The Science Students’ Society Annual General Meeting 2012

**Date:** 11th May 2012 **Time:** 12pm **Venue:** Common Room

# Minutes

**Attendance:**

**Chair:** John Gabarretta

**On the executive table:** Julian Bonello, Marie Claire Gatt, Katrina Grech, Jake Spiteri, Eman Mifsud, Martina Mizzi, Jonathan Schembri, Michael Buhagiar, Jonathan Muscat

**Number of members present on commencement:** 31

The AGM commenced at 12:23. John started by welcoming those present and presenting the agenda.

**Agenda:**

1. Reading of the AGM 2011 minutes
2. Matters arising from (i.) above
3. Committee’s administrative report
4. Annual financial report
5. Appointment of an electoral commission, if necessary
6. Amendments to the Statute
7. General motions and other matters arising
8. Topic chosen for the AGM: Embracing Diversity: Tackling fragmentation at the Faculty of Science
9. Nominations/Presentation of the new committee

A vote on the agenda as stated above was taken and approved nem. con. (31 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

### Reading of the AGM 2011 minutes

John started reading the minutes of last year’s AGM meeting. He did not go into details as the minutes were available online.

### Matters arising from (i) above

Ryan Sultana (BSc Bio&Chem, 1st year) asked what Nathan’s conflict of interest was and John went on to briefly explain, adding that the details were available in the AGM2011 minutes online.

### Committee’s administrative report

Each of the executive members presented their work as in the annual report.

John emphasized on the way forward and presented a preview of the 6th issue of *In Touch*, saying it would be published next week.

Jonathan M presented the Smoking on Campus Report.

Katrina’s report was presented last.

John thanked Rita, Lucianne and Carmen from Estate and works and the KSU exec for their help when needed and dedication.

Jonathan Falzon (BSc Bio&Chem 4th year, S-Cubed Honorary President) thanked this years’ exec and congratulated their work, particularly in attaining the participation of a variety of students. He also congratulated effort in the Careers’ Week and said how S-Cubed was establishing itself as one of the best organisations on campus.He thanked John for his dedicated work throughout the year.

Joanathan F asked why the two executive members appointed in the beginning of the term had resigned and whether this was done by official means.

He also criticised the absence of some exec members during some events and what our reaction was to this.

Regarding the publications sub-committee, he thought the outreach and work was somewhat lacking.

Jonathan had proposed a design sub-committee with John and asked if anything had developed.

He also asked whether the international organisations we were affiliated with were being utilised by S-Cubed.

He said the Biology department had approached S-Cubed for help in organising a communications framework between students and staff and asked what S-Cubed had done about this.

Marie Claire replied to his first query. She said that, as outlined in the annual report, Roderick Micallef and Julian Chircop had left the organisation early in the term due to personal matters. She said she had received a formal email from both of them about their resignation and these were accepted.

John said that the absence of exec members at some events had been noted, but said the work from these people had been done behind the scenes, even if they could not attend the events due to other commitments.

John recognised that the Publications Subcommittee had remained somewhat dormant throughout the year due to commitments of some of these members who could not dedicate as much time as they initially wanted. He stated how, in future, it should be taken as a more serious commitment.

On Jonathan F’s point on a Design Subcommittee, John had approved his request and it is currently a work in progress, with some work having been considered throughout the year, such as consistency in branding. He encouraged students to come forward to help with design, and not necessarily science students.

*Chris Desira (BSC Bio&Chem, 2nd year) left the meeting 13:09*

On the question on our international affiliations, Michael replied saying that he thought it was important to stabilise contact with these organisations first, both the ones currently in place and other prospective ones. Having said that, Michael agreed that more resources were available but were not yet being exploited from these organisations, particularly RSC which has a lot to offer us. At this stage, he said, this is the target we are walking towards now that we have been stabilising ourselves locally so we could go on to strengthen an international image. He emphasised the International Officer’s duties as there was a lot of potential.

