

Royal College of Science Union

Minutes of the 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee

Held at 11:00 on 5th October 2014 at the RCSU Office (Sherfield 214D)

PRESENT:

- Zoe Hsu – RCSU Academic Affairs Officer
- Philip Kent – RCSU Honorary Secretary
- Alexander Nash – Biochemistry Departmental Representative
- Clark Baker – Physics Departmental Representative
- Arijit Gupta – Maths Departmental Representative
- Annina Sartor – Chemistry Departmental Representative

APOLOGIES:

- Serena Yuen – RCSU President
- Sinziana Giju – Biology Departmental Representative

ABSENT:

None

OBSERVERS:

None

Meeting opened at 11:15.

A. CHAIR'S WELCOME

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by ZH.

NOTED:

1. Thanks were given to everyone who have submitted their handbook entries.
2. Please complete the SSC Checklist for it by the end of the day.

B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE AA COMMITTEE

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by ZH.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the minutes.

C. MATTERS ARISING

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by ZH.

NOTED:

3. It was requested that notifications are received at least one week before.

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4. ZH will aim to attend at least one SSC meeting from each department.
5. Most departments appear to have two meetings per term however some (i.e. Physics) have them more often.

D. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by each dep rep in turn.

NOTED:

6. CB stated that Physics have nothing to report aside from the department organising Mums and Dads events.
7. AG noted that there has been a discussion with the BioChemistry UG office regarding Panopto. Some academics currently oppose the use of the service, however the lecture theatres are equipped to use it.
8. Other departments have nothing to report.

E. REP HANDBOOK

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by ZH.

NOTED:

9. ZH has spoken to the Deputy President (Education) who may wish to contribute to the handbook.
10. All contacts have been contributed, thanks were given for the effort of the committee.
11. There is concern that the handbook is quite wordy; although this can be fixed with pictures.

F. PANOPTO UPDATE

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by ZH.

NOTED:

12. AS mentioned that Panopto is working well with Chemistry UG years 1+2; LTC which is used by UG 3 has a poor camera which makes seeing the writing on the whiteboard difficult.
13. Most lecturers in Chemistry are on board, with panopto auto scheduled; however there are still issues with ensuring lectures are recorded when a lecture is rescheduled.
14. CB stated that the situation in Physics is similar.
15. AN mentioned that Earth Sciences and Engineering have set a good example to follow.
16. It was suggested that Chemistry academics could talk to Biochemistry to help increase Panopto uptake in Life Sciences.
17. AS also noted that the Chemistry Department are trialling live streaming to homes this year. There is concern that some people won't turn up to the lectures, which may upset staff and leave to removal of the system. However, the situation in Chemistry can be monitored as an example for other departments to follow.

G. YEAR REP ELECTIONS

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by PK.

NOTED:

18. PK informed the committee that the names of people running for the elections will not be available until after nominations close; however a count for the number of people running is likely to be available upon request. This may be useful for targeting shoutouts.

H. RCSU AFFAIRS

RECEIVED: This item was verbally presented by PK.

NOTED:

19. PK informed the committee that free tickets to the RCSU Ball will only be available to departmental representatives who contribute positively to the operations of the RCSU as a whole, in line with other RCSU Officers. All officers not entitled to a free ticket may still buy one at full price, with their ticket reserved.
20. Freebies available at freshers fair should not be pilfered – departmental representatives are only entitled to what any normal member of the RCSU is entitled to. Dep reps may play the Wheel of Fortune.

I. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NOTED:

21. ZH requested that all dep reps are present on yearly facebook groups, as is herself.
22. Some priorities were decided for the year: Panopto; cutting down on late feedback.
23. With feedback it was suggested that a 'Meet the Marker' scheme could be introduced to improve confidence in the system.
24. It was noted that in some departments, some lecturers reveal raw exam papers which is inconsistent with College policy.
25. AS noted that Chemistry have exam tutoring sessions for first years after Foundation exams.
26. CB mentioned in Physics a tick/cross per question transcript can be requested; exam feedback on the whole is quite positive.
27. Another solution may be for older years to tutor freshers – this has been trialed in Chemistry and Biochemistry.
28. AS asked what different departments are doing with Mums and Dads.
29. CB replied stating that Physics have a common room party, and termly M&D tutorials.
30. PK stressed that no departments are of an awkward size.
31. AS pointed out in some departments the scheme is run by departmental representatives; in others by departmental societies. Chemistry is the latter.
32. Biochemistry have an introductory meeting with nibbles.
33. PK asked whether it would be preferable to make it more uniform across the faculty whether M&D is run by deptsocs or dep reps. Most reps seemed happy with the arrangement as it stood.
34. Physics are attempting to arrange a 'house system' within tutorial groups.
35. PK alerted the committee to an incoming policy for departmental representative involvement in the rest of the RCSU to clear up any confusion for the future.

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36. The RCSU will likely not be paying to have the handbook professionally printed due to budgetary constraints. It was suggested that the SAC printer is used, or grant could be requested from the relevant ICU committee.
37. There is a complete lack of information for students wanting to go into postgraduate study, especially not for going into study outside of Imperial. For example, Oxbridge deadlines are fast approaching.
38. Many people feel that going into an Imperial PhD is straightforward; however there is appetite for finding information on applying for PhDs in general.
39. A PhD fair was suggested but deemed difficult to implement. Instead, a PhD handbook could be produced?
40. There is an RCSU fair in Feb/March however the timing is inconvenient for PhD schedules; so would only be beneficial for people starting PhDs next year.
41. In a handbook, alumni could be consulted to give a 'real world' experience through contribution of a paragraph each.
42. Some departments have an alumni facebook group, this could be expanded to all departments to aid in finding alumni. Chemistry is one example.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To be decided.

Meeting closed at 12:00.