



ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE UNION

RCSU

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE UNION

End of Year Report

A Summary of the Activities and Operations of the RCSU for the 2016-17 academic year

Compiled by Michael Edwards (RCSU Honorary Secretary and President-elect) on behalf of the General Committee of the RCSU, 2016-2017

Royal College of Science Union
Student Activities Centre
Prince Consort Road
London, SW7 2BB

rcsunion@imperial.ac.uk
020 759 48459

President: Lloyd James

Committee, 2016 - 2017

President - Lloyd James
Vice President (Activities) - Charlotte Hampson
Vice President (Operations) - Sina Lari
Honorary Junior Treasurer - Griffin Farrow
Honorary Secretary - Michael Edwards

Events Officer - Benson Lee
Publicity Officer - Benjamin Collier
RAG Champion - Isabella Withnell
Sports Officer - George Brooks

Broadsheet Editor - Benjamin Sharpless and Thomas Roberts (appointed, acting)
Welfare Officer - Kate Chandler
Academic Affairs Officer - Sinziana Giju
Science Challenge Chair - Rani Mehta
Web Communications Officer - Zack Xiang

Biochemistry Departmental Representative - Georgios Santis
Biology Departmental Representative - Raven Connolly Beng Hung
Chemistry Departmental Representative - Maximilian Moser
Mathematics Departmental Representative - Emma McCracken
Physics Departmental Representative - Abhijay Sood

Activities

DepSoc Activities

The Departmental Societies of the RCSU (BioSoc, BiochemSoc, ChemSoc, Math Soc and PhySoc) have excelled themselves in cultivating community in the Faculty, with a wide variety of events held both individually and with other DepSocs, including those in the CGCU. We've also welcomed Synthetic Biology to our small group of clubs, and after working through some initial funding and administrative issues, the club is growing and expanding. Next year we hope to adopt RCS Rugby from the Incubator and pave the way for RCSU Sports Teams in order to re-establish a competitive rivalry with the other Constituent Unions. Noteworthy outcomes for clubs are as follows:

- All clubs ran highly successful Christmas Dinners or Socials this year.
- ChemSoc have been proactive in developing student-led outreach activities in conjunction with the College Outreach team, which were invited to a Fringe event and the Science Museum Late Night event in November.
- SynBIO were able to obtain subsidised tickets for a popular synthetic biology conference, making the event more accessible to Imperial students and their members.
- Life Sciences have been able to obtain more departmental funding this year, and have worked to develop a positive relationship to ensure further funding from departmental sources is forthcoming.
- PhySoc organised and ran a highly successful tour to Prague for 30 students to see some institutions over there, including some laser installations and a

tokamak. The amount of effort it takes to organise this level of activity is commendable.

Our DepSoc chairs have been incredibly helpful in suggesting improvements to Union and College provision, ranging from an improved buddy / 'Mums and Dads' allocation system to making the procedure for room bookings more transparent, and we are grateful for their engagement in these matters.

At the Colours Committee meeting on the 3rd June, a vote was taken based upon reports on which of our DepSocs was deserving of the title 'Club of the Year'. We can announce that **PhySoc were unanimously voted the Club of the Year** after intense discussion, and would like to congratulate the committee on their award.

Thanks are due to the Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers of the RCSU Departmental Societies for their Management Group facing roles, of whom there are too many to mention in this short report, and the many other DepSoc officers who have put time and effort into providing activities for the students of FoNS over the year, of which there are even more.

Tri Union TakeOver '16

This year's Tri Union Bar Night was held on Thursday 24th of November and was well attended. We were able to organise and pull off the event in a fairly short time frame for which we are grateful to the Beit Venues staff for making time for us. CGCU, RCSU and RSMU came together in this flagship event for inter-CU co-operation and it was a moderate success.

More time needs to be put into the event next year for it to really shine, as well as the allocation of a Wednesday to maximise turnout a la ACC Night, and utilise the Union marketing machine. Next year's Entertainments Board will be focussing on working with Beit Bars staff to make sure we can make this a reality, but early discussions with the other CUs and managers at the Bars seem positive. Our thanks to the people who helped out on the event, and we hope to deliver an event that is even better next year.

Revel '17

Continuing on from the roaring success of the 2016 Rooftop Revel, we held this year's Revel on the 2nd of March at Cirque le Soir in co-operation with the Department of Computing Society. This is fast becoming an annual fixture and we envision the annual Revel ball as superseding our traditional termly ball / club nights.

It was very well attended but reviews of the venue are mixed, with some questioning whether the event was as good as last years. For the amount we spend on Revel, we need to ensure we address any raised concerns with the event to ensure we're investing in the best event we can. In-depth discussions for next year's Revel will take place over the summer break following initial discussions at the RCSU Entertainments Board.

