

Lessons learned | *felix*

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Introduction

The *felix* editor-in-chief is a largely independent role. Knowledge on the particulars of the role can often be lost from one year to the next. It was deemed appropriate that as current *felix* editor, I produce a 'Lessons Learned' report six months in, to assist the Union in supporting the next *felix* editor with their transition into the role and their general duties.

1 | Media law training

One of the most crucial responsibilities of the *felix* editor is legal liability. With publishing come legal risks, making at least a rudimentary media law course essential, not only to ensure the paper and the Union are legally protected, but also for the peace of mind and mental health of the *felix* editor.

Despite Grace Rahman highly insisting her successor get media law training as soon as possible, there was no support by the Union in helping me find an appropriate course. This led to me missing some great opportunities for media training and having to squeeze in a sub-optimal course at a sub-optimal time for the paper.

I suggest that from now on the Union, in conjunction with the current *felix* editor at the time, identify an appropriate course in time for the new editor to comfortably enroll in, preferably before the end of Summer term.

2 | Website updates

Any major website overhauls / updates should be done before the beginning of term. Plans to update the website at a later date may inhibit readership but will most likely remain unfulfilled due to the time constraints of the role.

3 | Adobe training

Though usually *felix* editors will have come from the editorial team and have some experience with the Adobe suite (Indesign, Photoshop, Illustrator) the role of the *felix* editor requires a whole different level of Adobe literacy.

Currently editors need to train themselves and some do so with a greater success rate than others. Regardless it's undeniable that bringing in a specialist for even a few days of training would greatly help reduce the steepness of the software-learning curve.

4 | HR management

This role involves directly managing student volunteers. Just the editorial team can include over 40 people, and that's without including many regular and casual contributors. There will be situations where the *felix* editor will need to be firm, show authority and at points even adopt a pastoral role. It would be good to have some rudimentary training to support the *felix* editor with this aspect of the role.

5 | Committee

It is important to have a full committee with defined roles from the very beginning of the *felix* editor's term. A lack of a committee will only inhibit the *felix* editor's work and will cause a lag in important tasks that need doing throughout the year. It is important that the Union understands and encourages an EGM if necessary, even if it's out of term.

6 | Forming C&S ties

Though the *felix* editor might expect their editorial team to take upon them a proactive strategy of commissioning content, it is likely that the editor themselves will have to actively try and form ties with a range of societies, campaigns and other student bodies in order to effectively commission appropriate content on a weekly basis.

To do this the *felix* editor should try to engage in as many social events as possible and establish at the very least correspondence with groups of interest.

The Union can help the *felix* editor by making them aware of and invite them to any major events organised by the Union and College in a timely manner, as well as offering complimentary entry to at least a small number of *felix* members for the purpose of networking.

7 | Proactively growing the editorial team

Undeniably the most vital resource the editor of *felix* has is their editorial team. A high number of good, reliable editors not only greatly adds to the quality of the paper but really makes a difference to the *felix* editor's workload and mental health.

It is often assumed that interested parties will come up and ask for an editorial position. But *felix*, given the high quality of our product, can be intimidating. The *felix* editor should recognise that and make sure they recognise good writers and their potential as editors. The *felix* editor should not be afraid to suggest an editorial role to casual writers, neither should they be afraid of taking away editorial responsibilities and credit from editors who are no longer contributing to the editorial process.

8 | Socials

felix is a club and inherently has a social dimension. It is easy for the *felix* editor as they are a sabbatical officer, to forget this. However the social aspect of the club can be a major driver for membership and participation in the making of *felix*.

I suggest the *felix* editor make sure the social aspect of the club is not lost, by effectively delegating social duties to one of the existing committee members, or by creating a new role.

9 | Social Media

It is important to remember social media. This year there has been a more rigorous approach to our Facebook activity. We try to schedule the entire week's posts on the Friday

and share as much of the content of the paper within the week. I think this has increased the paper's visibility though as of yet I have not had the time or the know how, to assess this.

Our twitter activity has not been quite as strong. Our instagram game is non-existent. It would be good to have internal support here as well, by delegating some of the social media work to *felix* members. This has to be done carefully though to represent the brand of *felix*.

There are plans for the creation of at least a LinkedIn profile that will help connect alumni, especially since many have influential positions in global media.

10 | It gets better

When I first started, creating the paper was a monumental task. My inexperience, in combination with refractory lag of my editorial team as they were adjusting to a completely new environment and way of working (which admittedly was a result of my pretty comprehensive overhaul), meant long hours and a paper of varying quality and content.

The first term was extremely stressful and detrimental to my health. It would have been nice to have had some support, even if it came in the form of pastoral care.

Things of course are much better now. The paper has reached a really good point , both in content, appearance, frequency of errors, time costs and overall satisfaction with the final product. Naturally this has greatly relieved my stress levels.

It's important to convey that to the prospective/ future *felix* editors. Even though I was personally told by my predecessor, the reality of the situation didn't quite strike me until I started the weekly routine that comes with printing *felix*. I'd like to see more emotional/ psychological support for the role but I feel unqualified to make suggestions.