

RSMU Report

Union Council
05/12/2023

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RSMU Overview

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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. Increase member engagement through increased publicity and maintaining diverse event offerings.
2. Better communications, encourage greater unity and collaboration of the RSMU with the RSM departments, RSM constituent CSPs, IC Union, Faculty of Engineering, and alumni (RSMA)

Goal 1

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. Based on general engagement numbers and attendance during events in the past academic year, we are adapting our events accordingly, to cover more varied types of events, as well as being able to reach a larger target audience. For this we are amending our publicity strategy and event offerings accordingly.

- Changing our event types: We are working to see what events are heavily attended, while what events are not so popular, while also keeping in mind the academic and IC Union activities calendar, to organize the right events at the most convenient possible time to maximize attendance. For example, the Annual Christmas Dinner has been very poorly attended in the past few years, leading us to replace that with a more relaxed bar night–Christmas jumper dress-up event to celebrate the end of term, which is non-ticketed. The aim is to attract more attendance as there is no costs associated with it and doesn't clash with any deadlines.

At the same time, we are striving to include more welfare-based events in our calendar. They are designed to promote community building in a non-drinking atmosphere, hence reducing the pressure on drinking and the overall 'drinking culture' within the RSM. Some of these events are also organized in collaboration with various Imperial Clubs and Societies, and include, but are not limited to, knitting follow-along with IC KnitSock, Gingerbread decorating with IC BakeSoc, Dog petting with IC DogSoc and a free coffee walk with the IC LGBTQ+ network.

- Postgraduate students and staff involvement: Involvement from PG students and staff has always been low in the past years. Since the inclusion of PG students within the RSM, we are striving to increase their engagement with our events, CSPs and traditions. With changing publicity strategies- visual (print and social) media advertising and monthly President update emails going out to all PG students alongside UG students has shown increase in involvement from PG students. We are aiming to invite them to all future events such as Pub Quizzes, Welfare events, dinners, Bottle Match, etc. We are also aiming to increase staff involvement by inviting them to Pub Quizzes and to dinners as guest speakers to promote student-staff interaction, and to keep the staff in the loop of what events and activities are being organized within the RSMU. Both parties are also invited to our Regalia sales, where we aim to do in-person publicity of RSM activities.

The creation of the role of PG Ordinary member allows for postgraduate representation on the RSMU Committee, hence bringing in a different viewpoint to normal RSMU activities.

Goal 2

Better communications, encourage greater unity and collaboration of the RSMU with the RSM departments, RSM constituent CSPs, IC Union, Faculty of Engineering, and alumni (RSMA).

Recognizing the importance of strong relationships between various bodies across the college with the RSMU, the RSMU President and the RSMU are working towards improving such collaborations and encouraging better relationships following from the minimal communications in the past year.

- Attendance at meetings: The RSMU President, Honorary Secretary, VP Welfare, VP Education, VP Clubs & Societies, and Treasurer attend various meetings at IC Union, Faculty and Departmental levels representing the RSMU, its interests, traditions and views, as well as effectively completing the feedback loop with the rest of the committee members. This ensures that all committee members are aware of the RSMU's stance in various aspects of governance and their suggestions are incorporated into the overall working of the RSMU, which is then reflected in the overall working.
- Review funding provided by Departments, Faculty of Engineering and the RSMA: The RSMU Management Group (President, Treasurer and VP Clubs & Societies) are working to review the annual grant proposals to the above three mentioned bodies. The FoE one has been submitted and approved, while work is being carried out to prepare and finalize the RSMA grant proposal, and proposals for departmental donations. The RSMU recognizes the importance of these donations and highly acknowledges the contributions made as these funds are directed towards the planning of RSMU's events, including our flagship Bottle Match.
- Shared events calendar with all RSMU Committee members, including RSM CSP Presidents: Gathering feedback from the RSMU Committee in the past academic year regarding transparency in communications, this year, we are working to ensure smooth and effective communication between all committee members for ease of working and overall functioning. A shared excel spreadsheet has been created with the 2023/24-year calendar, and all events in it are colour coded by type to avoid clashes, and to keep everyone up to speed. Added to this, important resources have been linked in that spreadsheet, and open communication between all members is highly encouraged. Significant improvements have been made this year in this aspect, making all committee members feel highly included.
- RSMA mentoring scheme: RSMU and RSMA, with support from both departments has put together a mentoring scheme, designed for 3rd and 4th year students to get an alumni mentor, to have one-on-one interactions with RSM alumni about career prospects and associated logistics like CVs, interviews, application processes etc. The aim of this scheme is to help students understand the world of industry and academia after graduation from the RSM and hear about post-RSM life from former RSM students. With 72 student sign-ups, the scheme is set to launch by the end of this term.

