

SECRETARY

What are your hopes for this coming year as secretary?

JOB DESCRIPTION

Letters!

Being an effective CU secretary involves a lot more than simply writing letters, despite what you may have been told. You are the person who aids & facilitates communication within the CU - even the smallest CU cannot survive without effective communication.

The size & structure of your particular CU will dictate the exact nature of your role & responsibilities both inside & outside committee meetings. Whatever the details, the reality is that an effective secretary makes for a CU that is functioning well: yours is an important & strategic position.

Often people imagine a secretary to be one of the less "spiritual" people in a committee. This does not have to be true by any means. Your service for God, whether it is in writing letters or booking rooms, taking minutes or collecting post, is a vital role that can honour God & significantly assist his work in the CU, calling others to a living faith in Jesus.

The role of secretaries varies from CU to CU, & although you do not have to do all of it yourself, it is important that you take the responsibility to ensure that it all happens to a good standard.

Minutes: not every word needs recording, but a brief & accurate account of what happened during the meeting (include committee, AGM and mission meetings) should be kept. Not only is it good practice to ensure accountability, but it is a legal requirement of SU affiliated societies. Minutes should also be read, & verified as true at the following meeting.

Information: should where necessary be passed on to the committee in good time for meetings.

Post: Collect & distribute quickly & effectively. A lot comes from international / mission organisations: don't just dump it on the international sec. If mail is coming in that you cannot cope with, write & politely ask for it to be stopped.

Rooms: need booking & confirming. Check a week before any one-off events, & check practical arrangements (e.g. refreshments, PA systems)

Speakers: need to be written to with a clear brief on the CU and with a date & subject of talk. Don't tell them what to say, but do explain why the passage/topic has been chosen & how it fits into the rest of the term. Also ensure that they have adequate arrangements, where necessary, to be met, fed & brought to the meeting in good time. See example letters attached (letter of invitation, letter of confirmation). Writing to speakers: do type all letters & keep a paper copy of all correspondence. Remember to include a copy of the IFES Ireland doctrinal basis for the speaker to sign. Including a reply slip & a self-addressed envelope is polite & will enable a swift reply.

Communication: with SU & CU advisory body, as well as CU members & any other interested parties. Ensure it happens efficiently, politely & with integrity. This may include responding to e-mail & enquiries that come via the CU web page, which should also be handled with care & tact. Do not be afraid to delay replying until you've spoken to the rest of the committee.

Liaising: with the treasurer when it comes to paying speakers

Other practical hints...

Plan ahead: remaining as organised as you possibly can! Keep a file in good order for incoming and outgoing correspondence. Communicate with speakers well in advance of meetings (anything less than 4 weeks is, on the whole, very short notice).

Keep a CU address book: including an up-to-date directory of speakers, CU members & any other useful contacts. This may take time to set up, but is well worth it.

A CU news-sheet: it is often better to use this method to convey information, rather than making long notices that are boring & detract from the focus & impact of the meeting. Any essential notices should be kept short, useful & easy to understand, avoiding in-jokes. You may need to delegate this to someone else.

A letter to CU members during each holiday period is also useful. These should be informative as well as fun & are great opportunities to communicate the vision & plans of the committee to the CU members. Ensure the CU committee jointly authors the letter

Team Life: you are working as part of a team both within committee and the general CU. Look out for those who are also gifted in administration, bring them on board with you and delegate work out – don't burn yourself out running after things