

Royal College of Science Union

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the General Committee

Held at 18:00 on 27th November 2017 at the RCSU Office (Sherfield 214D)

PRESENT:

- Michael Edwards – RCSU President (ME)
- Michael McGill – RCSU Honorary Junior Treasurer (MM)
- Michael Suarez – RCSU Honorary Secretary (MS)
- Ayush Dharap – RCSU Vice-President (Activities) (AD)
- Becky Neil – RCSU Vice-President (Operations) (BN)
- Abhijay Sood – RCSU Academic Affairs Officer (AS)
- Alex Crew – RCSU Events Officer (AC)
- Rohan Kamath – RCSU RAG Champion (RK)
- Matthew Stone – RCSU Sports Officer (MS)
- Shervin Sabeghi – RCSU Welfare Officer (SS)
- Oscar Scrivens – RCSU Publicity Officer (OS)
- Ivan Tang – RCSU Web Communications Officer (IT)
- Pranavi Agarwal – RCSU Broadsheet Editor (PA)
- Ansh Bhatnagar – RCSU Science Challenge Chair (AB)
- Lidia Ripoll-Sanchez – Biochemistry Departmental Representative (LR)
- Yizhou Yu – Biology Departmental Representative (YY)
- Katerina Stavri – Chemistry Departmental Representative (KS)
- Michael McGill – Maths Departmental Representative (MM)
- Michaela Flegrova – Physics Departmental Representative (MF)

APOLOGIES:

ABSENT:

OBSERVERS:

- Fred Fyles - Felix Editor (FF)

Meeting opened at 18:05.

A. Constitutional Review Update

RECEIVED: The item was delivered by ME, outlined in the document added as an appendix.

NOTED:

1. The need for a Deputy Welfare Officer was confirmed, but an equivalent in the Academic Representation network was disputed. It was argued that the role of a DWO could be diffused through the nascent WBRN, with a lot of the work described as the operational

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aspects of the Welfare Officer role now outlined in WBRN Rep role descriptions. Regardless, going to the extreme of forcing parity to an extreme was undesirable.

2. Discussion around the Publicity Officer role across the boards resulted in the need for specifying their involvement in all boards for communication purposes.
3. Year Reps are formally removed as voting members of the General Committee - an archaic and unused provision. In future, more efforts will be made to ensure they are invited and included in discussions.
4. Concerns were raised regarding the budget for Science Challenge. The need for event-specific sponsorship was raised, as well as the potential for links to other universities.

RESOLVED:

- a. The Executive were empowered to amend and bring a new set of Governing Documents to the next General Committee.

B. Union Democracy Communications

RECEIVED: The item was delivered by AB

NOTED:

5. The Union needs to do more to communicate the efforts of volunteers in the democratic fora of the Union.
6. Concerns were raised as this is perceived to be a failing of the central ICU.
7. It was agreed that this would be a good way to tackle poor communication from the central ICU and to ensure representatives are being held to account.

RESOLVED:

- b. To undertake work to communicate the results of meetings of the ICU where our representatives and Officers are present and acting as the student voice.

C. Felix Talk

RECEIVED: The item was delivered by FF

NOTED:

8. FF gave a brief introduction to the work of Felix and outlined how the paper could be used to promote our activities.
9. ME promoted the opportunity and outlined previous work by RCSU volunteers in the campus media.

RESOLVED:

- c. None

D. Executive and Faculty Representative Reports

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RECEIVED: The item was delivered by the Executive Committee - ME, BN, AD, MS, MM - and the AAO and WO

NOTED:

10. MM outlined the expenditures so far - the budget, after a period of concern, is much healthier than previously considered. Questions can be asked by email regarding the budget.
11. MS has been curating the office space and expenditure on new office supplies has been minimised - including the loss of water for the cooler in the office.
12. VPA reported on the events of the term - widely successful. The proposed Ents Board moving forward was explained. More effective working with the Departmental Societies for promotion and events was proposed. More integration with the activities of ICU RAG was raised by RK.
13. VPO reported on the operations of the Union - the Broadsheet has been ordered and will be released on the 4th. Science Challenge will be launching next week and volunteers are needed for on the night. There will be free food, and the DepSocs have been invited. Website is undergoing an update. BAHFest is all under control.
14. AAO has been present at all departmental SSCs and chaired the Faculty SSC. There is room for improvement in our current working practices. One idea would be to have an overarching discussion theme for each major meeting, such as the NSS or SOLE. Rep Social occurred on the 30th October - the preceding talk was received moderately well. Work on improving SSCs has been undertaken with the Faculty, and how to integrate the WBRN. Academic Board is upcoming.
15. WO outlined the work in each department, and raised the challenge being posed by Physics not having WBRN volunteers in position. Planning for Welfare Week is underway, and a Year Rep in Maths is planning a 'Scientists of Imperial' campaign similar to the successful Medics of Imperial campaign.

RESOLVED:

- d. To accept the reports.

E. GSU Remuneration and the RCSU

RECEIVED: The item was delivered by ME

NOTED:

16. The role of a CU President is hard work, and remuneration for time served could be a positive impact, serving to widen participation in the role. However, there are a range of concerns.
17. The GSU role is not a formal Sabbatical position and is being paid to reduce the pressures on the individual taking on the role, who will inevitably be a PhD student who's research outputs may suffer from their ICU work.
18. AS argued the decision was not sensible due to the poor engagement of the GSU, and stated that the participation of a former OT in the role shows the GSU is on its 'last chance' to demonstrate its effectiveness. Alternatives with either integration into the 'Faculty' CUs or separation into Faculty PG Unions.

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19. The activity of the RCSU President was cited as being variable and it was suggested that the money incentive was a bad incentive which would attract people for the wrong reason.
20. It was suggested that any extra money, rather than going into remuneration, should go to the wider committee or into the general budget, which was widely agreed.

RESOLVED:

- e. To discuss funding with the Faculty at the next opportunity and aim for expansion of the block grant.

Meeting closed at 19:40.