

RSMU Report

Union Council
08/11/2022

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RSMU Overview

1. Introduction
2. RSMU Academics
3. RSMU Welfare
4. RSMU Events
5. RSMU Clubs and Societies
6. RSMA Collaboration
7. RSMU Finances



Introduction

The report below gives an overview of the Royal School of Mines Union's activities during the term so far, as well as our goals and plans going forward.

Goals as President for this term

1. Continue to celebrate new and revive lost RSM traditions such as Hill Cup, Mastermines, Women in STEM dinner, and mascotry.
2. Increase member engagement through increased publicity and maintaining diverse event offerings.
3. Encourage greater unity and collaboration across the RSM departments, deptsocs, clubs, and alumni (RSMA).

Goal 1

Continue to celebrate new and revive lost RSM traditions such as Hill Cup, MasterMines, RSM Women in STEM dinner, and mascotry.

Continuing on the efforts of the 21/22 committee who brought back the annual ice-skating trip to the NHM, Christmas Buffet, and Bottle Match after the COVID-induced hiatus, in 2022/23 we endeavour to restart many of the annual activities that haven't been seen since 2018-2019; namely MasterMines: a cross-departmental staff/student quiz, Hill Cup: a multi-part competition, traditionally between the departmental societies: MatSoc, GPS, and Geo(I)Soc, named after a former student, and the RSM Women in STEM dinner, which we plan to reform as a Women in STEM bottomless brunch. The aim of this change is to lower the price point, making the event accessible to a wider range of budgets, avoid the stigma associated with formal dinners, encouraging more diversity in event attendees, and it is hoped that the less formal setting will promote meaningful networking and greater social cohesion.

Some progress has already been made toward this goal, with our first Hill Cup event held during our RSMU Freshers Fortnight. We also recognise the importance of adapting to the times; with the closure of the NHM ice rink, ice skating will be held at Winter Wonderland this year, and given the overlap in the GPS & GeolSoc deptsoc memberships created by the introduction of the Earth & Planetary Science degree in 2019, Hill Cup 22/23 will instead be a competition between the Materials and Earth Science & Engineering (ESE) departments.

Given sufficient funding is available, the RSMU would be willing to collaborate with CGCU and RCSU on a Triunion event, following positive feedback from last year's Triunion Extravaganza (club night) attendees. Previous suggestions have included pub quizzes, bar nights, and hackathons, providing opportunities for mascotry and stimulating healthy rivalry between the constituent unions.

Goal 2

Increase member engagement through increased publicity and maintaining diverse event offerings.

As a union, we are really committed to working towards a more inclusive RSM. Over the past academic year, previous committees have reflected on which subsets of the RSM population are currently underserved/ underrepresented within the RSMU community, and we are adapting our publicity strategy and event offerings accordingly.

- The divide on drinking

In previous years, attendance at RSMU events has been generally ESE-dominated, especially for events involving alcohol. While the reasons for this are complex - such events tend to be well attended by RSM sports teams which are popular with ESE students, etc, it was observed that drinking-free events (e.g. bowling, paintball) were poorly attended overall, but tended to receive high levels of interest from Materials students. This has led us to review how we analyse event success- not just on numbers but by the diversity of attendees it attracts. Other efforts include broadening the selection of non-drinking events we host and reconsidering the way events involving



alcohol are promoted to encourage non-drinkers to attend as all RSMU events are open to everyone and there is never any pressure to drink.

- The Covid vs post-Covid generation.

It has been observed during the 21/22 year, that there are large discrepancies in the degrees of engagement from undergraduates who joined during the pandemic in 2020 (who didn't have the traditional introduction to the RSMU) and the newer cohort of students who joined after (2021 & 2022) with the COVID generation tending to prefer niche CSPs or small-scale gatherings over RSMU wide events. To tackle this, we're looking to take a more localised approach to event promotion, with greater utilisation of social media and physical posters in common rooms to appeal to this cohort as well as working with the deptsocs to implement smaller scale events more relevant to these students.

