



Royal College of Science Union

Minutes of the 1st meeting of the Science Challenge organising committee

Held at 17:00 on 5th October 2016 at the RCSU Office (Sherfield 214D)

PRESENT:

- Lloyd James – RCSU President (LJ)
- Michael Edwards – RCSU Honorary Secretary (ME)
- Rani Mehta – RCSU Science Challenge Chair (RM) - *Meeting Chair*
- Abhijay Sood - Physics Departmental Representative (AS)

APOLOGIES:

This was a voluntary turnout meeting and as such there are no apologies.

ABSENT:

Most of the presumptive SC committee were on a field trip to South Africa, and so absences were not kept.

OBSERVERS:

Meeting opened at 17:10.

A. Venues

RECEIVED: This item was delivered by RM.

NOTED:

1. Next stages are actual viewings and decisions of venues, questions and assorted administrative efforts - RM was thanked for the work she has put into the preliminary organisation of the event.
2. **The date has been changed for the Launch to be in the start (second week) of the second term (specific date needs to be confirmed), and the Final will now be on the 21st of March.**
3. Venues considered by RM were the Greenwich Planetarium, which can offer a private show and is a generally fancy venue, and the Freemason's Hall in Covent Garden, which is also sufficiently high-class and is cheaper than Greenwich. Both venues have a seating capacity far higher than required, and so there should be no problem.
4. LJ reminded RM to utilise the Union's charitable status in getting preferential quotes to keep costs down.

RESOLVED:

- a. RM to liaise with Event Co-ordinators at the Greenwich Planetarium and the Freemason's Hall to get preferential quotes.

B. Website and Entries

RECEIVED: This item was delivered by RM and LJ.

NOTED:

5. Issues have been raised regarding the website, including its entry verifying process for school entries. This was seen as a potential barrier to entry in some cases.
6. Solutions suggested were: starting a new Wordpress in the same spirit as the C&A website campaign; or asking the previous editor, James Long, to offer his services again.
7. LJ suggested, as a method of verifying student entries, including the name of a 'signed-up' teacher's name that will enable us to keep track of school entries. The teacher would list the interested or entered students and we could simply match names. The current system is too complex to be useful.
8. RM raised concern at the 'manpower' required to sort entries, and suggested simply emailing the Science Challenge account with the entries.

RESOLVED:

- b. A WordPress will be used as the new website with the content of the current website, due to the sustainability of WordPress resources (limited experience required)
- c. RM and LJ to talk to the Web Editor, Zack Xiang, to voice ideas about the redesign.
(Note - discussions around this could feed into the general C&A redesign, and Broadsheet)

C. Theme

RECEIVED: This item was delivered by RM.

NOTED:

9. All Science Challenges have had a specific theme with regards to publicity.
10. LJ asked RM to consider what she wanted from the event and what theme she saw naturally fitting into this event. Importantly, the design can be simple - it just needs a good picture.

RESOLVED:

- d. RM to think about the design of the event.

D. Questions

RECEIVED: This item was delivered by RM.

NOTED:

11. Judges have yet to be invited, but LJ stressed the need to have a 'clamped-down' idea of the question area and style before we lock down judges.
12. In a meeting with Lord Robert Winston, the event's 'Patron' judge, he called for the questions to be more thought-provoking and less technical, more about the communication

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than the science. He was against an Art category as he deemed it too abstract and superficial.

- o An issue arises with the availability of LW. The final was erroneously given as an April date, whereas the plan is to have the final on 21st March. **Follow up.**

13. It was noted that an approach towards 'the right question' rather than inclusive media was the way to go. Suggested questions included "The Biology of Winnie the Pooh", or "The Physics of the Great Gatsby". A poetry section was suggested.
14. Before setting a video category, it was thought prudent to meet and discuss it with potential judges.
15. To maintain the maximum appeal, it was agreed that questions should appeal to a generalist science audience with clear boundaries. We want to avoid a scientific review format similar to a previous question ('The Invisibility Cloak') and more an analysis and communication of what the science is.
16. Discussion of questions followed and can be found as a tabulated appendix.

RESOLVED:

- e. LJ to email LW's secretary to confirm the date of the Final.
- f. RM to contact the Felix Editor, Lef, to get Felix publicity and an interview arranged with LW.

Meeting closed at 18:30.