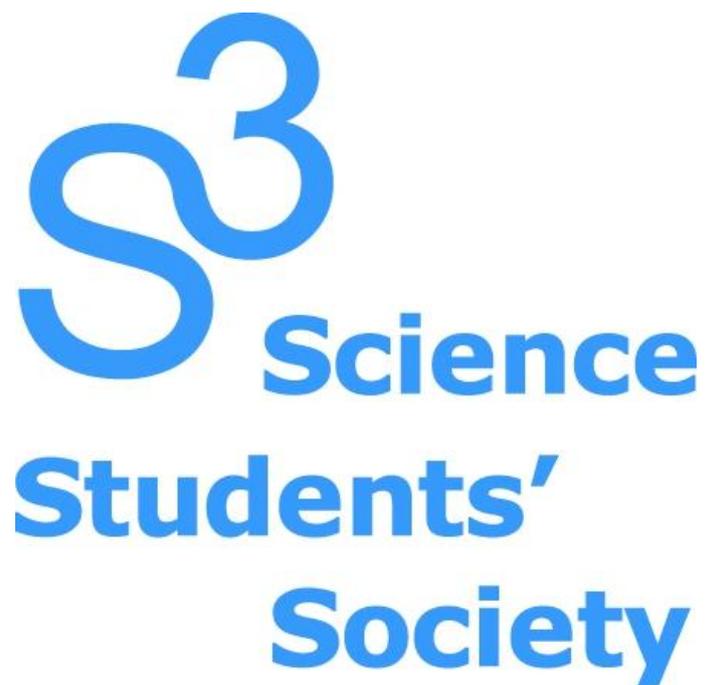


S-Cubed Annual Report 2011-2012



*Strengthening
your way
forward...*



President

John Gabarretta

“ One of the greatest challenges our Faculty faces is the issue of fragmentation – five departments with students coming from totally different backgrounds and interests. S-Cubed is committed to overcoming this challenge – we strive to promote unity.”

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges our Faculty faces is the issue of fragmentation – five departments with students coming from totally different backgrounds and interests. S-Cubed is committed to overcoming this challenge – we strive to promote unity. For this reason, one of S-Cubed’s main aims this year was to bring these departments closer together and tackle the issue at the core. S-Cubed took on various initiatives which were targeted at all students at the Faculty of Science.

The largest obstacle in the midst of this, though, is the lack of student involvement in extra-curricular activities on campus. In our experience, however, we realised that very often this is because many feel detached from the everyday activities going on at university. In light of this, we decided to organise a wider variety of activities and events which were aimed at the more specific interests of individual clusters of students. We tried to balance out social events with educational ones and tried to maintain an equilibrium between these two aspects in each event we organised.

Thus, seminars and site visits included topics and areas of interest spanning the whole spectrum of the faculty’s students and several other initiatives such as Careers Week were organised specifically with this thought in mind.

Another main aim which we set out to achieve is bridging the gaps between the several clusters of individuals within university. An important area of development has been the increased communication with post-graduate students who have contributed in various ways this year: be it by giving a talk at one of our events, contributing to our magazine, or simply by

attending and being present in our activities. Beyond this, opportunities such as the Science Gathering are a prime example of how S-Cubed has sought to reach out to the members of staff too. These occasions provide an excellent opportunity for socialisation and bonding.

In Touch Magazine

As with previous years, the *In Touch* series has continued to be produced as the main publication of the society. The October issue, distributed during Freshers' Week and throughout the year, has reached several hands from several backgrounds – from staff and students at the faculty of science, to students at Higher Secondary.

This year, the content of magazine was once again given a revamp in terms of variety as well as presentation. While the main theme was retained, several new design elements were introduced to make the magazine more aesthetically appealing and colourful. The May issue, in fact, will be available shortly and features many photos from the year's main events, promising to be the most colourful issue to date.

Like previous years, the magazine was also made available online on our website www.scubed.info. This year we decided to adopt the use of Issuu which is an online site which makes the magazine-reading experience even more dynamic. By including links for further reading and to various entities, which may be of interest to science students, the magazine received a welcome breath of fresh air.

S-Cubed values this regular publication, not only to showcase its own achievements, but more importantly, to give space to students and staff from all backgrounds in the scientific field to express their opinions, share their experiences and communicate new knowledge.

Networking & Collaboration

One of the main features that being involved in a student organisation includes is meeting and getting to know new people. As President of this society, this has been possibly the most dynamic aspect within my role - you get to see so many new faces and share so many ideas. More importantly, it also serves as a means of broadening the society's reach and improving its reputation.

A point I would like to emphasise in this regard is the communication with sponsors. It is essential to maintain a positive relationship with the entities which keep our organisation buoyant financially. This year, I met personally with the representatives from our main sponsors: Arrow Pharm and the Malta Council for Science and Technology, as well as maintained regular contact with the responsible individuals from Papier Plus. As with previous years, we kept these organisations in the loop and regularly informed them about our ongoing initiatives by providing them with copies of our magazines as well as involving them directly in the work we did throughout the year.

Another point worth mentioning is the importance of closely collaborating with the main student entity on campus, KSU. By being involved in its sub-divisions such as KPS and taking part in the initiatives it organises, such as Freshers' Week and Organisations' Days, our organisation is able to maintain an active role in the student organisations scene, as well as contribute to the formulation of KSU policies. We have made use of the KSU board room and common room on several occasions for several meetings and events. It is at this point that I would personally like to thank Rita Borg, Lucianne Caruana, together with the rest of the outgoing KSU executive for all their help and dedication showed throughout the year.

