



2019-2020 Committee

Alex Auyang
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Michaela Flegrová
Vice-President Education

Francesca d' Agnese
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Zoe Stamoulis
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Karl Lee
RAG Champion

Sung Soo Moon
Broadsheet Editor

Isabelle Zhang
Science Challenge Chair

Aishwarya Chidambaram
Sponsorship & Alumni Officer

Mareya Saba
Welfare Events Officer

Anca Ciona
Web Communications Officer

Isabelle Zhang & Ruben Colindres Zuehlke
Biochemistry Dep. Representatives

Stephanie Cheng & Angharad Smith
Chemistry Dep. Representatives

David Ni & Danitza Iniesta
Biology Dep. Representatives

Aparna Pillai & Anna Mossop
Physics Dep. Representatives

Lorenz Wolf & Arvind Narayan
Maths Dep. Representatives

Royal College of Science Union

Start of Term Council Report

Tuesday November 5th, 2019

President's Report

Alex Auyang

Coming into the RCSU as a relative outsider has been challenging. Getting a handle on the intricacies of Union bureaucracy with little to no training, combined with an understandably scattered committee, made the planning of RCSU Freshers' Fortnight difficult.

Despite this, things have been going rather swimmingly for us. Event turnouts have been high, and our committee members are settling into their roles nicely. Additionally, the office has been renovated, providing a space for the committee to work and bond.

This year's approach to the RCSU is outlined in this report alongside an update on each of our activity strands. While being a newcomer was difficult at first, it has also provided some fresh eyes for identifying the RCSU's internal inefficiencies. These are a few overarching objectives that I would like to achieve during my presidency.

- Increasing engagement within the RCSU student body.
- Additional interaction between the different departments of the RCSU. Particularly supporting cross-departmental events on the departmental society level.
- Spending more of our budget on welfare and academic activities rather than social events.
- Improving the administration of the RCSU, with a focus on handovers and documentation of events. This will reduce knowledge leakage between committees.

Some miscellaneous concerns include updating the RCSU's logo, creating a mascot bearer role, and bringing back/creating more RCSU traditions.

I am open to questions on any aspect of this report but be advised that I may be unable to immediately provide an answer to technical aspects that may be in the realm of individual officers.



Financial and Management Report

Cameron Mills

The RCSU has begun the new academic year with a positive financial outlook; with an opening balance of £14,227.27. The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Imperial College Union has continued to financially support the RCSU; allowing us to continue many of our operations and activities. Not only this, but our annual RCSU Autumn Ball generated a profit of just under £550; giving us the opportunity to re-invest this money in student welfare. Many of our other events hosted during Fresher's Fortnight were of low cost and did not exceed their budgets.

Our funding from FoNS amounted to a total of £19,000; consisting of £12,000 for core operations and £7,000 for the Science Challenge. This is a 7.7% increase in the Science Challenge Budget, with hope for increased inclusivity across the RCSU departments and £6,000 of the remaining £12,000 going towards events for the rest of the year. The faculty have also promised to pay for a magnetic lock and new computers for the RCSU office. These additional items have an estimated value of £4000.

Once again, the RCSU was unable to secure sponsorships with corporate partners this year. Plans have been put in place to ensure that sponsorship documents are updated prior to the start of next year's executive committee and more detailed handovers are put in place; allowing next year's committee to successfully obtain sponsors during the summer.

Cohesion with the Department Society Presidents has begun positively, with discussions already underway to increase cooperation involving events and marketing. PhySoc, MathSoc, BiochemSoc and ChemSoc have all managed to secure sponsorships for the year and have run successful freshers' events.

However, BioSoc has begun the year with a debt of £800, preventing them from running substantial events. Discussions are underway to resolve this problem as quickly as possible. The turnout to RCSU events has been heavily biased towards maths and physics students. This seems to be linked to strong departmental societies with good publicity networks and strategies. We are hoping to strengthen the other departmental societies in order to balance the event attendance ratios.

We have been unable to contact SynBio despite multiple attempts of contact. This has prevented us from coordinating our efforts with theirs and has soured relations for the time being.

