

El Salvador Alumni Group

El Salvador Alumni Group

Discussion, 13/05/06

In attendance: Martin Threakall, Mark O'Hare, David Woodhead, Neal Turkington, Dan Woodier.

Absent: Paul Astle

Minutes and Actions from previous meeting

Mark had spoken to Ruth, she was interested in the idea and keen to have a role. Unfortunately she could not make the meeting today. Mark also explained what he had found out regarding bank accounts. See below for more information.

Paul Astle contacted Mel who is very keen to discuss the group with us. Mel is back in the UK within the next few weeks and it is hoped some of the group can meet with him at this point to discuss. Paul has had some problems with the website but is still working on this, and intends also to circulate his timeline within the next 2 weeks.

Martin presented the constitution he has drafted and offered it out for comment. It will be adapted and developed over time, anyone is welcome to feed comments back to him for inclusion. From speaking to Mikey, the completion of last year's report is imminent now that exams are finished. Seb Kaminski is finishing this off. They will post out CD's once it is completed, and should add a copy to the website. Martin will email Dr. Bommer this week, prior to Dan and Neal seeing him on Thursday.

Bank account

Mark has researched a number of bank accounts, and it seems that Lloyds TSB and HSBC offer the best options. Mark has further meetings with the bank this coming week. As Dan does not have a separate account as yet, it would be ideal for this to be set up in time for Dan to use it this summer on the project (departing in June). As the accounts take around 2 weeks to set up, this will be tight but should be possible.

Formation

It was mentioned that it may be more efficient to form this group as a small company or charity. However, it was agreed that it would be best to keep it as an informal group for the time being, and review the situation in a couple of years, once it has been developed and functioning for some time. It was also questioned whether anyone would want to take on the responsibility of heading up a more formal arrangement, and that it might bring in more bureaucracy than is desired or required.

Management Committee

There was further discussion on the role of the management committee in terms of knowledge management. It was agreed the committee should maintain a record of people working with REDES, or others in El Salvador, but not on the project (for example on placements, as Mikey is applying for this year). As noted before, these contacts do not have to be members of the committee, or even the group, but the committee should try to keep track of what experience and knowledge is held where so that it can be drawn upon as appropriate.

Role

The role of the group as a whole was debated further. It was agreed that members should be used by the team to try and leverage funding from their employers, but it was reiterated that the responsibility for the fund raising will lie firmly with the team, not the group (refer to meeting 1 minutes for definitions). Along with this point it was also repeated that the intention of the group is not to

El Salvador Alumni Group

take away any responsibility or control from the students, but to support and guide them in order to ensure the continued success of the project, and take away unnecessary difficulties (such as the bank accounts). It was made clear that the more the team use the group for advice and support the better, and if this does become too much the group will push back.

Funding

The topic of funding was considered, along the lines of what the project sponsors actually gain from the projects, and how best to try and develop long standing sponsorship agreements. The two key budgets which funding comes from are graduate recruitment and charity. It was agreed that the project should not be advertised to students as a way to directly gain summer placements or employment, but that the project sponsors could do a lot more with their opportunity to interact and recruit the students. WhitbyBird was cited as a sponsor who had done this successfully, employing several former participants. In order to develop these relations, it was suggested that perhaps instead of offering a solely a presentation following the project, those companies who don't want a presentation could be encouraged to partake in a smaller meeting. This could be carried out once the report is completed, perhaps in the January each year, and could involve the leaders from the two teams in existence at that stage, along with team members from the returning team, meeting with the key sponsor contact. This could be used to talk them through the project report and encourage them to sponsor subsequent years.

Team leader

The issue of the next year's leader was raised, how this individual might be found and chosen. Interest in the project within the department is growing strongly, and there has already been some prospective candidates suggested. How this process works and what the role of the group is within it can be developed as required nearer the time.

Actions

Mark – speak to Ruth to clarify the situation and her interest in involvement in the group. Also provide her with feedback from the meeting.

Martin – Send out minutes from this meeting (and last meeting to Dave Woodhead, Dan and Neal). Also email Dr. Bommer before Dan and Neal meet him this Thursday. Also, look for any research on what motivates companies to fund such projects (especially involving students) to try and gain an insight into how to ensure the sustainability of funding, year on year.

Paul – complete time line and circulate.

Dan – contact Mark regarding sponsorship from Osbornes.

Dan and Mark should also liaise regarding the bank account, especially if this is to be organised for this year.