John added that S-Cubed had promoted these international organisations, particularly in Freshers’ Week, and a number of our members had approached us with questions about them.

Jake said that with regards to IAPS, S-Cubed had an article about our organisation published on jIAPS.

*Chris Desira joined the meeting 13:14*

Marie Claire told Jonathan Falzon that S-Cubed had not yet been approached by the Department of Biology. She explained how she was involved in a conversation with lecturers of the Biology Department on student apathy and lack of involvement and the Department showed its wish to organise a communication framework between students and staff for feedback on the academic experience. Marie Claire said she had spoke about the department’s idea to S-Cubed and, as an organisation, agreed to support it in promotion due to our outreach with students. Jonathan Falzon outlined that if such work was left for the Department, it would probably not be done and encouraged S-Cubed to take more initiative in this. Marie Claire agreed and said that she would also follow this up in her power as student rep in the Board of Studies of Biology.

John added that the role of Education Officer in the amended statute had outlined this need.

*Julian left the meeting 13:20*

Roderick Micallef (BSc Bio&Chem, 3rd year) asked how S-Cubed had showed its concern in issues regarding students, such as low marks being given in Chemistry last semester and issues with Chemistry thesis titles.

John replied that he did not agree that S-Cubed did not represent students in such circumstances, pointing to S-Cubed’s comments on the National Curriculum Reform as an example. Regarding the low Chemistry grades, such issues should be tackled internally rather than showing a stand or position publicly. John said S-Cubed would await the revision of paper results. The thesis issue had been forwarded to Faculty Board and John as student rep will assure that transparency in this issue is kept. He said that as S-Cubed he preferred to use dialogue prior to public stands. The Nat Curr reform stand was made public as it was a national issue.

Roderick Micallef clarified that he has no doubt that the work was done, but rather why it was not made public since students did not know of this and only the close members knew of certain updates since it was tackled low key.

*Julian joined the meeting 13:23*

John understood and agreed that this work was not appreciated. He referred to there being a fine line between sensationalism and taking a stand.

Jonathan F, as KE commissioner in KSU, said that he agreed with John on statements on sensationalism which would not really get to the solution, but said that the students should know about the contact being made in order to address the situation.

Mark Farrugia (BSc Bio&Chem, 4th year, S-Cubed Honorary Member) commented that he also thought some work was not too visible to students, not just educational initiatives and asked why. On another note, he asked whether our members were being informed about what S-Cubed was participating in through KPS.

John said that Mark made a good point as a lot of work was not promoted. John said he addressed this issue when promoting more inclusiveness in our way forward.

Jonathan M agreed that with regards to KPS, the issue needed development. Issues had been discussed within the executive with the student in mind. He said the next exec should develop on this further.

Mark agreed and said that although members do not need to be engaged in discussion for each KPS issue voted on, they should at least know that these issues are being addressed and we are representing them.

Marie Claire agreed with this and spoke from her experience as Social Policy Officer in the past, and on her aims as the new KPS Commissioner, that the students needs to be more informed on what’s going on in KPS.

Chris Desira asked how subcommittees with members outside the executive had been formed.

John said that this year, applications for the Science Quiz subcommittee were promoted on Facebook on groups.

Anna Pulo said that she had not seen such applications.

John said that this had been aimed mostly at first years to include them more in our activities. He also said that the organisation’s Facebook page and group are generally used.

A vote was taken on the administrative report and approved nem. con. (31 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

### Annual financial report

Katrina presented the Financial Report.

John said that sponsors should be taken care of as they provide the financial buoyancy of the organisation. They had been met in person and were visited in site visits and invited for events such as the Career’s Week.

Jonathan Falzon asked what the BOV sponsorship consisted of. John said it was on normal terms but BOV provided a donation of money of which they did not want any more recognition.