Activities

Marine Coispeau, Gabriel Michaels, Zoe Stamoulis and Karl Lee

This year, in addition to hosting diverse and successful RCSU events, we also wish to concentrate on increased prior and post event publicity (FB posts, posters, emails, Instagram) as well as keeping detailed records of our events. Our Fresher's fortnight events have been very successful, with the highlight being the RCSU Autumn Ball.

RCSU Pub crawl: 09/10/2019

The first 200 participants were given an RCSU t-shirt to personalize. We started at 6:30 and the Union and ended up at Belushi's. This event had high turnout (roughly 200+ people) and retention rates despite the heavy rain. Jezebel made her much anticipated appearance, and ferried students between pubs. For next year, more supplies for the pub-crawl need to be provided (primarily markers). Special thanks to the Maths and Physics presidents for their help in promoting the pub-crawl.



RCSU Mums and Dads tea and snacks: 07/10/19

The event was open to all RCSU members, particularly those involved in the Mums & Dads scheme. The goals were to provide vertical integration across year groups and provide a service promoting welfare and community. There was a high turnout, which decreased as the food supplies diminished, but a significant number of students stayed until the end of the event. However, some “Mums and dads” did not seem to be aware of the event and therefore the goal of vertical integration across the RCSU was not achieved as well as it could have been. In addition, the typical venue for this event, the Union Dining Hall, could not be booked, as the request was never approved. An alternative space was used instead. The initial booking was completed more than two weeks in advance. Event attendance and quality likely suffered due to the sudden change of space.

RCSU Book Sale: 08/10/19

Like last year, the RCSU sold second-hand Science textbooks from students who no longer needed them. This year, we were based in the Sheffield Foyer, which allowed us to reach a more diverse range of students. However, issues with book cataloguing made the exact pricing of some books difficult. In addition, our card reader request was submitted too late and could not be authorized, so we could only accept cash during the sale.

RCSU Autumn Ball: 15/10/19

The annual autumn ball took place at Ruby Blue in Leicester square. 330 tickets were sold, a 65% increase in ticket sales compared to last year. The dress code was smart/black tie and the peak arrival time was from 11-11:40 pm. Reception of the event was positive. However, the event held in Ruby Blue before ours overran, meaning that we were still trying to clear people out from the previous event when ours was meant to begin. Pictures taken during the night should have been uploaded on the RCSU Instagram and FB page post event.

RCSA young professionals bar night: 24/10/19

The event was hosted to promote discussion between the current RCSU students and graduated alumni over some free drinks at the Union bar. Coordinating with the RCSA was difficult, but ways to improve are being looked at. Despite this, turnout was good, with 120 people joining the RCSA young professionals mailing list.

Upcoming and planned events

- Smaller-scale events such as a potential RCSU pub quiz night at five-six-eight or H bar, a Christmas marathon movie night at the Imperial Cinema and a winter pub crawl.
- Like last year, Revel, a large-scale event collaboration between the RCSU and DocSoc which would take place around February 2020
- RAG events (jail break, bake sales, trampolining...) with RCSU general committee volunteers to help out
- BAHFest (Festival of Bad Ad-hoc Hypotheses), is an RCSU organised science comedy competition. The UK arm of the international event is now going into its 5th year of being hosted at Imperial College. Organization is currently underway, spearheaded by Lloyd James. The first BAHFest committee meeting is taking place on the 6th of November. BAHFest has consistently generated a profit and continues to be one of our key events. We are exploring expansion of the event into more of a full-day programme going forward, which we will be attempting this year.

Further meetings are being planned to discuss and develop these events.



Operations

Francesca d'Agnese, Sung Soo Moon, Isabelle Zhang

Broadsheet

Sung Soo Moon is the current Broadsheet editor. The first weeks of term were focused on recruiting new participants (writers, designers, etc). This process culminated in the Broadsheet launch event on Monday 21/10, at which had about 30 people participating. The aim is to have at least three Broadsheet editions this year, maintaining the standards of previous years and striving to have a content aligned more with the interests of students at Imperial. There were talks about rebranding Broadsheet. These branding changes may be implemented in the following academic year. There have also been suggestions of creating a social media platform for Broadsheet, which could be done, depending on the amount of material the editor receives.

