



ROYAL COLLEGE OF SCIENCE UNION

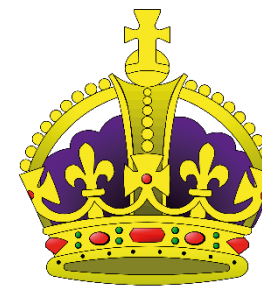
RCSU

# The RCSU Strategy 2018-2021

*‘Represent, Engage, Excite’*

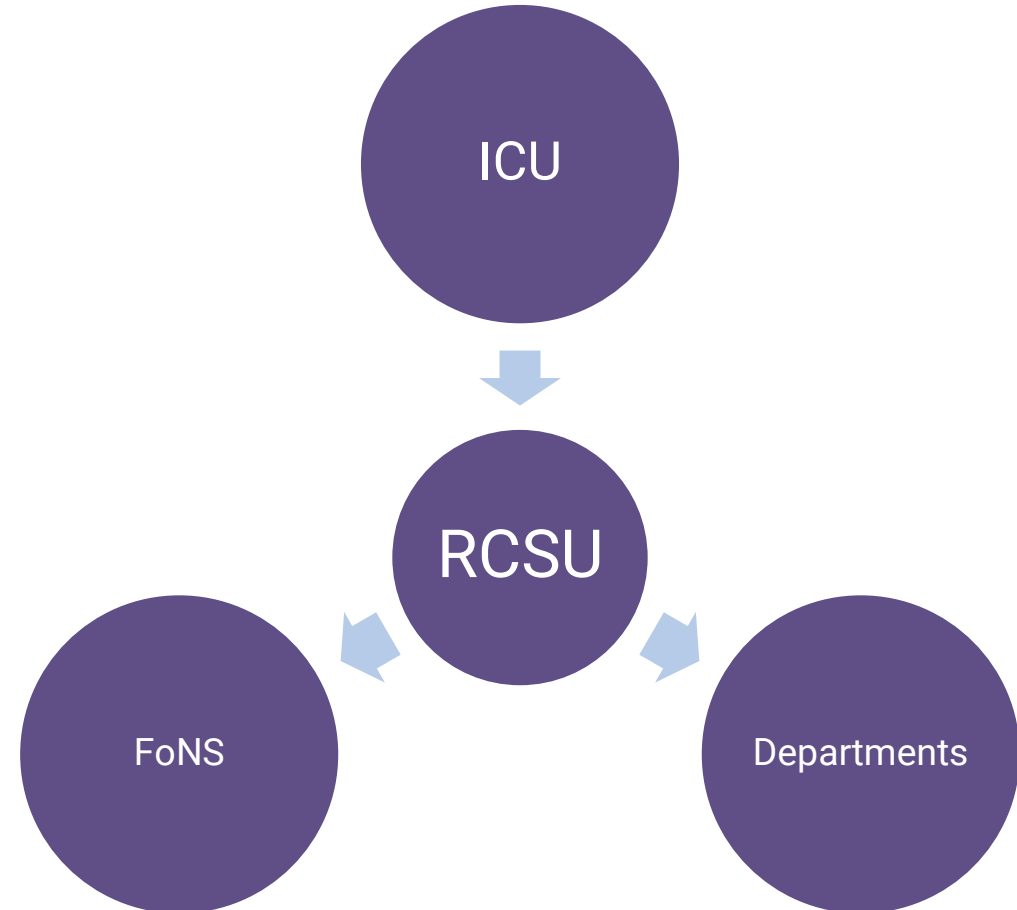
Michael Edwards

*President, Royal College of Science Union – 2017-18*



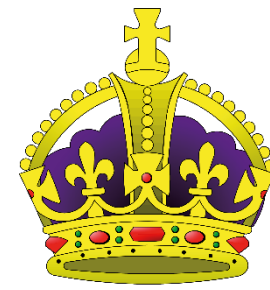
# Introduction

- The 'Constituent Union' or sub-Union representing students of the Faculty of Natural Sciences
  - Undergraduate academic and wellbeing concerns
  - Social events
  - Central body managing departmental societies and student activities with a 'science' remit – Synthetic Biology, Botany (TBC)
  - Student personal and professional development - skill-building, careers access, networking
- Between Imperial College Union and FoNS!