- Postgraduate inclusion

The need for greater involvement of our postgraduate students has been acknowledged and sought for some time through the creation of the RSMU postgraduate ordinary member role, designed to allow postgraduates to have active input in the RSMU's operations. This role remains vacant and whilst we maintain committed to representing and involving our postgraduate cohort, this is made difficult by a lack of a comprehensive mailing list or alternative channels beyond email to disseminate information.

- Staff involvement

The RSM Christmas Ball used to be a formal, annual dinner which included both staff and students, celebrating a successful first term at the RSM. This event was reformed as a studently-only, smart casual buffet event in 2019 due to the organisational pressures and lack of budget for hosting three formal dinners a year. However, this reform has come at the expense of staff involvement, and maintaining close departmental ties will be essential in order for us to achieve *Goal 3*.

Goal 3

Encourage greater unity and collaboration across the RSM departments, deptsocs, clubs and alumni (RSMA).

There is so much more that unites us than divides us. Especially as the RSM approaches its 175th anniversary in a few years' time, the RSMU is keen to lay the groundwork for its future.

Here are some of the works in progress:

- Review funding provided by departments
Departmental contributions are usually sought annually towards the covering of Bottle Match expenditure. Looking forward to the RSM of future, a new form of financial support has been proposed by the Department of Earth Science & Engineering that would cover all RSMU activities, rather than just the single varsity match. Whilst Bottle Match is likely to remain a prominent part of RSM culture for years to come, the support of RSMU's other activities is always welcomed.
- Seasonal celebrations resolution
Last year, the RSMU trialled running Christmas and Valentine's seasonal campaigns. These events required a lot of manpower to run and often overlapped with the departmental



wellbeing seasonal celebration activities. It was decided that RSMU will not be holding seasonal events this academic year, as these are better run at a departmental level.

- Shared events calendar with deptsocs and clubs
To minimise any calendar conflicts for events within the RSMU and its clubs/ societies this year, dates of all activities are recorded in the Monthly Events Calendar document, updated fortnightly at RSMU general meetings
- RSMA mentoring scheme with departmental reps
In a new collaboration of RSMA and Departmental wellbeing and academic reps, the RSMU is seeking to create the RSMA Mentoring Scheme to help pair alumni knowledge, experience and industry insight to 3rd and 4th years wanting firsthand career advice.

RSMU Academics

The main target of Vice President Education (VPE) this year is to ensure that the quality of fully in-person teaching is maintained for both departments, ESE and Materials in the Royal School of Mines (RSM). Mainly, students are enjoying in-person teaching and the attendance rate is higher than before. Additionally, the VPE and two departmental representatives will strongly focus on Materials department since the Materials department received the lowest score for student satisfaction and ESE received the highest within the faculty of Engineering. VPE will work closely with both the Deputy President (Education) and two departmental representatives within RSM to elevate the student satisfaction in Materials and maintain it in ESE. The VPE has attended several faculty and union meetings and will continue to represent the student voice of RSM at meetings. The VPE and two departmental representatives will keep listening to the student voice at RSM and acting to them to ensure problems are efficiently solved. VPE will endeavor to improve the learning experience of students within RSM by frequent communications with all cohort of both departments.

VPE is very confident that the fully teaching mode this year would be academically successful. To solve the uncertainties of return, all students and staff will need to collaborate together to build an excellent learning environment in the RSM, and VPE is responsible for this.

RSMU Welfare

The Vice-President of Welfare (VPW) continues to uphold the goals of their predecessors, in an environment where we have almost returned to normality and have comfortably transitioned to completely in-person. The VPW aims to maintain and foster a welcoming and caring community within the RSM between the departments. This includes planning events together with the Vice President of Activities & Events (VPAE) whilst ensuring inclusivity. The VPW will attend meetings and arrange catchups to ensure smooth and constructive communication between staff and the student body.

