

Royal College of Science Union

Minutes of the 1st meeting of the Welfare Committee

Held at 18:00 on 20th November 2017 at the RCSU Office (Sherfield 214D)

PRESENT:

- Michael Edwards – RCSU President (ME)
- Michael Suarez – RCSU Honorary Secretary (MS)
- Shervin Sabeghi – RCSU Academic Affairs Officer (SS)
- Chenyu Lin – Maths Departmental Representative (CL)
- Felix Thompson – Chemistry Departmental Representative (FT)
- Natasha Boyd – Biology Departmental Representative (NB)
- Tiah Cudjoe-Cole – Biochemistry Departmental Representative (TC)

APOLOGIES:

Meeting opened at 18:05.

- Arrange next Meetings (meet once a month until the end of the year)
- Updates and Plans

A. Update and Plans from Welfare Officer (SS)

a. RCSU Welfare Officer

Ask for help and advertise the WBRN

SS prompted the DepReps to raise any issues or ask for help if they needed further support. Likewise they should raise awareness to the student body that the wellbeing network exists and it is okay to ask for help. This could for example be done in the Felix through an article - just contact the editor and let him know about the relevance of the topic at Imperial.

Links with Companies

The second issue arising was the idea of forming links with companies for event specific sponsorship - further planning should be discussed at future meetings. SS should create a provisional timeline.

b. BioChemistry

Problems with Mums and Dads

TC raised the issues about Mums and Dads being unsuccessful and having little to no benefit for the first years due to the families never seeing each other after day one. This issue will be raised by ME in CSPB and to union staff. The other Reps (apart from FT and NB) have brought up similar concerns.

Difficulty of integrating international students with home students

Solutions which have been proposed include making them aware of the sports societies at Imperial as well as contacting Rana Khan, the International Liberation Officer.

Deadlines are very close together

Solutions include contacting the senior tutor.

c. Biology

Mums and Dads is going well

Ask your Rep stall in SAF (Information Dropping)

This idea was proposed to raise awareness of both representative networks as it seems that most people have no idea about either Representative Network.

d. Chemistry

Chemistry First Year Representative has resigned

Strong Departmental Support for Awareness

Support for awareness has multiple forms in the Chemistry Department including the Student Experience Officer, offering rewards (i.e. printing credits) for filling out Wellbeing surveys as well as designing and hanging out posters with the relevant information of the WBRN and the contact details if someone wants to seek help (chemwellbeing@ic.ac.uk).

e. Mathematics

The usual stress due to a demanding academic curriculum

It was noted that the workload is in fact getting easier over the last couple of years.

Introduction of a buddy scheme to integrate international people in the next year

Another solution to the integration problem has been suggested by introducing a buddy system, similar to mum's and dad's but run by the DepSocs with specific social events in mind.

B. State of SSCs in Departments

a. Chemistry

Chemistry has a separate WBRN SSC

This includes Year Tutors, DUGS, Student Experience Officer, Dep Rep, Year Reps, Academic Dep Rep

b. BioChem/Biology

State of confusion as currently only an Academic SSC is held

Currently Life Sciences has a joint SSC with all Academic Reps of both Departments and the two Wellbeing Dep Reps from the student side. However, this allows hardly any time for them to raise any wellbeing issues as it is mainly focused on academic issues. NB proposed the solution of rotating Chairs for the SSCs to enforce equal time spent on both academic and wellbeing matters. The Academic Departmental Representatives have refused to cooperate. SS is to talk with the AAO and to encourage the Academic DepReps to find a common ground. Alternative solutions like having separate wellbeing SSCs were mentioned but detailed discussions have to happen on a departmental basis.

c. Maths

No SSC for wellbeing

Liaison officer does part of her job but no interest is shown for the additional SSC. The DepRep seems to have her hands tied.

C. Faculty SSC

The faculty has committed to some funding for the Dep Reps, so they should think about what they want to organise and propose a budget.

D. CWB

It went okay and the possibility of an active bystander training was mentioned to raise awareness amongst students.

E. Respiratory of the RCSU

The idea to create a database where all the information is collected from past years for the future was mentioned.

F. Constitutional Review

The Wellbeing Rep Network should become its own board parallel to the Academic Rep Network, Ops and Ents.

Meeting closed at 19:05.