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## Russell group? Who cares?



By [Josh Boswell](#), Deputy Editor (2012/13)

Tuesday 18 June 2013

Scandal and outrage abound: an exclusive in the Times Higher Education (THE) Supplement had recently exposed the Russell group as a money-spinning lobbyists' circle-jerk after a secretly filmed senior representative said York was allowed a seat at the table not as a "jewel in the crown" of British Universities, but merely for "moolah in the bank".

Or rather, it would have done, had the story not been a complete fabrication, as is every article in The Poppletorian, THE's newsfeed of a fictitious university.

In my naïve journalistic fervour, I shared this as gospel on Facebook, and elicited responses from similarly duped students. Naturally, when I discovered The Poppletorian was as sincere as a politician's promise, I felt rather silly.

But there is some truth to be salvaged from the now painfully obvious lies, and that is in the your reactions – students of a prestigious Russell Group university.

You see, nobody cared. At all. York's prestige, its national standing, its governmental influence: all were completely undermined by this "sting". But the student response was, perhaps understandably, a resounding "meh".

What does this say about us? That we're a bunch of apolitical, bovinely docile apathetics? Perhaps.

I have a more heartening explanation though. Maybe we don't care because at the end of the day whether York is in, out, or shaking it all about in the Russell group makes very little difference to us as students.

What really matters for one's uni experience, graduate prospects, and academic progression? Picking the right modules, having good lecturers (which is not the same thing as good academics), and getting involved in the hive of student activity on campus.

Graduate employers are looking past the superficial prestige of the Russell group and focusing on who you are, what you've made of your time at York. They want to find out why you're the one for the job. If you've thrown yourself into a society/sports team/charity venture and taken part in interesting and worthwhile activities that give you important life skills, it makes all the difference. Being a "jewel in the crown" does not.

And the fact that nobody I asked in earnest tore their hair asunder and beat their chest in anguish leads me to think we have our priorities right. We know what is important to us – not senior management – about York. And we're the ones in control of what that 'jewel' is worth.

My advice to any of you that would have been concerned by The Poppletorian's fantasy romp: concentrate on enjoying yourself at York. Make the most of it, because before you know it you'll have graduated and then you'll have no teeth and a full colostomy bag and then you'll be dead.

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