The cohorts are becoming comfortable within their own departments and communities are thriving already. To encourage interdepartmental interaction, the VPW is looking forward to arranging 'Beat-the-Blues' week with VPAE, which may be re-branded as 'Re-Freshers'. For this, a focus will be drawn on inclusive activities covering a wide range of interests such as arts, sports, and de-stressers. Collaboration with societies would be optimal to create the best experience for attending students.



It is important that students feel supported and heard for the whole of their university career. The VPW will work with departmental reps to run schemes, especially during the winter holidays, ensuring everyone has a buddy or group to meet and interact with over the holidays. The VPW will also work with departmental reps to ensure feedback is invited and encouraged. The VPW is looking forward to what this academic year will bring and is hopeful that students will feel seen and heard through our support.

RSMU Events

Autumn Term Events

October	November	December
Oktoberfest (For Returning Students) (Sunday 2 nd of October)	November bar night (Thursday 3 rd November)	Christmas Buffet (Friday 9 th December)
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Freshers Week	Mastermines- Hill Cup pt. 2 (Thursday 17 th November)	Film Night (Friday 16 th December)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Scavenger Hunt (Monday 3rd, ~ 5-6:15 pm) · Bowling (Thursday 6th, 5-6 pm) · Pub Crawl (Tuesday 4th, 7 pm- late) · Paintballing- Hill Cup pt. 1 (Sunday 9th, 1-4 pm) · Freshers bar night (Tuesday 11th, 7-11 pm) · Karaoke w/ VPW (Thursday 13th, 5-6 pm) · Freshers Dinner (Saturday 15th, 7 pm) 	--	
	Ice Skating at Winter Wonderland (Wednesday 23 th November)	

Events throughout the autumn term were held with varying levels of success. The Oktoberfest for the returning students had a decent turnout with around 30-40 people; however, it was expected that more materials would come. Some better ways of communicating with the materials students should be found as they aren't as willing to come to the RSM events as the other department. The first event of the Freshers week, the Scavenger hunt was relatively successful as well, especially with the ESE students already having their mums and dads scheme finalised. More materials students would probably have come if their mums and dads allocations/ meetups had been done beforehand. For next year if the event were to go ahead again, Materials Society should be contacted earlier so that the allocations will be finalised before the Scavenger hunt, which will result in more participation from the materials students. The Pub Crawl was the most attended event of the first week of the Freshers Week with well over 70 people attending, also accompanied by the Clem and Davy. The students wanted to continue the tour even after it was finished, so the last pub should have been one that was



open for longer. The Bowling @ Queens event wasn't well attended, probably due to the late promotion of the event. However, the event attracted a large proportion of materials participants and all attendees had a fun time. The first event of the Week 2 of the Freshers Week was Paintballing, which also acted as Part 1/3 of Hill Cup, which is being brought back this year. Hill Cup is a RSMU tournament (not seen since 2018/19) where students from Materials Society, GPS and Geology Society compete against each other, to see which departmental society will end up on top. Materials won the first part. The Karaoke event (VPW event) wasn't as successful as hoped with the lowest attendance. For the next year, I believe that the VPW event should either be revamped and rebranded or the event should be replaced. The last event was the Freshers Dinner, where we had 100 attendees including two guest Speakers: Jessica A F Wade and Shelley Conroy, who were recommended by Professor David Dye from Materials. They were fantastic speakers and everyone generally enjoyed the food and had a good time.

The rest of the events, tabulated above, are yet to happen. We are expecting a similar turnout for the November Bar night (around 70-80 people). Lecturers will be contacted for the Mastermines this week. Matermines is an event where lecturers and students from the departmental societies compete against each other in a quiz. We are expecting a similar turnout for the Ice Skating compared to last year. The venue will be different as the Natural History Museum will not have an ice rink anymore; however, Winter Wonderland should attract as many, if not more people. For December we will have the Christmas Buffet and hopefully a Film Night. The Film night held during Freshers Fortnight last year was not very successful, so in the upcoming meetings we will be debating how to tackle that in order to attract more and a wider range of students.

