

Royal College of Science Union

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Science Challenge Organising Committee

Held at 18:00 on 10th November 2016 at the RCSU Office (Sherfield 214D)

PRESENT:

- Lloyd James – RCSU President (LJ)
- Griffin Farrow – RCSU Honorary Junior Treasurer (GF)
- Michael Edwards – RCSU Honorary Secretary (ME)
- Ben Collier – RCSU Publicity Officer (BC)
- Rani Mehta – RCSU Science Challenge Chair (RM)

APOLOGIES:

- Zack Xiang – RCSU Web Communications Officer (ZX)
- Ben Sharpless – RCSU Broadsheet Editor (BS)
- Charlotte Hampson – RCSU Vice-President (Activities) (CH) - *Interim*
- Sinziana Giju – RCSU Academic Affairs Officer (SG)
- Charlotte Hampson – RCSU Events Officer (CH)
- Isabella Withnell – RCSU RAG Champion (IW)
- George Brooks – RCSU Sports Officer (GB)
- Georgios Santis – Biochemistry Departmental Representative (GS)
- Raven Connelly – Biology Departmental Representative (RC)
- Maximilian Moser – Chemistry Departmental Representative (MM)
- Emma McCracken – Maths Departmental Representative (EM)
- Abhijay Sood – Physics Departmental Representative (AS)
- Kate Chandler – RCSU Welfare Officer (KC)

ABSENT:

- Sina Lari – RCSU Vice-President (Operations) (SL)

OBSERVERS:

- None

Meeting opened at 18:10.

A. General Update

RECEIVED: Delivered by RM

NOTED:

1. RM visited the Science Communication Department at College, and got some ideas for restructuring the competition and boosting its appeal. The Departmental Admin suggested the MSc students could be engaged to do the first round of judging before the entries are handed to the judges, instead of the PhD students used in previous iterations of the event. MSc students are postgraduates and are the 'best of both worlds'. A task that MSc's in that department are given as an introduction is to take a strawberry and try to communicate a very theatrical 'death' of that strawberry through pictures or otherwise.
2. With regards to an overarching theme - a theme needs to be set before the judges are invited. In previous years the judges have set the questions based upon a theme. Problems with this last year have led to the change where we set a theme and a format, and set the judges the task of working within our guidelines to something that is to our satisfaction. A loose theme to draw things together will help the direction of the competition.
3. RM has been in touch with the student and College media to promote the event. I, Science are happy to help out, and Felix will provide ad space, and hype across the time that the competition is on. The Broadsheet Editor could also be enlisted for media hype, as the next issue is planned to be printed and released during the period the competition is on. An interview with Lord Winston is planned, and Felix have been invited - ME requested that RM make sure that Felix embargo the interview until such a time as advertising for the Launch is more effective.
4. A redesign of the website is needed to reflect any new theme.
5. Formats for entries are as follows:
 - o A digital category - 'Video' or 'Podcast'?
 - o Prose - an essay and 'feature article' on a certain topic.
 - o Creative writing - TBC?
6. Potential themes are as follows:
 - o *Sustainability as a global challenge - largely negative response, overdone theme.*
 - o *Anniversaries - 10th, 50th, 100th anniversaries in science*
 - o *International Year of Pulses*
 - o ***The Future - science of the future? Looking back from 2116 on 2016 science. Could encompass fusion energy and synthetic biology. The diary of a Scientist looking back on 2016 concepts and techniques.***
 - ME suggested the Futurologist (James Baxter?) who frequently writes in the BBC Focus magazine as a potential judge.
7. Publicity - a two-colour poster with a science image - the two colours will be carried forward and used as the branding for the events and invites. BC suggested using the template of the Revel poster, with multiple images to demonstrate the history of the Challenge and beyond.
8. RM asked whether the main judge for BAHFest, Zack Weinersmith, could be asked to come along to the Final, since it lies around the same time. LJ suggested, since we're covering his travel and accommodation, this could add expense to both the BAHFest and SciChal budgets.

9. Venue - three are up for consideration - **Kew Gardens in Richmond, the Freemasons Hall in Covent Garden, and the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich**. RM presented a spreadsheet with the budget breakdown and said that more funding may be required to cover some extra costs with catering and other items. Some of the caterers provide corkage, which enables some saving on drink.
- Buffet-style dessert whilst the awards are announced was suggested for *Kew Gardens*, as well as a talk from a Kew researcher and a land train trip around the Gardens.
 - *Freemasons Hall* has inflexibility with catering, and could be really expensive. LJ stresses that finances can be extended, as the Faculty have offered further funding. RM was not 100% enthused by the actual suite of rooms on offer at the Hall.
 - *Old Royal Naval College* includes all set-up, but some views could be obstructed by pillars. It was suggested that the event was smaller and so wouldn't have this issue. The grounds were nice, but the connection to Central London is poor, with DLR-only to the area. Security is also required. The venue has a slight issue with U-18s and serving alcohol - some marking system will be needed to make sure this isn't a problem.
 - **Decision - ORNC to be the venue**
 - o Guests are planned to be in the range of 60 - 70 people, and all venues are OK for a music group to play, with a few reservations (public liability insurance, etc).
 - o Canapes at ORNC were estimated at £800, deemed too expensive and cut off.
 - o The ORNC caterer, Ampersand, seem to be flexible and can be asked to provide a cheaper menu, as well as a tasting session.
 - ORNC offers specialist cakes, 'Ships of the Line', which could be a nice touch and cause for extra expenditure. **Needs further discussion.**
 - o Menu was considered for ORNC - Ampersand - a meat/fish option will be offered, and for allergies and dietary requirements, an option will be offered for no extra cost.

RESOLVED:

- a. MSc students to be primary judges
- b. Theme set as 'The Future'.
- c. RM to contact Felix to make sure the interview with Lord Winston is correctly handled and that the content is embargoed until January.
- d. LJ to talk to ZX to arrange changes to website.
- e. Formats and theme chosen.
- f. BC to work on a poster for the Launch.
- g. LJ to contact Zack Weinersmith about attending the Final.
- h. Venue to be **Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich**
- i. To consider 'Ships of the Line'.
- j. RM to liaise with Ampersand Catering.

Minutes

SCO Committee (2nd Meeting)

B. AOB

10. A formal limit of Yr 10 was set for entries. General Committee should circulate the event to their schools.
11. LJ raised the spectre of asking James Long to edit the website. RM stressed we have a Web Officer for a reason.
12. Computer wallpapers - on computers in the Library and in departmental buildings - should be used to hype the competition over the period of the competition.
13. Limit for the entries is as follows -
 - o Prose - 1,500 words
 - o Podcast - <5 mins
 - o Creative Writing - TBC, look into.
14. RM to invite judges over the weekend, using updated judge list and template.

Meeting closed at 20:00.