

Royal College of Science Union

Minutes of the 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the General Committee

Held at 18:00 on 18th December 2014 at Skempton LT 207

PRESENT:

- Serena Yuen – RCSU President (SY)
- Lucinda Sandon-Allum – RCSU Vice President (Activities) (LSA)
- James Badman – RCSU Honorary Junior Treasurer/Most Valiant Defender of Theta (JB)
- Philip Kent – RCSU Honorary Secretary (PK)
- Jonas de Beukelaer – RCSU Web Communications Officer (JdB)
- Ben Stockton – RCSU Broadsheet Editor (BS)
- Alexander Nash – Biochemistry Departmental Representative (AN)
- Clark Baker – Physics Departmental Representative (CB)
- June Gan – RCSU Science Challenge Chair (JG)
- Zoe Hsu – RCSU Academic Affairs Officer (ZH)
- Nas Andriopoulos – RCSU Vice-President (Operations) (AA)
- Scott Adams – RCSU Events Officer (SA)

APOLOGIES:

- Sinziana Giju – Biology Departmental Representative (SG)
- Annina Sartor – Chemistry Departmental Representative (AS)
- Frederik Piech – RCSU Publicity Officer (FP)
- Arijit Gupta – Maths Departmental Representative (AG)

ABSENT:

- Digant Tyagi – RCSU Sports Officer (DT)
- Kevin Kwong – RCSU RAG Champion (KK)
- Akash Jyoti – RCSU Welfare Officer (AJ)

Observers:

- Nishant Prasad (NP)
- Jake Philips (JP)

Meeting opened at 18:10.

A. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by PK.

NOTED:

1. Nothing to report.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 1ST MEETING

NOTED:

2. A vote was held to pass the minutes.
FOR 10
AGAINST 0
ABSTAIN 1
Passes.

RESOLVED:

- a. To pass the minutes as a true and accurate record.

C. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

RECEIVED: This item was presented by SY.

NOTED:

3. The Operations board has been particularly impressive this term.
4. Many events for ideas have been raised, but few have been implemented.
5. A vote was held to pass the report.
FOR 11
AGAINST 0
ABSTAIN 0
Passes.

RESOLVED:

- a. To accept the report.

D. TREASURER'S REPORT

RECEIVED: This item was presented by JB.

NOTED:

6. Money carry over from the previous year was poor, however next year's committee are expected to receive more money than this year did.
7. There is an aim to start a number of sports clubs this year. JdB asked whether rugby will be considered as a sport club considering reputational issues with the other rugby clubs. JB reported that, because of this, rugby plans are currently on hold.
8. A vote was held to pass the report.
FOR 11
AGAINST 0
ABSTAIN 0
Passes.

RESOLVED:

- a. To accept the report.

E. VICE-PRESIDENT (ACTIVITIES) REPORT

RECEIVED: This item was presented by LSA.

NOTED:

9. The inter-faculty event this term has been incredibly popular and it filled metric.
10. Winter Ball undersold somewhat but the event was still popular and well enjoyed.

11. The Europe trip has been axed due to a lack of interest in organisation.
12. SA asked if the trip could take place. JB responded that this would be difficult as the money has been reallocated and holding it at a future date would clash with other events and exams. However, SA agreed to look into it further.

ACTION: SA to look into Europe trip.

13. AA noted that the RCSA could help to organise a comedy trip.
14. NP noted that ArtSoc could help organise a theatre trip in late February or March. LSA suggested SA look into how much interest there would be.

ACTION: SA to look into interest for theatre trips.

15. A vote was held to pass the report.

FOR 11

AGAINST 0

ABSTAIN 0

Passes.

RESOLVED:

- a. To accept the report.

F. VICE-PRESIDENT (OPERATIONS) REPORT

RECEIVED: This item was presented by AA.

NOTED:

16. Sponsorship total so far is around £7,000.
17. Broadsheet's first issue of the year has been outstanding.
18. The website redesign has been going smoothly. There was concern over the colour choice used as it could signify a certain political party. SY suggested that a grey or purple bar with a gold hover, whereas BS suggested gold rather than yellow.
19. AA suggested Welfare Week could take place in the beginning of March. NP commented this may conflict with RAG Week and ArtsFest. However, there was general consensus that this timing is fine although it may conflict with elections
20. A vote was held to pass the report.

FOR 11

AGAINST 0

ABSTAIN 0

Passes.

RESOLVED:

- a. To accept the report.

G. POSTGRADUATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE RCSU

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by SY.