Upcoming Events

January	February	March	May	June
ReFreshers week [FKA Beat the Blues]	Pre-Bottle bar night (Thursday 9 th February)	Spring Dinner (Friday 17 th March- elections night)	RSM Gaming Tournament	Mini Golf (TBC)
Hill Cup pt. 3 (Mon 23 rd – Fri 27 th January): assassins/ sports competition /RSM Hackathon	-- Bottle Match (17 th -18 th of February) -- Post-Bottle bar night (Thursday 23 rd February)	-- Tri-Union event (TBC) -- Women in STEM bottomless brunch (Date TBC)		-- History of the RSM exhibition (TBC) -- RSM (charity) sports event- students vs lecturers (Date TBC)

The events after the Autumn Term have been decided for the most part as well, but there might be changes to some of them. Assuming all will happen, January will host the final part of the Hill Cup with a sports theme or a hackathon. The Beat the Blues that the VPW organised last year will be rebranded as ReFreshers as it is hoped that the participation will increase. February will consist of the Bottle Match events and are the events that most RSM students are looking forward to. In March, we will have the Spring Dinner where the following will be announced: RSMU awards, Hill Cup winners and winners of RSMA essay competition/bursaries. Then there is the possibility of the Tri-Union (RSMU, CGCU and RCSU) event happening again. The three unions will work together to host an event that



includes competitive pub quizzes, karaoke nights and possibly a club night. We are also hoping to have a Women in STEM bottomless brunch. We will not be hosting any events on April as it was found to be unsuccessful last year since most students are too busy revising for the exams, including the committee members. However, a gaming tournament can happen with the collaboration of the E-Sports Society to have a relaxed end to the exams. Lastly, in June, we are hoping to have a mini golf event, the History of the RSM exhibition and a RSM charity sports event of students vs lecturers.

RSMU Clubs and Societies

Bottle Match

Bottle Match plans are currently underway, with plans to start serious Bottle Match sports training and secure external sponsorship over the coming months. This 121st Bottle Match will be a home match, held in London over the weekend of the 17th -18th February 2023. In terms of the agreed sports line up, Men's Rugby, Men's Football, Men's Hockey, Women's Hockey, Women's Netball, Men's Badminton, Mixed Badminton, Tennis and Lacrosse have been confirmed, with talks ongoing on the feasibility of holding squash and cricket (premiered in the 2022 (postponed 2021) June Bottle) matches as well.

DepSocs

- Materials Society (MatSoc)

Materials Society (MatSoc) has had a very successful start to the year with three continuing sponsors and a very well-attended first few events including bowling, lunchtime lectures and the careers fair. Students across all year groups are engaged with the society which is something the committee are proud to announce along with the inclusion of postgrads and masters students.

MatSoc is currently pushing for events in collaboration with other societies such as AeroSoc to increase student inclusion . And also continuing to make exciting events for our members for Christmas and New Year's.

- Geology Society

The Geology Society this year is very much looking forward to the Freshers' Fieldtrip, which is happening on the 11-13th November. The society is ready to take 44 students including many freshers to Brecon Beacons! The GeolSoc is starting to prepare lunchtime talks for the end of term and also brainstorming for its annual symposium which will be hosted sometime in February/March! If finances permit, we shall be hosting a Senior Fieldtrip in March as well.

- Geophysics (GPS)

The Geophysics Society (GPS), after a successful Freshers Fair, have planned their first social to Flight Club Victoria on November the 14th and are looking forward to meeting their members, old and new. They are currently securing sponsorship agreements with multiple Geoscience companies while simultaneously organising their first lunchtime academic talk for early December.