RSMU Academics

The main target of Vice President Education (VPE) this year is to work closely with both the Deputy President (Education) and two departmental academic 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.

RSMU Welfare

The Vice-President of Welfare (VPW) is going above and beyond the responsibilities outlined by the role to uphold good welfare within the RSM. The VPW aims to maintain and foster a welcoming and caring community within the RSM between the departments. The VPW is working with the RSMU VP Activities & Events, and the RSMU Wellbeing & Events officer to organize various welfare-focused events to promote inclusivity and create a sense of community within the already close-knit RSM. These events so far have been highly successful in terms of attendance and student satisfaction: knitting follow-along with IC KnitSock, Gingerbread decorating with IC BakeSoc, Dog petting with IC DogSoc and a free coffee walk with the IC LGBTQ+ network.

Planning for future events is currently ongoing- plants-related event with IC BotanicalSoc, another DogSoc collaboration, and a potential collaboration with the IC Cinema Soc. The VPW has also established contact with the other Liberation and Community Network Officers and is working with them and the departments to potentially organize stress-busting events during the exam season. The VPW is also the RSM's representative on the FoE sustainability and EDI committees.

RSMU Events

Autumn Term Events

October	November	December
<p>Freshers Fortnight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GeolSoc’s Rock & Talk (05/10/2023) • Fresher’s Pub Crawl (05/10/2023) • RSMU Rounders and Sports Day (08/10/2023) • RSMU x IC KnitSock (09/10/2023) • Fresher’s Bar Night (10/10/2023) • RSMU x IC DogSoc (11/10/2023) • RSM Sports Clubs Night (11/10/2023) • RSMA Social and Bar Night (12/10/2023) • Fresher’s Dinner (14/10/2023) <p>Rest of October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MatSoc Bowling (19/10/2023) • GeophysSoc x RSM Football Pub Night (25/10/2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November Bar Night & Pub Quiz (02/11/2023) • GeolSoc’s Fresher’s Fieldtrip (03/11-05/11 2023) • RSM x IC LGBTQ+ Coffee walk (13/11/2023) • RSMA’s 138th Annual Dinner (24/11/2023) • Regalia sale (23/11-24/11 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSMU x IC BakeSoc (05/12/2023) • RSMU’s Christmas Jumper Day (05/12/2023) • RSMU end-of-term/Christmas celebration Bar night (15/12/2023) • Setting up of RSMU’s Book Club – Dec 2023 • MatSoc’s Christmas Curry (01/12/2023)

Events throughout the autumn term were held with varying levels of success, although all events recorded more attendance than the past academic year due to improved communications and advertising, as well as an engaged cohort. The Pub Crawl was the most attended event of the first week of Freshers Week with attendance of around 100-120 people, also accompanied by Clem. Although the Fresher’s Bar night recorded a slightly lower attendance, the RSMA social and the welfare-based events attracted a larger crowd, due to the variety in the event types. For the first time, the Fresher’s Dinner sold out within a short period of time, and a waiting list of 12 people was recorded, showing the heavy engagement and improvement in organization. Dr Alex Whittaker, Reader in the department of the Earth Science and Engineering was the special guest of the evening, and kindly graced us with his presence and inspiring speech. The efforts put in by the RSMU VP Activities & Events to organize an extremely successful fresher’s fortnight are highly commended. All students and attendees enjoyed the events and are looking forward to another term of events and activities.

The regalia sale was heavily attended by UG and PG students, as well as staff and alumni. The introduction of new items such as socks and beanies in addition to our annual hoodie sale proved to be a beneficial factor in increasing sales, and promotion of RSM merchandise to all target groups.

The efforts of the Regalia Officers are highly commended by the committee, students and staff alike and their creativity is acknowledged.

The RSMU x IC BakeSoc Event has got around 80 sign-ups, so it is expected to be another successful and enjoyable event.

