



MICKELODEON

Like a monkey with a miniature cymbal

International Rescue

Having been at Cardiff Uni since what feels like the dawn of time, I've developed a theory about any new development that our fine institution makes. There are two building options available: they can either build toilets, or more computer rooms. Obviously the University management believes that we're all nerds with kidney problems.

But increasingly there is a third possibility: squeezing ever-increasing volumes of bureaucracy out of the budget. Like any institution, Cardiff Uni is partial to producing reams of unnecessary paper (the first person to say 'things in Welsh' will be hauled up before the Equal Opportunities Committee).

But an initiative sent out to all teaching staff last week is one of its finest achievements in years. Every month for the next year, staff have to fill in forms explaining how they have spent every minute of every day.

So next time you need help with an essay and your lecturer doesn't have time to help you, you'll know why: because some administrative wonk is making sure he looks busy.

Obviously university management believes we're all nerds with kidney problems

When exactly is anyone going to have time to sit down and go through the tens of thousands of pages that will be produced by this pointless exercise?

It's certainly far from being a one-off problem. Anyone (supposedly everyone, but few departments seem to give a toss) who has been on the receiving end of PDP will know what I'm talking about. Short for Personal Development Plans, they're intended to make sure that we're all well-rounded individuals who stand half a chance of getting a job when we leave. The plans are similar to the services offered at the Careers Service, but powered by a 10-Watt bulb.

It's not surprising to find that the university is not doing particularly well under this paper burden. This year we have dropped in the *Times's* university ratings to number 22. It's hardly surprising; if everyone has to fill in forms all the time (quite literally now in the case of teaching staff) then no-one has any time left to get on with some actual learning.

And this is having an effect on the lucrative cash cows that are international students. Students from abroad provide a significant portion of any

university's cash flow, so every institution in the land is trying to pack out the lecture theatres with them. But whilst Cardiff University as a whole has experienced a rise of 9% in applications this year - purely because Wales doesn't have top-up fees - the rise in the number of international applications is such a minor change that it registers as 0%.

To some extent this can be attributed to the government's nutjob new rules and charges for visas, which have put off a lot of people from coming here. But there are more specific reasons why international students may well not want to come here.

We are a university that seemingly has more bean counters than teaching staff

First off, the Uni gets a sizeable portion of its money from the Assembly, which it cannot afford to keep up, and from international students, who are losing interest in coming here. Two of the major monetary reasons for international students coming here are looking pretty insecure. If we're stopped from having top-up fees for a whole year then it's going to be hard to keep up with the other universities. Then there's only one way we're going to be going in the ratings.

As if the overall number of international students wasn't enough of a problem, the countries from which they come from make it even more of a problem. Half of all applications come from China, India and Malaysia, but the prospects of getting more students from these three seem slim.

With the native universities in all three countries improving rapidly, as well as increasing competition over the ones that still want to come to the West to study, there's little reason for them to choose to come here - the numbers for all three are already negligible or falling.

Still, as long as we are a university that seemingly has more bean counters than teaching staff, we'll at least be able to look at the god-awful result in easy-to-read tables. That'll get us educated.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: Not for you

Every little hell

All of the noncing about surrounding the new Tesco Express on Salisbury Road has bought the usual arguments about how the company is taking over our lives screaming back into our minds.

Which, of course, is fair enough; the half an hour brawl it takes just to buy a can of soup in the eighth level of hell that is Tesco Metro pays testament to that.

But there's a pretty easy shorthand that is developing which people use when they feel like slagging off supermarkets. Bleat on a little bit about trampling on community spirit and everyone knows full well what you're talking about.

But it's worth remembering that, for an entire generation of people, supermarkets were truly revolutionary. They liberated women

from spending half their time walking between shops, and meant access to affordable food for all.

Sod all this talk of community spirit (like you even know your neighbours' names) and the rights of small shopkeepers; without supermarkets, women would still be stuck chained to the trolley, if not the kitchen sink.

This isn't to say that Tesco Express should be welcomed with open arms; I for one won't be shopping there. But we have a freedom to make that decision because, by and large, every student here is middle class enough to choose where they shop. (It's also worth noting here that just because your Mum is a teacher and you lived in a council house until you were seven does NOT mean you're working class).

We have a choice as to where we shop. But when people start getting up on their high moral horse about the fact they won't go to Tesco, be sure to push them off again. For an entire generation of people before us, and still for many people today, supermarkets aren't a big evil; they're the only way to be able to afford to live.

BOYCOTT PEOPLE & PLANET

The lost motion from the Union AGM, February 15, Great Hall:

AGM NOTES:

- 1) People and Planet propose a boycott of themselves, having run out of other things to try and ban.
- 2) The society in question stand accused of imprisoning and torturing over 400 students every year at the AGM, with prolonged, indignant and self-righteous bollocks.
- 3) The organisation plays malicious mind games with poor Cardiff students. They advocate non-violent action, but their intoxicating combination of heady fragrances, frightening appearance and outright questionable existence lead many people to want to do just that.
- 4) Have consistently undermined proper market channels, trying to flood First World markets with their inferior 'Fair Trade' products against the will of the natives. Do you really want to deny people their Kit Kat and Coke breaks, just for the sake of a few pence a day?
- 5) None of their mothers like them.
- 6) In 1933, it was largely People and Planet members who voted for Adolf Hitler.
- 7) No-one cares about human rights that much.



PLANET: Cared for by morons

AGM RESOLVES:

- 1) To remove People and Planet members as quickly and humanely as possible*
- 2) To ban all copies of the *Socialist Worker* and *New Internationalist* from University property, on oxymoronic grounds.
- 3) That Kit Kats shall be resurrected immediately and all this Divine Bar nonsense shall be removed forthwith
- 4) That I'm really finking glad I graduate in a few months and will never have to have these stinking fools in my face ever again.

*subject to the availability of Fox Hunting Soc.