RSMA Collaboration

The RSMU and the RSMA continue to have a positive and growing relationship. The RSMU President and Honorary Secretary, as well as the Presidents of all three department societies attend regular meetings with the RSMA committee.

RSMA events:

- The 137th Annual RSMA Dinner is scheduled for the 25th of November 2022, Friday. RSM Alumni and students attend this formal sit-down dinner.
- The RSMA careers evening will go ahead in-person in the Spring Term. It may be re-scheduled for early February instead of holding it in mid-March to avoid clashes with exams, deadlines or field-trips.
- The RSMA Barbeque will go ahead in the Summer Term.

Finances and Funding:

- The RSMA will continue to provide bursaries and hardship funds to RSMU students. There are efforts being made to publicize the RSMA Endowment Fund.
- The RSMA also provides the RSMU with a grant which goes towards Bottle Match, RSMU Spring Dinner and other welfare related events.
- This year, the RSMA has kindly agreed to fund the Geology Society Fresher's Fieldtrip to Brecon Beacons, scheduled from 11th- 13th November 2022.

New initiatives:

- An RSMA Mentoring Scheme is going to be set up, wherein an RSM Alumni is matched with final and/or penultimate year students based on matching career interests to guide them in various career related aspects such as job applications, interviews etc. The Honorary Secretary and President are working with a group in the RSMA and the departmental reps to aid the setting-up of this scheme.
- The RSMU would like to hold a "History of the RSM" exhibition in association with the RSMA to make the students more aware of the RSM's rich cultural evolution and the like. This is planned to be held in the Summer Term or may be organised on a larger scale for the RSM's 175th anniversary.
- Student involvement in the RSMA and its events:
 - The student tickets to all RSMA events are subsidized to promote attendance and aid transitions from RSMU to RSMA.
 - The RSMU President and Honorary Secretary and the Department Society Presidents attend the RSMA committee meetings to boost involvement by keeping RSMA in the loop about all RSMU events.
 - The RSMU President also sits on the RSMA Board of Trustees ex-officio.

RSMU Finances

Opening balance of £2470.78. This was lower compared to previous years as the previous committee did not have sufficient time to receive £3500 of sponsorship and coach fees from our varsity opponents for the extraordinary Bottle Match varsity held in the Summer before the handover.



Currently, we are seeking a grant of £3950 from the Faculty of Engineering, which has seen a significant decrease from last year with only one Bottle Match Varsity being held this year as things return to normality. We would also be seeking a £2500 sponsorship from the Royal School of Mines Association (RSMA) to support our existing and new events, such as the Refreshers' Week.

For donations from the departments within the RSM, the Department of Materials would continue to offer donations on a case-by-case basis according to the event, whereas the Department of Earth Science and Engineering is planning to change a Bottle Match-focused sponsorship into general student funding for organising activities year-round. This may lead to changes in our usual planning and budgeting practices and emphasises the importance of overall financial responsibility.

All three Departmental Societies (Dep Socs) are in a good financial position. The Geology Society would also be seeking sponsorship from the RSMA to support the Freshers' Fieldtrip and their activities. For the Sports Clubs, 3 of them (Football, Hockey, and Netball) in particular did not receive any Union Grant despite completing annual budgeting earlier this year. After getting in touch with the ICU DPCS, this issue would be resolved by having the 3 Sports Clubs apply for the Activities Development Fund (ADF), which would undergo the approval process separately from the ADF committee and by the ICU directly. In the meantime, some sports clubs are considering seeking sponsorship from the RSMA as they await the ADF funding approval. On the other hand, the issue with Imperial Athletes (IA) mentioned in the November 2021 RSMU Union Report has not improved this year. The RSM Sports Clubs remain disadvantaged compared to their ACC counterparts with many of the advantages provided by IA not being available to our Clubs. This has forced our Clubs to seek alternative sources of income to support their activities.

Thank you for your time.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to further discuss RSMU activities, you can get in touch with me at rsmpres@ic.ac.uk

