



ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE UNION

**RCSU**

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# Start of Term Report

*Union Council – 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016*

Prepared by:

Lloyd James – RCSU President

Michael Edwards – RCSU Honorary Secretary

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## Finances

Prepared by Michael Edwards – RCSU Honorary Secretary and Interim Junior Treasurer.

### FUNDING OVERVIEW

Funding (Code)	Total Amount (£)
Grant (0)	2,459.39
SGL (1)	8,000.54
College (4)	3,864.67
	<b>14,324.60</b>

Financially, RCSU is in a fairly strong position – we've secured the necessary Faculty funding (pending clearing) to run our extensive Operations portfolio, including the Science Challenge, Broadsheet and the standard representation and welfare network, as well as securing sponsorship of £1,000, linking both established and emergent companies to upcoming graduates of the Faculty for employment and networking purposes. On top of this, the previous committee left the RCSU a significant pot of SGL, which has been graciously received.

**Our current net spend from SGL, accounting for non-cleared income and unapproved claims, is £2646.06.** This includes:

- Expenditure on materials for our Freshers' Campaign – including new glassware regalia and the Freshers' Handbook.
- Expenditure on Entertainments, including our perennial Tea Party, the Autumn Ball, and Fresher's Pub Crawl. Loss was made on Autumn Ball due to non-budgeted expenditure and a lowering of ticket prices to compete favourably with a rival event.
- Spending on committee stash (hoodies for the general committee, and polos for the core events team) – this is a traditional expense and marks the committee as a point of contact during events and functions.



## Entertainments

Prepared by Michael Edwards – RCSU Honorary Secretary

As part of its Freshers' provision to welcome the new students, a number of events were planned and implemented, ranging from the 'traditional' to the more inclusive. Our General Committee is commended for the work that they have committed so far in providing a range of excellent events.

Each event is as follows.

- Our Freshers' Pub Crawl (06/10/2016) through South Kensington and Hammersmith saw more than the planned 200 attendants (we ran out of t-

- shirts!) and could have been as high as 300. Feedback is generally positive, although some pubs were not prepared in advance despite being called.
- The annual Tea Party (13/10/2016) saw an attendance of around 130 people across 2 hours in the Union Activity Spaces – overwhelmingly positive feedback, although the amount of food ordered was insufficient (we had requests for more scones!).
  - Our Autumn Ball took a tangent to previously held Freshers' Balls in that we decided to hold a 'fancy' reception in a hotel (The *Chelsea Harbour* in Fulham) with an afterparty (held this year at *Embargo Republica*). Rides were given on our fabulous mascot, Jezebel at the hotel. Feedback on the event has been mixed but generally positive, with some criticism about the lack of food and the price of drinks at the hotel. Also, the afterparty venue failed to fully honour its deals as per the contract and as such there were some issues with drinks prices there. There were also some expected concerns about the change in format of the event, which will be taken on board with our next Ball.
  - A planned Sports Day was postponed due to lack of organisation. We wholeheartedly apologise for the inconvenience caused to our colleagues in the CGCU who had put time into compiling teams. We fully intend to make good this event in March, when the weather takes a turn for the better.

Planned events for the next term include the annual Tri-Union Bar Night, in conjunction with the CGCU and RSMU (pending approval from DPFS and DPCS) and an event collaboration with ICU RAG to hold a charity Winter Ball event close to the end of term.

## *Operations*

Prepared by Lloyd James – RCSU President and Interim Vice President (Operations)

### *Science Challenge*

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Science Challenge, which is being redesigned in light of poor engagement in recent years. We are working on developing a new format for the questions that will hopefully make the competition more enjoyable and rewarding for participants, and result in a higher quality of submission. The launch will take place January 24th and the prize ceremony will take place March 21st.

### *Welfare*

We are currently developing a "quiz and contact" system – one of the new initiatives for RCSU Welfare, which will help ensure that the resources that are already available to students are properly signposted. Not only will this be beneficial for students as it means that they will be able to seek help from the correct people promptly, it will ensure that resources will be used more effectively and efficiently. So far a list of possible issues and contacts required has been made, using categorized areas of concern.

As part of the physical health branch of the three tiered welfare system that is new to RCSU, we are currently organizing an event with the charity "Coppafeel" which encourages people to check themselves for signs of breast cancer, and informs about how to do it properly and what symptoms to be aware of.

### *Academic Affairs*

NSS results have been mixed for the Faculty of Natural Sciences, with Physics in particular suffering a significant drop in score and aspects such as Assessment and Feedback showing low scores across the Board. At our first meeting (observed by the DPE – thanks for attending), we decided that more work needs to be done on publicizing and reporting on student-led change and the concerns of students, and our Rep Team will be using the poor NSS scores to more effectively leverage this change on both a departmental and a Faculty level. The elections mishap has affected all rep teams and meetings with departmental staff have been postponed, much to the ire of our Departmental Representatives.

### *Clubs and Activities*

Prepared by Michael Edwards – RCSU Honorary Secretary

We have met with our Clubs and Activities team twice since the March 2016 election, and support has been provided as per request. Communication has largely been easy between the DepSocs (emails coupled with a Facebook chat). There have been no major scheduling clashes. At the most recent board meeting, concerns were raised regarding:

- The current state of the elections – some of our DepSocs have vacant positions and almost every open position was affected by the circumstances of last week's mishap.
- Implementation of the Mums and Dads scheme – two of our five DepSocs have withdrawn from the Union Mums and Dads scheme and have strongly advised the remaining DepSocs to do the same. They cite the unsuitability of the matching algorithm and the lateness of providing the data to the DepSocs for sorting. We would like to raise this as a concern and seek that some consultation is done in this area.
- Room bookings.

Our DepSocs have also organised and carried out Freshers' events of their own, ranging from pub crawls to an innovative Bubble Football trip planned by BioSoc. We commend them for their efforts in providing activities.

### *Long Term Strategy – the 'Five Year Plan'*

Prepared by Lloyd James – RCSU President

We are developing a 5-Year Plan that aims to refocus our core objectives on 4 areas that we have identified as being critical to our purpose: academic representation, welfare support, science communication, and student engagement. We have outlined a number of specific goals that we will aim to achieve over the coming 5 years, and we are beginning a process of consultation with our members and other relevant parties including ICU. Council will be consulted in due course, likely prior to the Christmas recess. In the meantime, I can be contacted regarding the Plan on my Union email ([rcsupres@ic.ac.uk](mailto:rcsupres@ic.ac.uk)) and will happily discuss any potential additions and your concerns.