

Royal College of Science Union Council Report
A note by the RCSU President David Charles

Handbook and Communications

Over the summer holiday Christina Flanagan (Broadsheet Editor) and I launched an ambitious plan to shake up the way in which we communicate with freshers. A central part of this was to produce a high quality handbook whilst reducing the cost to the RCS executive. Through planning and several months of negotiation we were able to acquire advertisers. The fee charge for advertising covered approximately 93% of the total cost of the handbook. More importantly the handbook was well received by freshers who commented on the “professional but fun” design. In addition, this year we proceeded to write a letter to the freshers’ advertising our events, our buddies system and explaining our role. The idea was to instil a sense of community whilst increase our students awareness of us. I would like to thank Miss Christina Flangan for all of her hard work. I would also like to thank Mr Jovan Nedic for his technical assistance.

New Website!

As part of my plan to reinvigorate our infrastructure I have embarked on a website redevelopment. Phase one of this is almost complete. The website is completely new. Our aim was to create a better platform to interact with our students whilst increasing the flexibility the website making it easier to use and improve. We believe that we have successfully completed these aims. This website should serve the RCS well in the future. The new website is experiencing heavy traffic several times greater than the old website received at this point in last year.

This Year’s Fresher’s Fair

We wished to bring a new excitement back to freshers fair and attract large crowds to our freshers’ fair stall. We used a combination of great freebies and novel entertainments. Specifically on our stall we put out welfare packs these contained:

- Pens
- Pencils
- Notebooks
- Academic Year Calendar
- Sweets
- Condoms
- Information about safe taxi journeys
- The official tube map
- Information about meningitis and what to do about it

This was all contained in a handy RCS cotton drawstring bag. The contents of the bag were provided by sponsors and companies after many hours of negotiation.

Office Equipment

Over the last few years the RCS has suffered from a lack of basic office paraphernalia. We have lacked a phone and our computing equipment has been lacking. I have remedied this by getting a new phone and equipping the office with new phone points. Likewise, our computer problems have remedied and I have set-up a number of new network points. I would like to thank Mr William Dugdale for his assistance and advice.

Autumn Elections

In accordance with the wishes of central union the majority of elections this year have been run via the online voting system. The DPEW is aware of all deviations from this.

Buddies System

The buddies system is running smoothly. We have got greater number of buddies than ever before. Most of the initial buddies meetings have already taken place. These meetings have taken place in packed lecture halls. We have been training buddies using a special buddies training video which acts as a great ice breaker as it is extremely funny. More seriously it illustrates what a good buddy can do for students and what a good buddy shouldn't do. These events have been supported by the use of social events target towards buddies.

Our Events and Entertainments

This year we have had a number of exciting events to tempt the fresher and attract the older crowd. Across the CSC we have had bar night, cocktail evenings and numerous other events. More importantly there is still more to come including our two large events the Gathering (13th October) and the Masquerade Ball (31st October). So far we have taken in over £3000 in online ticket sales alone. The Gathering is packed out. Importantly, funding for the gathering was acquired externally through sponsorship ensuring plenty of free drinks going around.

Media

This year we hope that broadsheet will be better than ever. Over the summer the main objective was to find and acquired advertising revenue. This objective has been achieved and consequently the cost to the RCS has been reduced by 50%. This year we intend to use the "London Lite" style distribution to maximize the distribution of broadsheet.

Regalia

New regalia will be on order shortly and as soon as it arrives it will be on the Imperial College Union website. This has come about because of a great deal of interest in us getting some basic regalia. Soon we shall have tie and shirts these will be of the same design as old RCS regalia. We have been tracking down RCS regalia through the RCSA and archives.

Academic and Welfare Issues

This year the RCSU welfare support system got off to a flying start with our office being transformed into a welfare surgery. Hope fully this will become an important tool for our student in weeks and months to come. As soon as the new representatives are elected we intend to hold a big meeting to let them know their role in the RCS and train them.