Jonathan Falzon also asked why the number of corporate sponsors dropped to 3. John replied that this year the sponsorship process was harder this year. GSK have no employment or ventures so probably this was the reason it was nut sustainable for them anymore. Actavis had simply declined the sponsorship this year. Other companies such as Aurobindo and ORME were contacted as well. John blamed this battle on the European and Global financial crisis.

Jonathan Falzon said the amount of money that S-Cubed has is not small anymore and S-Cubed should start looking at shares and other long term investments in fixed accounts. John said it had been discussed informally and is worth looking into.

John also commented that an HSBC account had been opened to fascilitate internet banking from members.

Jonathan Falzon also commented that Careers’ Week could be a financial income. He said that the money that S-Cubed gains can be used for the students themselves. He used Youth in Action to illustrate his point.

Michael said that it is still important to have income throughout the year to fall back on and events are financially feasible. The scope is not to collect the money but to be at ease that if something had to happen, there will be a safety net. He said fixed deposits are an interesting prospect. He also said that a Swiss Francs account was opened for the international trip this year and expenses were paid by internet banking via this account. This allowed us to take advantage of a good currency conversion rate.

A vote on the financial report was taken and was approved nem con. (31 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

### Appointment of an electoral commission, if necessary

None was required since the maximum number of nominations (12) was not exceeded.

### Amendments to the Statute

John said that a revamped statute was being presented. This included numbered articles for easier referencing, cross-referencing, articles were grouped, Secretary was changed to Secretary General, inclusion of soft copies to the clause on number of copies of documents, relocating of articles, clarification to the rights of observers and honorary members, descriptions of roles that were not included before, and general grammar.

Mark asked John to read the clarifications of the roles and Jonathan Falzon asked what the maximum number of exec members was.

John said that the maximum number remained 12, as in the previous statute. John then went on to read the roles on the statute that were added.

Jonathan Falzon thought that the amendment that adds definitions for non-statutory roles may appear too exclusive and does not protect that this work is done in a minimum number executive.

Michael said the purpose of adding them was to serve as guide to the persons taking those roles in the executive.

Roderick Micallef said that it could be understood that if members to take on these roles are not available in the exec, their lack would be a breach of statute and there would be a conflict in the statute.

Jonathan Falzon said that all that had to be amended was the addition of a clause that if the roles are not taken, these responsibilities should be taken up by the rest of the executive.

*Roberto left the meeting 14:08*

On Jonathan F’s proposal, the statute articles 7.12 to 7.14 were amended to read ‘The executive member/s responsible for [role] will be tasked with:’ with [role] being:

Educational matters

International matters

Social Policy matters

Additionally, all ‘ie’s in article 7 were changed to ‘eg.’ So that the list to follow is not exclusive.

A vote was taken on this amended statute and it was approved nem con. (30 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

John clarified that this motion was proposed by John Gabarretta and seconded by Katrina Grech.

The second amendment to statute, proposed by Marie Claire Gatt and seconded by Michael Buhagiar removed Vice President from a statutory role.

John said that this was due to the workings of the organisation not requiring this role full time. Marie Claire clarified that the role can be delegated if the need arises in the year, but since it did not appear to be required during this term, it would be removed from a necessary statutory role. Michael also said that this role should not be elected in the first meeting, but rather along the way in the case that the president requires a vice to aid his role.

Mark voiced his disagreement since he thinks that the role is being misinterpreted as a person who will eventually take up the presidential role. This role should bridge the exec, irrelevant of its size, enforce that the exec members are doing their role, ect. He fears that the Vice President role is being taken as the President’s pet.

Roderick Micallef shared Mark’s view and thinks that the role is essential. The executive may feel uneasy with the President and the Vice President would serve to link this bridge, while the president holds the casting vote. Looking at the executive from the outside, he thinks that the role of Vice President should be larger than is being effected.