# Key Stats

- 25 volunteers on the General Committee – our ‘core team’
  - Including 10 Departmental Representatives – one each for academic and wellbeing concerns
- 115 volunteers in the wider FoNS community
  - 62 running student activities and 53 student year or cohort reps
- Over 50 % (54.7%, or 1,700) of our community engages with Union elections
  - As voters - 150 unique candidates over 2017-18 academic year



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# Challenges

- Changing nature and student expectations of HE in UK
  - 'Students as partners' vs 'students as consumers'
- Balancing traditional or previous successes with modern demands
  - A 134-year old organisation – lots of 'baggage'!
- Part-time volunteer-driven organisation
  - Variable engagement year-on-year
  - Risk of losing progress and experience



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# Opportunities

- Volunteer-driven organisation
  - High turnover with potential for innovation
  - Large volunteer network – 140 and growing!
- FoNS-focussed
  - Potential to be more nimble and pro-active than the central ICU
  - More impactful, concrete staff-student collaboration potential
- Constituent Union culture
  - Chance to change the paradigm away from past 'exclusive' perception towards our modern operations



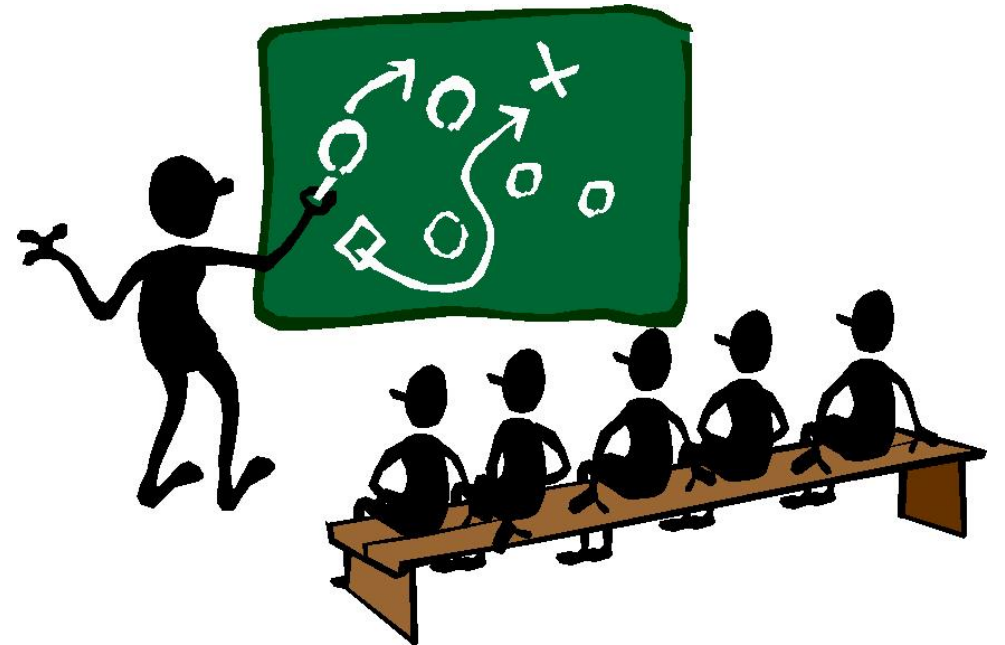


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# Result – Our First Strategy

- Setting the ICU Strategy into a FoNS context with more ‘concrete’ aims and objectives
  - ICU’s CU Strategy Project – promoting Faculty-specific development
- Three core, interwoven aspects of our operations selected to develop (*actions*)
  - Member / student representation - **REPRESENT**
  - Wider member engagement – **ENGAGE**
  - Exciting opportunities for members – **EXCITE**
- Each with four core *targets* – 12 overall!



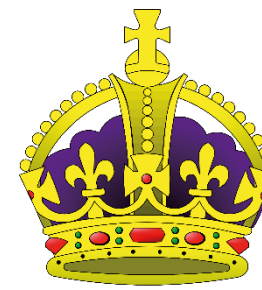


# Result – Our First Strategy

- ‘Tactical’ vs ‘Strategic’ strategy
  - Compromise – a vision set, with more room for future leaders to easily develop a unique contribution
- Three year life – ‘lifecycle of a BSc student’
  - Aim for widely perceivable change over the life of the Strategy
  - One-year ‘Operating Plans’ set by incoming and outgoing leaders to ensure strong handover and direction for the coming year.








