



# RSMU Report

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## RSMU Overview

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## Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Royal School of Mines Union's activities so far and any plans for the year. I have detailed my plans and those of my officers below.

Throughout first term we saw low participation rates across both wellbeing focussed events and general events, which was expected of the online nature to the activities. Throughout the next term we hope to increase engagement and expand our range of online activities. We also hope to see an increase in Postgraduate interaction, which has been steadily rising since their inclusion into the RSMU began last term, as well as furthering regalia sales and the continuation of 'Pit Magazine'

## Goals As President for this term

1. Come to conclusive decisions surrounding Bottle Match and put the infrastructure for the event in place.
2. Encourage participation in the 2021 Leadership elections and fill our newly created roles.
3. Support our committee officers and CSP's planning online events to keep interacting with students and continue to exert a presence within the community.



## RSMU Academics

The focus of the Vice President - Education (VPE) for the year has been to make sure that the standard of teaching and academic support services provided by both the Materials Science and Earth Science and Engineering departments have been to as high a level seen in years without remote study. The VPE has attended the Remote Teaching working group and had close communication with student representatives in both departments to ensure their goal is achieved throughout the Autumn term and will continue to do so in Spring. The officer also notes that they are aware the departmental representatives are analysing the NSS results and formulating a response to improve areas of weakness within the RSM's teaching provisions.

In light of an additional lockdown, the VPE is involving themselves in conversations with the union's DPE surrounding support akin to a 'safety net' which can be implemented college wide as well as the need for an easier process for students when self-certifying in mitigating circumstances applications.

## RSMU Welfare

The Vice President - Welfare (VPW) and Wellbeing Events Officer worked in partnership last term to host monthly 'Tea and Biscuits' sessions via Microsoft Teams so that students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and staff could attend. The sessions were themed to instruct how to make specific warm beverages and prompted conversations between attendee's either within or outside of their studies. These events connected students from cohorts that wouldn't normally socialise together in working environments. A well-attended and positively reviewed yoga class provided jointly by the RSMU Welfare team and IC Yoga Society occurred once last term but is planned to go ahead multiple times this term based on the uplifting feedback.

Using the 'Strava' platform an RSMU Group has been created and is described as:

*'a welcoming space for all Royal Miners (staff, students and alumni) to share their activities - from short walks to half marathons, for the most casual to the most intense athletes among our Earth and Materials Scientists and Engineers at Imperial College London. This space will be used to set challenges that we will aim to complete as a team throughout the year as we encourage people to take breaks away from studying to get those endorphins flowing.'*

This new group will be used to build a community made up of RSMU full members, staff, and RSM graduates to encourage exercise or outdoors activity, designed to improve both mental and physical health during the current lockdown and further on into the year.



The main goal for welfare focussed events this term is to provide students with a 'break' from their normal computer activities, encouraging social interaction between our members to prevent loneliness as remote working continues.

The VPW has successfully co-hosted the Faculty of Engineering (FoE) Wellbeing SSC along with the CGCU officer equivalent and worked closely with student representatives within the RSM so far and will continue to do so throughout Spring. A major achievement for the VPW in Autumn was the advocacy and acceptance of the need to appoint a mental health specific support staff member to join the Earth Science and Engineering department, as the only department in FoE to not have access to one. We hope this comes to fruition before the end of the Spring Term.

## RSMU Events

### Autumn Term Events

Throughout Freshers' Fortnight our Vice President - Activities & Events (VPAE) successfully hosted a scavenger hunt, quiz, Netflix party, escape room and virtual dinner. The rest of the term's activity calendar also included a virtual pub crawl and Christmas murder mystery tour. A feedback form was circulated amongst students at the end of Autumn term which had few responses, but generally gave a positive review of the activities provided as well as suggestions to widen our range of events for the rest of the year. As mentioned above, the RSMU Welfare team also held events during this period. The VPAE notes that it has been a struggle to engage with students and numbers attending the events outlined were lower than hoped and expected.

### Upcoming Events

The Spring term events will be held online as was done in Autumn Term. However, if conditions are deemed safe to hold socially distanced in-person events before Easter then the VPAE will attempt to organise events which accommodate this closer to the time.

MasterMines (inter-departmental quiz), online gaming tournaments and wellbeing themed lunchtime filler events have been planned to go ahead over the coming months as well as an online alternative to the Annual Spring Dinner. The VPAE will work closely with the VPW with the organisation of the wellbeing events (e.g., yoga and 'Tea and Biscuits' sessions).

