

RSMU Report

Union Council
05/11/2019

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RSMU Overview

1. Introduction
2. Goals as President
3. RSMU Academics
4. RSMU Welfare
5. RSMU Events
6. RSMU Clubs and Societies
7. RSMA
8. RSMU Finances
9. Items for Discussion



Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Royal School of Mines Union's activities so far and any plans for the year. I have detailed my plans and those of my officers below.

We've had a good start to the year, with better-than-expected attendance at our events and an enthusiastic response from new students. We hope to maintain this level of enthusiasm, while also engaging students who have not engaged with the RSMU so far.

Goals As President

1. Increasing profile of RSMU as an academic and welfare support system
2. Developing RSMU outreach programme alongside our Outreach Officer, a newly created role
3. Adapt sufficiently to the significant change in demographic within the RSMU

Goal 1

Increasing profile of RSMU as an academic and welfare support system

President's Update

- A short newsletter with everything that might be relevant to any student at a given time i.e. key dates, regalia sales etc. The aim was to produce a short and well-formatted email that would be sent out to all members at relevant times (1 per term, minimum). This will create a constant flow of communication from the committee to the members, without the emails feeling like spam
 - Added an area at the bottom of the emails for members to advertise their club or society to all members of the RSMU, aiming to promote engagement
 - Had some complaints about communication of Welcome Week events - looking into avenues of communication other than Facebook and email

Representation network

- By the time this report is seen by Council, all Reps will have been elected and contacted by either the RSMU Vice President (Welfare) or RSMU Vice President (Education), depending on their role

Goal 2

Developing RSMU outreach programme

- RSMU Outreach Officer created in 2018/19 constitution change, and first elected in the 2019 Leadership Elections
 - Outreach Officer elected in the 2019 Leadership Elections resigned in late September 2019 - position re-elected in the 2019 Autumn Elections
 - Handover will occur, but Outreach events have been put on hold due to this change
- First outreach event is planned, with a host school set, but date/time/content is yet to be determined
- Our grant proposal from the FoE includes money for Outreach activities, on top of a grant from the Old Centralian's Trust
- Departmental societies are undertaking their own outreach activities and are eager to collaborate with the RSMU
 - Newly elected Outreach Officer will liaise with the DepSocs once handover has been completed



Goal 3

Adapt sufficiently to the drastic change in demographic within the RSMU

Wellbeing Events Officer

This is a new role created with the specific remit of running and advertising events of a more welfare-focused nature

- Hope to dissuade the image of the RSMU as a boisterous drinking society

International Students

Both the Department of Materials and the Department of Earth Science and Engineering have seen significant increases in the proportion of International Students this year

- Vice President (Activities & Events), Vice President (Welfare) and Wellbeing Events Officer are collaborating to create a series of events that will be geared towards International Students and their engagement with the RSMU
- Aim to run a campaign that highlights and celebrates the diversity of the RSMU
- Look into the creation of an RSMU International Officer to represent International Students on the RSMU Committee, which is currently dominated by home students

RSMU Academics

The RSMU Vice-President: Education (formerly ALO) has outlined the following main aims for the coming academic year (expanded upon in the following paragraphs):

1. Increase the **collaboration between the Welfare and Academic** sides.
2. Tackle **integration** and communication between **staff/students, Materials/ESE** to attempt to make the overall experience better.
3. Help **reverse the downward NSS trend in Materials** (or at least stabilise to better reverse it in the coming years).
Return ESE to pre-2016 levels (or at least maintain current levels)
4. **Assessment & Feedback** and **Organisation & Management** are two key metrics that will need to be monitored.

The Welfare and Academic networks both run reasonably well and have proven useful, particularly when staff are receptive. However, recognising that when it comes to being a student these usually go hand-in-hand, the RSMU VPs for Education and Welfare (VPE, VPW) agree that better communication and collaboration would be good.

In this vein, a common target for VPE and VPW is better integration and intermingling of the RSMU population, both vertically and horizontally. The MasterMines RSMU quiz that ran last year proved popular and will ideally return sometime in November.

