

RCSU Report

A note by Jen Morgan – RCSU President

Academic and Welfare

One of the biggest challenges we faced this year was giving the academic and welfare representation a great big shake up. We hold weekly surgeries with the Academic Affairs Officer, Andreas Esau and Welfare Officer, Vicky Eriksson, on Wednesday lunchtimes for students to drop in and discuss any problems they have. Students can also drop in on any weekday lunchtime when we have a timetabled office rota so two or more members of the committee will always be in there. Last term we have been drawing up an informal paper-and-pen survey. This is based on the NSS picking out the questions where there has been most dissatisfaction and also adding several questions of our own based on services and accommodation as well as more department specific questions. I want to do an informal survey with students that are actually still present (instead of the NSS which asks students opinions when they are graduating). The survey will be conducted by year representatives, led by their department reps. Our goal is to specifically pick out real problems faced by Imperial students so that we can do something about it, not merely generate data.

Early on last term we got all of the year representatives together so we could make sure they knew what their role was and what was expected of them and also gain their feedback and ideas. It was actually quite overwhelming how many of them there are and our office was fit to burst, but nevertheless we found it to be quite a useful exercise.

Last term we had our most successful second hand book sale of recent years, selling over £1000 worth of books. The idea of the book sale is that we collect books from recent graduates and sell them onto freshers who want text books at reasonable prices and then the money made is given back to the original owners. There is an awful lot of work involved and Andreas and Vicky did it very well, so well done to them!

A new academic year and a new office

Our new office is absolutely fantastic. It has the space we need and is great for students to come along and meet us and for us to be able to hold our weekly executive meetings. There have been a few teething problems along the way though. These include our lack of internet access, phone line, lockable storage, general office paraphernalia and being unable to get to our office due to the connecting corridor from the Sheffield walkway being ceremoniously locked by security outside of normal college hours. However, all but the small matter of the phone line have been rectified. The problem we had with the internet is that the previous occupants of our office were on an external network and so new data sockets and cabling had to be installed. ICT were particularly useless about getting anything done in the first place, despite many desperate phone calls, and then they wanted the RCSU to fit the bill. I eventually came across Daniel Mulhall, from the blue cube, who has been superbly helpful and managed to get everything sorted. I strongly recommend him as a contact for any similar problems.

To equip our office with new storage and general office paraphernalia the original plan was to apply for a Harlington Trust Fund grant. Before the application form was handed in, a few members of ICU staff were asked if they knew of anyone that had any of the things we needed going spare. We were very lucky with the timing of that request and it turned out that several college departments were in fact moving offices that very week and so we were donated even more furniture and storage than we had hoped for and we were even able to pass some of it on (the medics now have a

very nice table in their common room!). Many thanks to Becca and Steve! So, no application to the Harlington Trust Fund was required and hopefully a society or club will be able to better spend any available money that they have.

Over the Christmas break swipe card access has been installed to the door of corridor that leads from the walkway to our office. This has the great advantage that we don't have to chase around security to let us in at weekends and in the evenings. We will shortly be getting an LED moving message sign to put in our window so that we can publicise events and activities to our outside view that looks onto the SAF and Chemistry buildings.

Regalia

New regalia is currently in the process of being ordered and when it arrives that shall be going on the ICU website for sale as there's been lots of interest in us getting our own hoodies. The RCSA have also been getting involved with digging out old regalia so we can use the traditional styles. Archives have also been very receptive to our queries and we hope to be going down there soon, not only to look at old regalia but to see what else is stored away.

Media

Broadsheet, the publication of the RCSU, has been of a very high calibre this term with a good number of contributors, many incriminating photographs and expert editing from Alex Guite even though he hasn't had access to our own copy of editing software due to the internet problems faced! So far three issues have been published and with the most recent two we have taken a novel approach to its distribution by copying LondonLite and thrusting copies of Broadsheet into the arms of unsuspecting scientists. This is something the whole executive have been involved with, as after all it is our main expense and mode of communication so we don't want any copies to go to waste.

The RCSU website has been not used to its maximum potential, but this is mainly due to the fact that there were no publicity and communications officers until late into last term and that a large proportion of our links died. Although they are now up and running and postings have become more regular. It has come in useful for online sign ups of the buddy scheme and football tournament teams. Most of our events are also published there. A new year representatives page has been created following our representatives meeting, as well as a very large Science Challenge section. I encourage you all to log onto www.rcsu.org.uk to see our most recent photographs from the Christmas Bar Night!

Felix has kindly published a few columns from the RCSU and this is something we hope to do more of this term.

Events

On Monday 8th Oct we had the most amazing Freshers' Ball ever held by the RCSU! We packed out Zoo Bar & Club on Leicester Square with over 700 of our finest Imperial Freshers – mostly scientists but a few friends from the other faculties as well! We all enjoyed free vodka Red Bulls, champagne and chocolate fountains for just £5. We're putting this record attendance and fabulous fun down to our wonderful guests and our break from tradition! I would also, personally, like to give a big shout out to James Field, RCSU Vice President (Activities) and all his little minions who worked so hard to ensure we had a fantastic night!

We also had a very well attended pub crawl in freshers' week, thanks to our marvellous events officer Dan Teutsch, with over 150 students making their way from the union to Fulham. We actually had to stagger it so as not to make too many bar staff cry. Sadly, Jezebel couldn't join us as she had already been booked out way in advance.

Halloween Bar Night in the Union Bar. Great costumes, many freshers' yards, ghostly competitions and plenty of beer. The only real problem was that we were having problems with health and safety because it had reached maximum capacity, unfortunately, leading to a one-in-one-out policy on the door.

Christmas Bar Night. We absolutely packed DBs and had an overwhelming response to our pound a pint (or glass of wine) all night drinks promotions, which led to us getting through more booze in one night than the RSM has so far this year. There were lots of people on the dance floor to various random ipod tunes! Everyone was given a raffle ticket with their entry and we gave away four top prizes at the end of the night, which were 2 bottles of bubbly, a crate of beer, a digital camera and a playstation2. Union staff have suggested that if we were to do a similar night we should apply for a late licence because the only downside was that our party ended too soon!

Deloitte. We had two events jointly with CGCU with Deloitte giving recruitment talks and advice to our student members.

In the near future we've got the 7-a-side football tournament, Freshers' Week revisited, various bar nights, The Science Challenge, Parents and Alumni Day, the RCSU RAG Ball and associated RCSU RAG events including Queen's Tower Tours, Lecturer's Quiz and also for RAG all of the RCSU executive will be doing a silly sponsored something (e.g. Rob Jarvis and James Field will be getting their legs waxed for a paying audience). The 3 colleges bar night (+ medics!) is also something we hope will manage to get off the ground this term.

Thank you

I'd like to thank my exec for their consistently good attendance to weekly executive meetings and other union committees. I have a very proactive team and they are all a joy to work with. A special thanks goes to David Charles who has worked very hard to secure a number of sponsorship opportunities for us.