Bottle Match has been postponed to the weekend of June 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, having normally appeared in the calendar in February. Close communications are being held between the RSMU sports club representatives, the opposing Camborne School of Mines (CSM) representatives and both the associated student union staff to reinvent a COVID safe varsity. Currently, the prospect of holding a varsity with spectators is dim, however the Vice President - Clubs and Societies (VPCS) is also planning for a 'players only' event and further to that, a Rugby only event which is the main match that usually concludes who has won 'Bottle'.



## RSMU Clubs and Societies

### DepSocs

- Materials Society (MatSoc) gained multiple new sponsors alongside their usual sponsors this year and have hosted a variety of weekly online activities, as well as producing new merchandise to distribute this term. For the rest of the term, MatSoc will continue organising and providing the 'Beyond University Lecture' (BUL) series and the weekly activities.
- Geology Society have secured sponsorship from BP for their annual symposium "Sustainable Geoscience", although less than in previous years, which will be held virtually this year on the 10<sup>th</sup> February and include talks alongside 2 discussion panels. They also have upcoming lunchtime talks from external speakers planned throughout the term. Overall status and balance of the club is healthy.
- Geophysics (GPS) have secured sponsorship from four companies and will be hosting virtual talks from the company representatives throughout the Spring term. GPS have combined with the Geology Society to compete against other national Earth Science departments in a 'University Challenge' style league and secured a comfortable win in the first round. The society is in a good financial position and looks forward to holding in person events whenever possible.
- Discussions regarding the generation of an 'Earth and Planetary' departmental society occurred before my term as president began. Those discussions haven't been reignited thus far but have potential to in the coming term.

### Sports

- All RSM sports societies have joined the Imperial Athletes scheme and the majority managed to run training sessions when conditions allowed (detailed below)
- RSM Football acquired as much sponsorship as years previous and recruited a hearty number of new members during training sessions at the beginning of Autumn Term.
- RSM Hockey ran training sessions at the beginning of Autumn term but have unfortunately not been able to acquire any sponsorship which has occurred in previous years.
- RSM Tennis, Lacrosse, Cricket and Badminton have not secured any sponsorship deals thus far but have never attempted to in previous years. Badminton is the only club amongst this list which managed to run training in Autumn Term
- RSM Rugby players trained with the IC Rugby team in the Autumn term and plan to search for sponsorship deals closer to the Bottle Match.

## RSMA Collaboration

The relationship between the RSMU and the RSMA remains positive, with the RSMU President and Honorary Secretary attending meetings, as well as the three DepSoc Presidents. I, in my position as RSMU President, act *ex officio* as a Trustee of the Royal School of Mines Association Trust.



The RSMA Dinner, usually held in November was cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

The RSMA Careers event is scheduled to run virtually this year in early March, with a range of speakers across both Earth Science and Materials careers to encourage attendance and thus integration between the 2 departments. The event has been slightly pushed back compared to previous years due to Bottle Match not happening and therefore not restricting the dates and also taking into consideration the dates of Dep Soc and department virtual events to limit screen fatigue of students.

The RSMA Trust Essay competition is very soon to be advertised to both RSMU and CGCU students, further promoting awareness of the RSMA and its Trust and giving younger students the opportunity to have their work published in the Imperial Engineer should the Trust so wish.

Further collaboration has been achieved between the RSMU and RSMA in terms of regalia, by combining design and ordering of pins for both current and past students with common features between the two thus strengthening the link between students and alumni. The process of this also allowed the RSMA to have a greater insight into smaller roles such as regalia within the RSMU and provide financial support where necessary.

In terms of Facebook groups, the RSMU Recent Graduates and the RSMA page still remain separate however actions will be taken this term to ensure that all past/graduating students know where to access the information they wish.

## RSMU Finances

The 75% suspension of the RSMU Finances in Autumn term has caused issue with the upkeep of regalia stock and the purchase of prize gifts for attendees of the RSMU online event series. The continuously fluctuating feasibility of running Bottle Match in a number of different capacities also means that budgeting for the rest of the year has been difficult. The Faculty of Engineering grant and RSMA grant proposals will be drawn up by the end of January with the hope that this income will provide a means of purchasing non-pre-order regalia items and prizes for events as well as wellbeing events and campaigns for the remaining two terms.

Annual budgeting will begin soon for all CSPs in our Management Group, overseen by our VPCS and Treasurer. Some sports clubs have been unable to attain sponsorship contracts this year through their inactivity (COVID induced) and the DepSocs have struggled with slow returns of approval for sponsorship contracts from the Union.

If you have any other comments or would like to discuss RSMU activities to a greater depth, you can contact me at [rsm.chair@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:rsm.chair@imperial.ac.uk)