The increase in communication between departments that don't historically communicate will be challenging. This will occur on different levels such as the running of joint events (e.g. MasterMines) but also on an educational level with feedback and methods from both



sides being echoed across. VPE and VPW will be working closely with the Rep network and both DUGS and Senior Tutors to support this.

Reversing the NSS results is key for Materials this year. This seems to largely be due to a lack of structure that is currently being remediated and will need to be very closely monitored. Complaints about the course are hard to handle but there is a new curriculum that has been rolled out to current first years which will also be monitored.

Both departments took a hit in the assessment and feedback category which both have noted. ESE hopefully have addressed this fully whilst Materials will need to work some more on this.

A particular concern for this year is communication and transparency.

RSMU Welfare

Over the 2019/2020 year the RSMU Vice President (Welfare) (VPW) has outlined the following aims:

1. Increase vertical and horizontal integration within the RSMU. Specifically, this means integration between Staff/Students, Materials/ESE and Academic/Welfare representatives.
2. Continuing to improve student engagement in welfare through running events (with the help of the RSMU welfare events officer) with a wellbeing focus.
3. Continuing to ensure that the RSMU is an inclusive and diverse environment where all feel comfortable to study.

As a result of work being done within the student wellbeing initiative, the presence of the student wellbeing team within the RSMU has grown massively since its introduction in 2017. Much of the work done in the 2018/2019 academic year was geared towards creating a real welfare community in the RSMU as well as establishing the brand of 'wellbeing' through running events such as the themed student/staff tea and coffees. In the year 2019/2020 one of the aims of the VPW will be to continue to run these events, and new events, through the new RSMU Wellbeing Events Co-ordinator.

In addition, it has become clear that it will be imperative to work closely with the RSMU Vice President (Education) (VPE) to monitor and deal with student wellbeing issues which may stem from, or involve, academic issues. In doing so, we hope to make studying and learning in the RSMU as easy as possible for all students. In order to promote integration across all factions in the RSMU, the VPW has started to plan the MasterMines quiz jointly with the VPE to take place at some point in November.

Lastly, the current VPW would like to run a Diversity themed campaign which looks to celebrate culture within the RSMU and bring together students. Discussions have been made at the CWB and Community and Liberation officers are keen to help to provide their perspectives to ensure all students are represented. Moreover, Freshers events have been monitored and will be asked about in a survey to gauge how students found them. It will



be a priority to continue to monitor RSMU events to ensure that there is no offensive chanting or discriminatory behaviour by members.

RSMU Events

Freshers' Fortnight

- We hosted 6 events: Mini Golf (01/10), Pub Crawl (01/10), Oktoberfest (03/10), RSM Olympics (05/10), Bar Night (08/10), and Freshers' Dinner (11/10)
 - Mini Golf: Was very well attended, despite the rain. Groups were staggered to decrease waiting time and students were satisfied with the event (even if they had to skip one very waterlogged hole)
 - Pub Crawl: we went to 6 pubs, removing one from the line-up due to concerns of overcrowding in the venue. Members were shuttled between pubs on Clem, the RSMU mascot, introducing members to our traditions
 - Oktoberfest: new event run on Thursday 3rd October to replace Bar Night after the Bars team would not allow us to book the Union Bar in the first week. Attended by 50 members, and sold better than we were expecting (first 35 tickets sold out in 6 minutes)
 - RSM Olympics: poor attendance, possibly due to communication issues
 - Bar Night: well attended, despite the change in date, reaching capacity (80) in the Union Bar within an hour of the event starting. Capacity was increased to 95 by removing tables from the Bar, although members were still stuck outside. Theme was 'Home Sweet Home' to celebrate the diversity of the RSMU
 - Freshers Dinner: Held at the Radisson Blu Vanderbilt, Gloucester Road, and attended by 90 students. We decreased ticket numbers due to issues with event turnout last year - but we now recognise that last year was likely to have been an anomaly, rather than a trend. One incident of physical violence occurred; the perpetrator has been disciplined in line with our constitutionally defined Misconduct Review Process, and the victim has been directed to the appropriate support networks