Alumni Engagement

Meetings have been held with the Exec of our alumni association and communications have been productive. The RCSA continue to partly fund our Science Challenge, and this year we partnered with them and the Alumni Office to deliver an Alumni Weekend bar night. This had mixed success as mostly students turned up, but alumni engagement with similar events is set to continue with a little more thought for how to communicate effectively with lay alumni, particularly in the nearby London and Home Counties region.

Operations

Science Challenge X - 2017

This year was of particular importance to the Science Challenge, which was entering its tenth consecutive year. The theme of 'The Future' was chosen by the committee, due to the wide range of material to use and the need for participants to present a coherent and well-considered approach to presenting the view of the future.

The Launch of the Science Challenge was held on Tuesday 24th of January in the Sir Alexander Fleming Building here on campus. It was well attended by students and high school groups, although we did receive some complaints that the event lacked some content and could be further expanded on in future. This is put down to the short time in which certain aspects of the event were planned, which will be changed in future.

We received 110 entries for the Science Challenge, with more coming from high school students than Imperial students. The entries were judged for shortlisting by the Science Challenge committee and sent onwards to our four judges to select a winner. The Final was held at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, during which prizes were handed out. Feedback was highly positive for this event, from the judges and attendees.

Science Challenge over the last ten years has had a strong foundation and we believe that the competition has the sustainability to continue for many more. We look forward to seeing the next Science Challenges, and thank this year's Science Challenge Chair, Rani Mehta, for her excellent service to the Royal College of Science Union, and for organising and executing a highly successful Science Challenge.

BAHFest

The second annual Bad Ad-hoc Hypotheses Festival, or BAHFest London, was held on Saturday 25th March in the Great Hall of Imperial College London. This is part of an initial three year agreement with SMBC and Zach Weinersmith, which can be largely credited to the hard work of our incumbent President, Lloyd James.

We welcomed a panel of major and minor celebrities, including Zach, Tom Scott (a famous YouTube blogger), Simon Singh, the famed science communicator, and the Dean of FoNS Prof. Tom Welton. The event received media attention, our Office

made it into a ScienceGrrl YouTube video, and 700 people attended what was a commendable event, raising the profile of Imperial College London and the Union as establishments of science comedy beyond the already strong reputation we have for science communication.

The event raised significant revenue for the RCSU budget which will be reinvested in the event to provide a compelling case for its continuation, as well as being invested in our extensive Operations network. Initial planning is underway for next year's event, and we have identified a number of key areas in which the College, ICU and RCSU can work together to build the profile of the event and expand to boost revenues taken in by the event.

Activity on Union Council and subcommittees

RCSU Committee members who sit on Council and its subcommittees have been highly active this year in representing the interests of the student body and making the student experience better for everyone across College. A prime example of this activity was the lobbying for College to repeal its punitive Zero Tolerance policy for late submissions, which has been shown to cause significantly more harm than good for the average student at the College. Despite strong initial opposition from the Education and Representation Board, opinion polling of students showed the appetite for such action. Key members behind proposals and this polling were our President, Lloyd James, and the Physics Departmental Representative, Abhijay Sood.

Long overdue reform has also been made to the rules by which the Constituent Unions undertake the traditional Mascotry competition, through an initial proposal and a period of consultation ably assisted by the Union President. The new policy is awaiting final ratification but these publicly available rules are now the basis for mascotry to continue in a sustainable fashion for the years to come.

Along with other CU officers, a paper was submitted to Council to address long held concerns surrounding the 'Tie Clubs' - the information can be found on the Union Council pages. The campaign surrounding the paper energised the student body, and the Council meeting at which the paper was discussed was well attended by lay students. This engagement, although controversial, demonstrates that it is possible to engage the wider student body with the affairs of Council, and the work done on this paper to enthuse students should be decoupled and studied to see whether Union volunteers and staff can learn lessons from the way this campaign was run,

Five Year Plan

The General Committee have been working on a long term strategy for the RCSU to follow in terms of where we should be going as a Union to support the student experience. The finalised document is available upon request at the moment, and will be published on the RCSU website over the summer.

This Plan was mentioned in our Start of Year report, and since then we have consulted with other CU Officers to gain their perspective on where they see CUs in the near future and how they aim to ensure progress is made towards truly effective student representation.

We are happy to take any questions on our Plan.

Broadsheet

We have published two Broadsheets thus far this year and another one is set to arrive before the end of term. Issues with a narrow range of contributors have been raised and will be addressed next year.