Jonathan Falzon said he understood the reasons brought up by this motion as the Vice President’s role is somewhat vague, but those roles cannot be delegated to other exec members. The Vice President is a crucial structure of an organisation, even in legal light. He also thinks that the Vice President should be accountable to himself. He does not value the reasoning that the exec member stepping up for Vice President in the first meeting may not be capable. He highlighted that he was the one to remove and reintroduce the role as he felt its absence.

Roderick Micallef commented that if the person standing for the role is not ready from the beginning, there can be a reshuffling of roles.

*Thomas left 14:25*

Marie Claire said that the duties, particularly that of bridging between the executive and the President, was not felt required as there was never a communication problem.

Chris Desira said that perhaps it was the person delegated for the role that was not fulfilling the role and not the role not being required.

Michael continued to clarify his reasoning. Jonathan Falzon disagreed and said that removing the Vice-President would vacate the second-in-line role.

Ryan Sultana asked what the benefit would be. Marie Claire answered that all other roles had their benefits, but were not statutory. Michael continued to answer that while treasurer was required from the beginning of the year because the roles could not be delegated to other people, the roles of Vice President as stipulated could.

Anna Pulo (BSc Maths&Phys, 3rd year) said that in a new committee where the members are fresh, this role is necessary.

Roderick Micallef felt that it would be unfair on other exec members to have roles delegated on them which should be taken care of by Vice-President.

Jonathan Falzon highlighted again that the second in rank role was a role in itself.

A secret vote was taken on this motion, with 29 peoplepresent. Votes against: 18

Abstentions: 2

Votes in favour: 9

The motion did not pass as it did not get a 2/3 majority.

### General motions and other matters arising

John presented a motion proposed by Michael and seconded by Eman for the Honorary Presidency of John Gabarretta. John Gabarretta left the room for the vote.

A vote was taken and approved nem. con. (29 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

A second motion, proposed by Michael and seconded by Martina for Marie Claire Gatt as Honorary Member was put forward. Marie Claire left the room for the vote.

A vote was taken and approved nem. con. (29 votes in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

### Topic chosen for the AGM: Embracing Diversity: Tackling fragmentation at the Faculty of Science

John said that the biggest challenge of the organisation was promoting unity due to the different backgrounds in each of the 5 departments. John said that this diversity makes our Faculty so interesting. This is starting to be preserved in the executive committee. S-Cubed unfortunately was associated with only two departments, which in reality are in fact large. Outsourcing of our work should be taken on with our friends from a variety of departments. He commented that the inclusion of executive members from statistics and maths is good since these members of these departments were usually absent. Getting to know these different people makes it more appreciable.

This is the key to building a stronger faculty, tackling the fragmentation and sharing our talents. The more inclusive involvement may be able to outreach those which would usually not find sense in our organisation.

Anna Pulo suggested that small activities such as the science gathering, are organised for students only, to encourage mixing between them.

Jonathan Falzon said that it should be important that the members are informed on the goings of the committee and administration abilities should be key for involvement in executive committees. He thinks that an organisation shouldn’t be looked at solely for activities, but the scope of these should be more important.

He addressed the new committee and told them to look onto the work done in the past and for them to care on the organisation’s responsibility. Additionally, he said that contact with the faculty should be kept, but that S-Cubed should remain autonomous from the department at the same time to allow for criticism and not feel like a tool. He also encouraged the organisation to enter programmes such as youth in action.

### Nominations/Presentation of the new committee

The new executive was presented. The members are Michael Buhagiar Marija Cini, Timothy Debono, Chris Desira, Johann Galdies, Eman Mifsud, Martina Mizzi, Eric Pace, Antonella Portelli, Anna Pulo, Elena Schembri and Ryan Sultana.

A confidence vote was taken on the new executive. 1 abstention, 28 in favour.

John concluded with saying that these three years in S-Cubed were the most fruitful and worthwhile. When he states he took more from the organisation than the course, he is not lying and he has grown to love this work.

*Meeting adjourned 15:03*

Minutes presented at the S-Cubed Annual General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *[insert date]*

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President Secretary