RSMU Sports Day

- Due to the bad weather on the day of the Welcome Fair, some of our sports clubs received fewer signups than usual. As such, on Wednesday 23rd October, we ran the RSM Sports Day, an event consisting of demonstrations of each of the 7 sports we offer, which anyone could attend and try out

Future events

- Plans include weekly tea and coffee mornings, the MasterMines quiz, November bar night, NHM ice skating and Christmas drinks reception



RSMU Clubs and Societies

Bottle Match

- Planned for weekend of 21/02/20, this year hosted away at the University of Exeter's Penryn Campus. Budget has been discussed and approved by ICU DPCS and DPFS. Risk Assessment to be completed shortly. Coaches and accommodation booked, thanks to Annie Mao (RSMU Vice President (Clubs and Societies)). College and Union Instagram Takeover has been requested. Grants will be requested in the near future.

DepSocs

- Materials Society (MatSoc) are flourishing, having received sponsorship and are organising a careers fair in late October. Also starting a lecture series, the first of which was held on 15th October
- De la Beche (DLB) are running their first fieldtrip from 08/11/19-10/11/19, with their annual Symposium planned for late January
- Geophysics (GPS) are currently in debt, adhering to plan created by Isabel Wapenhans (GPS President 19/20), Annie Mao (VPCS 19/20) and ICU DPFS and DPCS. Held a field day in the Freshers' Fortnight, with multiple socials planned to make a profit

Sports

- Football and Hockey have both achieved sponsorship. FoE grant proposal includes £120 for Re-Freshers sports activity to boost involvement at the start of the Spring term. Strong set of sign ups across Welcome Fair and RSM Sports Day
- RSMU Lacrosse committee has changed since end of last year - Chair and Secretary resigned, but both positions have now been re-elected

RSMA Collaboration

Relationship between the RSMU and the RSMA remains positive, with the RSMU President and Honorary Secretary attending meetings, as well as the three DepSoc Presidents. I, in my position as RSMU President, act *ex officio* as a Trustee of the Royal School of Mines Association Trust

RSMA Dinner:

- RSMA Dinner planned for November 22nd - currently being marketed to recent graduates and 3rd and 4th year undergraduates
- Guest speaker being decided, but guest attendees include the RSMU and CGCU Presidents, President of the CGCA and the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering

Finances

- RSMA will continue to provide bursaries and hardship funds to RSMU students - aim to increase awareness of the support they offer
- Will continue to provide financial support to the RSMU to facilitate normal function



Transitions from RSMU to RSMA

- Prices for annual RSMA dinner are now lower for recent graduates
- It was discussed for all RSMU members to automatically become RSMA members

Student involvement with RSMA Committee

- RSMU President and Honorary Secretary sit on the RSMA committee, as well as DepSoc Presidents to boost involvement of students on RSMA Committee

RSMU Finances

We are financially healthy! Opening balance of -£8200, awaiting payment of our Faculty of Engineering grant of £3690. We are hoping to also acquire grants from the Royal School of Mines Association to facilitate Bottle Match and other activities as well as from the Department of Materials and the Department of Earth Science and Engineering (-£1500, similar to previous years), although this process has not yet begun.

Most sports clubs and DepSocs are in good financial shape as well, with the exception of GPS. They are taking steps to make a profit and have arranged a financial contingency plan for the upcoming academic year. GPS hope to continue normal function while alleviating financial strain.

Items for Discussion

International Student Engagement

1. Do you have any suggestions as to how we could best integrate international students into the RSMU community?
2. Do you think we should create an RSMU International Officer?

RSMU Outreach

3. Do you have any experience in the area and could share any advice?
4. Do you have any views on how such an event could run?

If you have any other comments or would like to discuss RSMU activities to a greater depth, you can contact me at rsm.chair@imperial.ac.uk