NOTED:

21. There may be the possibility to increase student satisfaction by passing feedback, advice, and training down from postgraduates to undergraduates.
22. AA noted that postgraduate participation in departmental societies is not always low, for example in ChemSoc. AA continued that this may be because of influence from the department to make this happen (especially considering that a large number of chemistry undergraduates go on to further study within the department).
23. ZH asked how this would affect the representation network, to which SY reported the item is up for debate. It is possible for PGs to work with dep reps. ZH's idea was elaborated in

being a good mechanism in providing mentoring advice to UG students interested in postgraduate study.

24. NP mentioned the Physics football tournament had significant interest from PG students, and there was demand to get involved in more. There is overall a need to make membership meaningful to PG students rather than it just being a label. There is a risk of the situation not being appropriate if UGs are telling PGs what they are and are not a member of and hence this could be driven through the GSU. JB replied that the GSU are unlikely to want to do this.
25. JP suggested that membership is built up from a departmental society level, starting with PG reps in each departmental society (like ChemSoc) before the RCSU as a whole. SY agreed this could be a good initial step in communication. There was concern from NP and BS that as PG students tend to congregate in small groups by research group, a PG rep may not be representative of all PG students, and there may not be interest in a PG rep anyway as GSU elections tend to have poor turnout. LSA replied that as some PG students feel there are no avenues open to them to get involved, creating a position would at least be a good first step. AA also noted that some departments have PG (Taught) representatives too.
26. NP pointed out there is some feeling that PGs do not wish to attend UG events as they are "run by a bunch of kids". JP continued in asking what could be done to build relationships between the two study groups. AA argued this would start on a departmental society level, and JB also noted the RCSU cannot run PG only events at the present as it does not fall under our aims and objectives. However, JB continued that a joint event could be created and money is set aside for running this. AA and BS pointed out that if a good event is organised, the stress of running a joint event goes away.
27. JP said overall he wanted to create a platform for PG students to at least get involved. JB agreed that research would be a good place to start, and creating a representative to act as a beacon for ideas would be a good first step.
28. A vote was held on each resolution in turn.

Resolution 1.

FOR	11
AGAINST	0
ABSTAIN	0

Passes.

Resolution 2.

FOR	9
AGAINST	0
ABSTAIN	2

Passes.

RESOLVED:

- a. To campaign at an ICU level for PGs in the Faculty of Natural Sciences to be recognised as Full Members of the RCSU
- b. For PG representatives to be introduced on committees, at least at a departmental level in respective DepSocs.

ACTION: Executive Committee to implement all resolutions

H. OUTCOMING AND INCOMING DEAN OF FONS

RECEIVED: This item was presented by SY.

NOTED:

29. Only interaction with the FoNS at the present is a block grant, Science Challenge, and a number of teaching committees. There is a feeling there should be a stronger connection, especially as a town hall meetings conflicted with the RCSU's representation system and this could have been avoided through communication improvements.
30. The Make a Difference competition is thought to be poorly advertised. ZH asked what the competition is, and noted that the RCSU could likely publicise matters better than the faculty can due to our established communication methods.
31. AA asked what priorities are there for discussion with the incoming Dean, especially considering the block grant as this has remained static over a number of years. JB noted that the RCSU has received £5,000 annually since 2011 for the Science Challenge, and £10,000 since 2008 for general matters. As inflation has changed the value of money significantly since then, there may be an argument for changing the values. SY replied no priorities in mind however representation matters could be clarified.
32. LSA asked if the faculty is involved in Welfare, to which SY noted that these go through departmental officers and not ever the RCSU. JB continued there are a number of tiers of tutors however he is not aware if there is a FoNS allocated College Tutor. There was general concern of the welfare provision in the Department of Life Sciences, however it was felt this may not be something which needs to be pressured to deal with on a faculty level.
33. A vote was held on each resolution in turn.

Resolution 1.

FOR	11
AGAINST	0
ABSTAIN	0

Passes.

Resolution 2.

FOR	4
AGAINST	2
ABSTAIN	5

Passes.

Resolution 3.

FOR	10
AGAINST	0
ABSTAIN	1

Resolution 4.

FOR	10
AGAINST	0
ABSTAIN	1

Resolution 5.

FOR	10
AGAINST	0
ABSTAIN	1

RESOLVED:

- a. For a vote of thanks to be given to Professor Dallman in return for all her work and cooperation since she was appointed as Dean of FoNS.
- b. To work with the FoNS to combine resources and help develop Make A Difference into a bigger and more widely publicised competition.
- c. To clarify the extent of which the RCSU and FoNS each get involved in academic representation
- d. To meet with Tom Welton next term to identify any areas of improvement from the perspective of the FoNS
- e. To work with FoNS and ICU where appropriate to implement the above resolutions

ACTION: SY to send thanks to Professor Dallman

ACTION: Executive Committee to implement all other resolutions

I. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business.

Meeting ended at 19:20.