Science Challenge

Isabelle Zhang is the current Science Challenge chair. Guest judges will be confirmed in the next week, so that the launch and finale events can proceed with being finalised. The launch event is planned for Thursday 5/12/19.

Sponsorship & Alumni Affairs

We have recently elected our Sponsorship and Alumni officer, Aishwarya Chidambaram.

We currently have no sponsors, as was the case last year, but the aim is to get more sponsors for this or the next academic year. A new proposal is being drafted, and hopefully will be sent out to previous and potential sponsors.

We are continuing to engage with the RCSA and RCSA Young Professionals in our activities, the first of which was a bar night on Thursday 24/10.

Web Communications

We have recently elected our Web Communications Officer, Anca Ciona. In the meantime, the websites have been maintained by the other members of the RCSU. Web-based communications have been produced by different members of the RCSU, and social media platforms are now used more than they were in previous years. Significant work remains to be done to bring the content and theme of the websites up to date.

Academic Affairs

Michaela Flegrova, Isabelle Zhang, David Ni, Lorenz Wolf, Stephanie Cheng, Aparna Pillai

The Academic Board has been focusing on publicity in the first month of term. A Meet Your Reps Week will take place at the start of November, introducing the academic and wellbeing reps to the students. The academic dep reps have also been publicising the elections aiming for full set of year reps in all departments. Out of the 32 year rep positions, 24 have been filled. Our appointment of David Ni into the role of Biology Dep Rep was also ratified in this election.

The focus of the Academic Board for this academic year will be in the following areas:

- Watching the implementation of the new curriculum and ensuring that any problems are flagged up and fixed for next year's cohort
- Looking into student dissatisfaction as indicated by the NSS, especially in the department of Chemistry
- Looking into surveys and how the results of them are used, especially SOLE
- Empowering the reps to collect feedback throughout the year, and making the roles of reps more known to students



An induction talk introducing all newly elected year reps to their roles will take place at the end of October, followed by a social event attended by volunteers from the RCSU, as well as departmental societies. The aim is to ensure that academic and wellbeing reps feel supported in their roles, and to strengthen the sense of community both in the representation networks and among volunteers. We will have an additional social event for reps later in the year.

Welfare and Wellbeing

Peter Hull, Angharad Smith, Anna Mossop, Danitza Iniesta, Ruben Colindres

The welfare and wellbeing team have got off to a good start; it was a pleasure getting to know the team over the summer holidays and getting started with our initiatives for the year ahead. Our focus so far has been on the following:

- Completing the handovers of all previous representatives where possible.
- Finalisation of the Life Sciences common room.

The focus for our team this year will be:

- Running focused and meaningful wellbeing events for students in the constituent union, including a Welfare Week in the spring term.
- Reinforcing the roles and responsibilities of the wellbeing representatives and giving students a clear idea of how their issues are represented and supported by them.
- Ensuring welfare issues have parity with academic issues in all SSCs and college decision making.
- Seeing the development of the Life Sciences common room through to completion.

- Building a stronger community within natural sciences with healthy attitudes towards welfare issues.
- Start the process for the distribution of free sanitary products and contraceptives across the RCSU for students to use.

Further planned work, jointly managed with the academic board:

- “Meet Your Reps” events, to ensure that students are aware of their representatives and how they can be supported by them.
- RCSU Representative Induction for all new representatives to give them guidance and to give an initial time and space to get to know everyone.

Other Affairs

Mascotry

Due to the cunning of a few RCSU committee members, we managed to snag both Bolt and Spanner from the engineers on week two of term. After our much-deserved gloating, and the ransom demands were met, the mascots were returned.

The sport of mascotry has died down in the past few years but both fun, and good for committee engagement. Given that the other CUs have mascot bearers, it seems fitting the RCSU should as well. Discussion will take place later in the year regarding the creation of a Theta bearer committee position.

RCSU Logo

The current RCSU logo, while thematically appropriate, is disliked by many on committee. Its colour scheme hardly reflects our actual CU colours, and its clip-art-esque aesthetic appears childish. Discussions are taking place regarding an updated logo. Feedback from council would be appreciated regarding our current draft.

