from Participant from Basel - the institution has a concern on quality - how to request feedback of the students in an effective way? - **Currently students at their institution do not have enough possibilities to communicate the school their concerns/ideas about the school management, how could this be improved from the student perspective?**

- Creating students 'focus groups' (by department, for example) where students have the chance to express their view on specific management issues related to their studies.
- Fostering the use of online services/platforms.
- Setting up a student body - the most efficient way to get the open opinion of student is creating a mechanism where students talk to other students - in an anonymous way, they can have open discussions and provide feedback through the students representatives.
- Make students feel actively involved in the management of the institution - they need to make it interesting so that students feel like directly addressed.
- In terms of documents - creating feedback mechanisms - (in a more official way)
- Direct formal/informal contact helps - involve students in management meetings, listen to them. Make sure the students understand the issues discussed, brief them and ask their opinion in a direct way. They should not only be present in meetings but they should also contribute - gathering is always beneficial

Many institutions do not know how to build the communication channels with students, how can this be addressed?

- In France for example, the contact is mainly informal - there are no official mechanisms to involve students. There are student representatives sending emails but not in a clear/efficient way.
- It would be advisable to organize specific meetings tackling special needs of specific courses, to attract the students directly affected.
- The role of the 'Student Councilor' should be emphasized - he/she, as mediators, should encourage the students to solve the problem by themselves. Enable the student to face and solve their problems in the institutions.

What can the student do to change the attitude towards changing teachers?

- The role of the students' representative is also to create a nice environment for them to speak up their fears/ views on the teachers' performance and attitude towards teaching.
- Another idea would be to create a paper at the beginning of the course stating that students do not have to stick to their teacher, make clear they are free to change if they find it necessary.

According to students, what should the institutions do to enable students to make a living in the future? How can anybody provide the tools when it is uncertain how life will be in 10 years?

- Students need to develop the capacity of adapting in times of uncertainty.
- It is needed to breathe and take the beauty of what you are doing, appreciate what is within and look around. Make sure your students have the tools to then be able to adapt to the industry in its broadest sense.

- Student unions are essential tools of communication, it is important to encourage student to join and actively participate. Rewarding students for their involvement is an option, although recognition is always tricky; if an institution gives credits to students for their involvement, they will get students that are there for the credits, not for the real motivation.

How to connect Music education to the rights/duties with society - diversity, world outside?

- The need to tackle social issues should be addressed from the student union, they should connect studies with society
- Creating working groups on specific issues where students can learn from each other should be fostered. This WG is a good example of the benefits that such a structure could have. The students agree they are learning a lot of other practices/realities in Europe thanks to their involvement in the FULL SCORE WG. This could be somehow implemented in each institution.

How could AEC support students for them to be more engaged in the association?

- Encourage students to come to AEC events - Each institution could bring a student representative. There could be sessions for students to get together and discuss on how the topics addressed in AEC events can be helpful for them. And also, in this way institutions would have direct feedback on what it is important to them.
- AEC could reconsider the idea of having students in the council meetings - there is value in having at least a student representative that reminds the Council members why they are working for, the real target group.

**Report written by Nerea López de Vicuna (AEC Office Manager and Student WG Coordinator)
Brussels, 15/12/2016**