Thanks are due to all contributors to the Broadsheet this year, as well as our two Editors, Benjamin Sharpless, who sadly stepped down in the Spring Term, and Thomas Roberts, who stepped up to the job and has been an exemplary volunteer officer for the RCSU.

Welfare Week and initiatives

Our Welfare Officer, Kate Chandler, has been particularly active in suggesting an innovative way to approach RCSU Welfare. Her work in developing a Quiz and Contact system has been excellent, and it will likely be an asset to hand down to the next committee.

Welfare Week 2017 was a particular surprise in the range of activities and resources that were developed to promote what the Union and College can provide in terms of welfare. Kate was successful in getting celebrity endorsement for positive welfare choices, from no less than Great British Bake Off's Selasi. She also organised a CoppaFeel talk to promote screening for breast cancer, and held stalls throughout the South Kensington campus. Thanks are due to Kate, as well as George Brooks and Benjamin Collier, the other RCSU Officers who assisted her in this undertaking

Academic Representation

The RCSU has been central to the academic representation of students in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. There has been at least a moderate presence of student representatives, from Year Reps to the Academic Affairs Officer, at Faculty Staff-Student Committee meetings. On top of this, the departmental representatives have continued to chair meetings on a departmental level, and we have seen examples of good practice in representation across the board.

The ICU Deputy President (Education) has been highly engaged with our representation network, attending our Academic Affairs meetings throughout the year to get a good feel for what the issues are in FoNS. This engagement from the highest level of the Union has been encouraging motivation for our representatives, and we hope the incoming DPE will continue this work.

Thanks are due to our team of Departmental Representatives, Raven Connolly Beng Hung (Biology), Emma McCracken (Mathematics), Maximilian Moser (Chemistry), Georgios Santis (Biochemistry) and Abhijay Sood (Physics), as well as our Academic Affairs Officer, Sinziana Giju. Credit is also due to the many Year representatives who make up the crucial backbone of the representation network.

Inter Constituent Union Relations

We have worked together closely with the CGCU this year on Council matters and events. We never made good on our promise to hold an Inter CU Sports Day, for which we must sincerely apologise to our colleagues over at the CGCU. The key event for CU relations was the Tri Union Bar Night, which has been mentioned.

Other than an attempt during the Spring Term there has been no theft of our beloved Theta and we intend to keep it that way.

RCSU Colours and President's Awards

Nominations were accepted from students until 1st of June, and our Colours Committee meeting was held on Saturday 3rd June. Minutes for this meeting are available on request; a copy including the nominations is available for internal and Union purposes and a concise summary will be made publically available. Amendments were made to the existing regulation on the awarding process due to the short time frame in which it needed to be done, and all efforts were made to ensure a fair awarding process.

The awards for RCSU Colours are as follows:

Name of nominee	Decision of Committee
Ariana Sadr-Hashemi	FULL Colours
Cat Saunders	FULL Colours
Daisy Burris	HALF Colours
Emmanuel Opoku	HALF Colours
Harrison Zhu	FULL Colours
Helen Panteli	HALF Colours
Jack Dawson	HALF Colours
Jenny Scott	HALF Colours
Kenza Tazi	HALF Colours
Lottie Borrill	HALF Colours
Michaela Flegrova	HALF Colours
Morgaine Stiles	HALF Colours
Stephen Davies	FULL Colours
Stephen Savage	FULL Colours
Rhidian Thomas	FULL Colours
Tom French	HALF Colours
Yizhou Yu	HALF Colours
Zac Savage	FULL Colours

As mentioned previously, the RCSU Club of the Year is **RCSU Physics**, and congratulations are due to the committee for their achievement this year.

The following students have been selected by the RCSU President, Lloyd James, for recognition with a President's Award, for their outstanding contribution to the RCSU, the student body of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the College in general.

Thomas Roberts
Rani Mehta
Abhijay Sood
Owen Leech
Alexandre Adler

Congratulations are due to those who are named above, and we thank them for their service over the course of the last year. All of the above will be recognised at the annual Colours Bar Night on Thursday 22nd June, and will receive a certificate and regalia to commemorate their service.

Closing Remarks

Thanks are due to the Union Sabbatical Officers - Nas Andriopoulos, James Cox, Rachel Blythe, Luke McCrone and Emily-Jane Cramphorn - for their outstanding service to the student body over the course of the year. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

Thanks are due to the Union staff for the invaluable support they provide to us on a daily basis. It has been a challenging year for both sides but with the work done in the Union by staff, the work done by student volunteers both within the RCSU and without is made just that bit easier.

Finally, thanks to the General Committee for their excellent work over the course of this year. You are all listed in the start, and you have all done brilliant work over the course of the year, for which the student body is no doubt grateful.