Upcoming Events

January	February	March	May	June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · RSMU x IC Dance Club (TBC) · GeolSoc's Hard Hat painting (19/01/2024) · RSMU Pub Quiz for Charity (25/01/2024) · RSMU x IC DogSoc II (25/01/2024) · RSMU x IC BotanicalSoc (TBC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pre-Bottle Bar Night (20/02/2024) · Bottle Match (23/02-25/02 2024) · Post-Bottle Sports Awards Night (29/02/2023) · RSMU x RSMA Careers evening (TBC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Spring Dinner (09/03/2024) · GeolSoc's Symposium/careers evening (TBC) 	(TBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · RSM takes on Pride (29/06/2024) · RSMA's end-of-year BBQ/Beer'n'bite (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, in terms of dates and general logistics. Events are being planned around the academic calendar and the breaks to maximize attendance and reduce any financial losses to the RSM. Some gaps need to be filled based on any potential ideas and timings. All dates are being carefully chosen and planning for events is underway by dates and scale of the events.

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 weeks and early Spring term. This 122nd Bottle Match will be an away match, held in Cornwall over the weekend of the 23rd – 25th February 2024. In terms of the agreed sports line-up, Men's Rugby, Men's Football, Men's Hockey, Women's Hockey, Women's Netball, Badminton, Tennis, Squash and Lacrosse have been confirmed. The search for accommodation and coaches is ongoing, while planning for the associated bar nights and award ceremonies is also taking place. Forms for trip funds have been submitted and other logistics of the weekend are being worked out by the RSMU President and VP Clubs & Societies.

DepSocs

- Geology Society (GeoSoc): The Geology Society successfully organized their Fresher's Fieldtrip to Forest Green, Dorking, over the 3rd – 5th November 2023. A total of 40 students attended this trip, and highly commended the efforts of the GeoSoc committee. They also organized a Rock painting event during Fresher's Fortnight for students to relax and unwind and socialize with students from all years. They also made sure to hand out their new GeoSoc stickers as freebies at Fresher's fair. The GeoSoc is also brainstorming for its annual symposium which will be hosted sometime in February/March, as well as other career related events and talks through the Spring term.
- Geophysics Society (GPS): The Geophysics Society have also had a successful start to the year by securing sponsorships and re-starting their field geophysics day with proper geophysical equipment at Hyde Park. They have also organized successful lunchtime/evening career talks to promote careers in the geophysical exploration sector. In collaboration with RSM Football, they also organized a pub social night that was well attended. They also had a "create your own earthquake" interactive equipment at their Fresher's Fair stall.
- Materials Society (MatSoc): MatSoc has organized a successful bowling event is working towards its Christmas Curry event. They have also put together several heavily attended lunchtime seminars with various staff members and researchers.

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, and the RSMU President attends all RSMA Trust meetings as an ex-officio trustee.

RSMA events:

- The 138th Annual RSMA Dinner was held on 24th November 2023, Friday, to celebrate RSMA's 150th anniversary.
- 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, funding, and awards:

- 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 awards 3 "100-club" bursary prizes to final year students who have shown excellent commitment to the RSMU while also balancing academic achievements.
- The Illing Essay prize is given to a student who writes an exceptional essay on a scientific topic.
- The RSMA also provides the RSMU with a grant which goes towards Bottle Match, RSMU Spring Dinner and other welfare related events.
- The RSMA has also introduced a "Clem contributions" award to present to the motor club annually, based on their dedication to improving mascotry and Clem's maintenance.
- This year, the RSMA has kindly funded the Geology Society Fresher's Fieldtrip to Forest Green, Dorking from 3rd – 5th November 2023.

New initiatives:

- An RSMA Mentoring Scheme has been 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.
- 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 -£9500. This was due to various reasons: missing deadlines for transaction corrections, not utilizing the past year's grant so not being able to obtain a grant this year under the claim of it being "unused". Added to this, in the past academic year, pending accounts from 2021/22 to receive £3500 of sponsorship and coach fees from our varsity opponents, as well as RSMA donations for the 2022 Barbeque remained extraordinary, and were not accounted for.

Currently, we are on track to receive a grant of £6000 from the Faculty of Engineering. We would also be seeking a £4000 sponsorship from the Royal School of Mines Association (RSMA) to support our existing and new events, and initiatives within regalia, outreach, and welfare.

For donations from the departments within the RSM, we are planning to secure our yearly donations from both the Department of Materials and the Department of Earth Science and Engineering, the amount of which will be decided in due course.

All three Departmental Societies (Dep Socs) are in a good financial position. The Geology Society has sought sponsorship from the RSMA to support the Freshers' Fieldtrip and their activities, while the Geophysics Society has obtained external sponsorships. 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. They are thus looking for other sources of funding like the ADF and funds from the RSMA, to be able to run their training, purchase equipment and host socials.

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