



Green Gown
Awards 2013

Finalist's case study

Dissemination supported by:



Falmouth Exeter Plus Best Newcomer

Empowering sustainable change: creative travel choices for two universities in rural Cornwall

Section 1 About the project

Summary

The Penryn Campus in Cornwall has been shared and jointly managed by Falmouth University (Falmouth) and the University of Exeter (UoE) since 2004 in an arrangement that is unique in the UK.

Falmouth Exeter Plus (FX Plus) is wholly owned by the two institutions and delivers shared academic, campus, estates, ICT and student support services and facilities for UoE and Falmouth in Cornwall.

Due to a creative Travel Plan, single car commuting dropped from 30% to 22% between 2011 and 2013.

Project partners

Falmouth University and the University of Exeter
Cornwall Council
First Devon & Cornwall

Section 2 The results

The problem

We have a unique challenge in the context of travel, in that we are two universities sharing a campus in a rural county at the very edge of the UK. Our university partners attract students from across the globe as a result of their academic reputations, graduate success, world-class facilities and stunning coastal environment, but we have to strike a fine balance between discouraging students from bringing cars when they enrol, whilst simultaneously promoting the outdoor lifestyle and sense of place that Cornwall offers, which is an integral part of our institutions' brands.

We also have two university towns – Penryn (population c 7,000) and Falmouth (population c 21,000) – and our impact on each community differs. If we got our car parking strategy wrong, for example, more students and staff would park on residential streets and cause problems for local people; if all the buses between Falmouth and Penryn were full of students, local people would miss hospital appointments in nearby Truro.

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY EXETER UNIVERSITY

Profile

- HEI
- 5,633 students (includes full and part time students)
- 982 staff
- Rural

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We therefore play an active role in both towns, contributing knowledge and expertise to reviews of transport infrastructure, community plans and regeneration proposals to ensure that the needs of our students, staff and the wider community are aligned.

The approach

Both university partners have demonstrated their commitment to sustainable transport by empowering FX Plus to introduce a range of transport measures, including:-

- Subsidising a five-year bus contract to enable all students / staff to travel between campuses and within a 5-mile radius, for 80p (regular fare currently £3.10); or for 70p through the advance purchase of tickets
- Introducing a dedicated inter-campus shuttle bus for all students and staff, which runs every 15 minutes during the day, as well as utilising regular public service buses; thus ensuring that there is a bus every 7 minutes between Falmouth and Penryn
- Introducing paid-for car parking permits and a number plate recognition barrier system to decrease the number of students and staff commuting by car, by making public transport a cheaper alternative for those that live within 5 miles of the campus
- Offering cheaper permits for car sharers, electric and low emissions vehicles
- Introducing a long-stay car park for students living on campus, where they only pay if they leave;
- Bringing car park management in-house to ensure consistency
- Working with Cornwall Council to introduce a Cornwall-wide network of electric vehicle charging points to provide publically accessible charging on campus
- Working with Sustainable 3D Design lecturers and students on a range of bus and cycle shelters;
- Creating a campus strapline for travel initiatives: Empowering sustainable change
- Introducing electric vehicles and trialling Segways for Campus Patrol and Grounds staff
- Promoting 'cycle to campus days' by offering free breakfasts; cycle maintenance and hire
- Working with Cornwall Council and Sustrans to enhance cycle routes
- Running a successful cycle scheme benefit for staff, which has seen 25 bikes purchased in 2013
- Investing in additional student residences on campus which reduces the need for some students to commute.

Our goals

- Reduce single car occupancy commuting
- Reduce carbon emissions
- Reduce cars parked on residential streets
- Improve relationships with the local community
- Increase environmental awareness

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacles	Solutions
Cornwall is a rural county where many rely on private vehicles for commuting	Making it easier for people to use public transport rather than commuting by car; offering subsidised transport schemes; offering advice and alternative options.
Lack of financial resource	Ring fencing car parking revenue; securing a negotiated bus contract; securing Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) funding; working in partnership with others.



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Lack of awareness of sustainable travel

Awareness raising events; facebook and social media promotions; branding of electric vehicles; lectures on the future of low carbon transport options.

Performance and results

A target was set by Cornwall Council in 2011 for single car occupancy commuting to and from our Penryn Campus to drop from 30% to 26% by 2013. Our Annual Travel Survey seeks information from students and staff about their transport habits and the number of single car commutes to and from the Campus decreased by 3% to 27% in 2011/12 and to 22% by 2013.

Every five years, our data is independently audited by JMP Consultants Ltd on behalf of the TRICS (Trip Rate Information Computer System) Consortium. In July 2012, JMP's multi-modal survey showed that single car commuting had dropped to 23% at that stage.

As our 2013 Travel Survey results were so positive, we double-checked parking rates against permits sold and daily parking revenue; assessed monthly bus invoices; reviewed the uptake of our cycle scheme and factored in the additional student accommodation that had opened within walking distance of the Campus. The combination of our independent audit and our own benchmarking gave us sufficient data to verify the results of our Annual Travel Survey and demonstrate that they were a true representation.

All car parking revenue from our Penryn Campus is ring-fenced to subsidise our university partners' current bus contract and other green travel initiatives. This bus contract, with First, was procured in 2009 through an OJEU process. Reduced bus fares, together with the fact that students and staff who live within a five-mile radius of the Campus are denied a car parking permit, have motivated a high number of bus users within this catchment area. In addition, those who live outside this five-mile radius can buy reduced price annual bus passes from First at no additional cost to our university partners.

We have also worked with Cornwall Council and ecodrive on a successful bid to receive Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) funding of 75% of the set-up costs for electric vehicle charging on campus.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

Never give up! There is always more that can be done, but every step along the road is a step forward to a low carbon future.

Our awareness raising with students continues on a regular basis. Our current bus contract comes up for renewal in 2014 and we will be working closely with our procurement team to manage the tendering process and negotiate the most cost-effective deal for our university partners, whilst looking to secure a better travel experience for all our staff and students.

Sharing your project

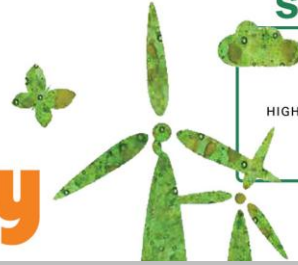
We distribute our Travel Guide to students and staff annually; issue communications about the benefits of new policies and operations; brand vehicles to raise awareness of our **Empowering sustainable change** campaign; exhibit during Go Green Week; give talks and face-to-face briefings; and promote schemes through our online newsletter, The Digest.



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Cornwall Council cites our Travel Plan as a best practice example and we work with them to help local businesses develop their own. Because our partnership is complex, our audiences are varied and the scope of our Travel Plan is far-reaching, we tailor our advice and adopt a themed approach to suit individual requirements – such as advice on car sharing, electric vehicles, car parking policy and cycle schemes.

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

We are extremely proud to have been shortlisted as a Green Gown Award finalist. We can now move forward with our Travel Plan in the knowledge that our hard work has been validated and recognised at the highest level. One of FX Plus's strategic objectives is to deliver environmentally proactive and responsible campus operations, in collaboration with our university partners. Being a Green Gown Award finalist for our creative Travel Plan is also a measure of success in this regard too.

Further information

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