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# Represent

- Covers activities in FoNS and ICU
  - Direct representation to departmental and Faculty staff – SSCs, etc.
  - Student Voice in the Union – Council, subcommittees, direct meetings with Officer Trustees and ICU staff
- Covers BOTH Academic and Wellbeing aspects
  - No specific Wellbeing section due to changing nature of Union Welfare – Wellbeing Representation Network



*Constituent Unions have a duty to promote student-led, member-focussed change throughout the Faculty and its departments, as well as in the wider Imperial College Union*

*With a network of over 50 volunteer representatives headed by experienced and dedicated leaders, the RCSU has great potential to be a community leader in student representation*





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# Represent - Targets

1. **Champion our members causes**, ensuring their concerns are heard and acted upon at all levels of college and the union.
2. **Empower our volunteers and representatives to be leaders in their communities**, ensuring they have the tools, training and confidence to enhance the student experience.
3. **Become a truly member-driven organisation**, expanding and enhancing the democratic input of our members into our continuing development.
4. **Be recognised as a leader in student representation across campus**, and acknowledged by our stakeholders as a professional representative organisation.



*With a broad array of communities within the Faculty - from international and EU students to liberation groups - ensuring our activities cater to all is crucial for effective engagement.*

*Beyond our core committee, the RCSU has a network of over 60 volunteers throughout the Faculty tasked with creating student community, and supporting their work should be a priority*



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# Engage

- Covers student activities and representation
  - Ensuring we're delivering a student experience that caters to the needs of our community
  - Not simply 'going through the motions' of previously successful work, but actively trying new things and stepping beyond our perceived boundaries
- Includes aspects of EDI to promote an inclusive mindset in volunteers



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# Engage - Targets

1. **Become an open and inclusive organisation** that our members will naturally want to engage with.
2. **Strive to be a forward-thinking and innovative organisation**, whilst retaining a link to our traditions and history that provide us with our unique identity.
3. **Support communities throughout the Faculty of Natural Sciences**, ensuring our members feel welcome and valued during their time at imperial.
4. **Be recognised as a vital pillar of the community by students, staff and external organisations**, expanding the opportunities for support and development our members are exposed to.





*Bringing together the community with engaging talks, competitions and social events is a present strength of the RCSU that should be maintained and developed over the next three years.*

*By reaching out to our natural allies in the other Faculties and even beyond Imperial, we stand to lead the community in improving the general student experience across the College*



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# Excite

- Covers student activities and development
  - Previous excellence in the area of SciComm and related areas driving future successes – cementing Imperial ‘on the map’
  - A commitment to promote careers that make use of the Imperial experience to tackle global challenges
- Explicit collaboration and ‘competition’ with the other Constituent Unions
  - Mascotry vs representation collaboration
  - Delivering a unique campus experience in concert with others in the ICU and Imperial ‘ecosystem’

# Excite - Targets



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- 1. Remain a community leader in promoting science communication**, developing and expanding the opportunities available for our members to develop their skills.
- 2. Bring all members of our community together to celebrate our successes and the work of the community** through a diverse and inclusive social programme.
- 3. Work closely with other organisations and individuals within the ICU 'ecosystem'**, to cultivate a sense of camaraderie and friendly rivalry, which will drive collective success.
- 4. Champion science-based careers within academia and industry**, ensuring members see the value of using their imperial experience to tackle the challenges facing our global society.

# Current Successes and Opportunities



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## Represent

- New guidelines and recommendations for running meetings
- A new Faculty-level committee for the discussion of student wellbeing issues
- Bespoke RCSU briefing sessions to complement ICU training and volunteer socials

## Engage

- Supporting the RCSU Clubs and Societies to carry out their work
- Modernising the mascotry sport in collaboration with the other Unions





# Current Successes and Opportunities



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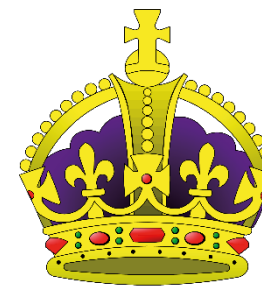
## Excite

- New collaborations such as the BAHFest with SMBC Comics
- Much-anticipated large scale social events
- Science Challenge moving towards broader methods of communication

## Opportunities

- Future development of the Academic and Wellbeing Representation Networks
- Increasing concerns regarding mental health provision
- Broader range of social events to meet demand





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# The RCSU Strategy 2018-2021

*‘Represent, Engage, Excite’*

*Thanks for listening*