Beyond this, S-Cubed has chosen to collaborate with several other student organisations on numerous occasions. This offers two main benefits: firstly, students get the opportunity to meet others from different faculties, and secondly, it brings about sharing of ideas and practices. To date, Careers Week has got to be the largest collaborative activity we have organised and look forward to reaping more and more benefits of such joint initiatives in the future.

Notable Achievements

It has been, without a doubt, an exciting year for S-Cubed. Along with the several well-attended events we organised this year, we are also proud that we have achieved recognition for our hard work from other external entities.

Of notable mention is the CONF Report, documenting all the work of last year's executive which saw us ranking 5th on the list of the top student organisations as defined by this report. The compilation of this 500-or-so page report, submitted as a digital copy, is paramount in securing the availability of a noticeboard as well as office space and a well-located stand in any of the KSU events.

We are also proud to say that our hard work has also paid off and we have recently received the prestigious Kokka Organizzazzjoni. This is the second such award which S-Cubed would have received, the other being the Kokka Innovattiva a few years back.

Looking Forward

S-Cubed has reached a point where it currently has a very bright future ahead of it. It is in this direction that I would like the organisation to keep moving. I believe that the secret to success in our faculty is to embrace our diversity and use it to our advantage. It is only by exploiting the various talents of one another that we have got so far and it is only this way that we will get any further. I look forward to a broader involvement of students both in their attendance and also in their contribution to our society so that we can see it grow and reach its full potential.



Vice-President

Julian Bonello

“ It is important to note that the community of science students is not just the university community however should also extend to future students within the faculty, and this is why it is important that we reach out to prospective students within our faculty.”

Introduction

Being one of our principle aims, S-Cubed has always strived to promote unity amongst science students. It has achieved this by organising a number of activities held which continued to strengthen the student's way forward. From my post as Vice-President I could also voice further the needs and wants of the science students which form part of the Physics department in the faculty.

The Science Student Community – Our Role this Year

As one of our aims this year we planned to increase the amount of people taking part in our activities. This aim however was target specifically towards particular parts of the faculty which till now have not yet taken part in events organised by S-Cubed.

This issue was addressed through a number of measures. In the first place, for the first time in a number of years the S-Cubed executive had at least one member from each part of the faculty, this means that the executive had a member from: Statistics, Maths, Physics, Chemistry and even Biology. Such a situation helped because everyone's voice could be shared now. This with difference to the past where before the members of the executive were made up of Biology and Chemistry students.

The executive also went on to address this problem through aiming its events on a global manner. If one for example had to look at how the trip was planned this was not of interest to one department of the faculty however could be of interest to multiple departments within the faculty, this can also be said if we look at the seminars which were organised throughout the year. In these seminars once again we attempted to reach out to all the people who took part.

S-Cubed this year also looked to strengthen its future by reaching out to people outside the university. S-Cubed had a number of school visits this year. It is through these visits that S-Cubed can continue to grow and increase the popularity of the degrees in science. It is important to note that the community of science students is not just the university community however should also extend to future students within the faculty, and this is why it is important that we reach out to prospective students within our faculty.

S-Cubed also looked towards enhancing the science student community through a number of site visits. It is through these activities that we bridge the gap between the working world and the student world. Since after university the student is immediately faced with the working world, as S-Cubed we have always worked to bridge the gap between the student world and working world. In addition to this, the executive this year also looked to enhance the students experience through the first Careers week for technical students. In such an event various companies were invited over to share their experiences.

Science Gathering

After last year's success, the S-Cubed executive looked to build on this event and for a second year running S-Cubed organised what has become an annual event. This year once again the executive looked to organise a big event where both the students and lecturers could meet up in a rather informal manner.

This idea also enhances the life of the science student community; this happens as it is through dialogue with lecturers that one can look towards his future and strengthen his prospects. It is also through such events that we can look to continue building on the strong bond which is already present between the students and the lecturers within the faculty. Such good relationships are enhanced through such events as formal occasions such as lectures and tutorials tend to limit the talk to a specific topic, where on the other hand such events tend to leave the student open to discuss a number of topics.

This year this event was an even bigger success, in this year's event finger foods and drinks where once again provided. In addition to this, in this year's event we also managed to have a display of some spectacular shots which were provided to us by NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). This display was then moved on to the library for another couple of weeks.

In total this event saw approximately over a hundred attendees. Such a number is healthy as it is a good percentage of the faculty that attended and such a result continues to indicate that this event should be strengthened and also such an event should continue to take place.

In conclusion, one can say that this was a positive year over all, and a number of issues have started to be addressed despite the further work that is required.



Secretary

Marie Claire Gatt

“ We have always believed that functioning as a fruitful team depended a lot on healthy relationships with each other, and making a family out of the assortment of characters this year was our first target, which I can boldly say succeeded with little difficulty.”

Introduction

This term, the S-Cubed executive saw quite a reshuffle with some of the older members stepping out and a lot of new faces stepping in. We have always believed that functioning as a fruitful team depended a lot on healthy relationships with each other, and making a family out of the assortment of characters this year was our first target, which I can boldly say succeeded with little difficulty. Moreover, this year we have worked like clockwork in organising our activities, with the result of ensuring the best experience for our members.

The Executive

Twelve members were nominated to the executive during last year's AGM, namely Julian Bonello, Michael Buhagiar, Julian Chircop, John Gabarretta, Marie Claire Gatt, Katrina Grech, Roderick Micallef, Eman Mifsud, Martina Mizzi, Jonathan Muscat, Jonathan Schembri and Jake Spiteri. Early in the term, Roderick Micallef and Julian Chircop resigned from their posts due to personal commitments. We would like to thank them for their involvement in this term. Thereafter, the roles within the executive committee were as follows:

John Gabarretta – President

Julian Bonello – Vice-President

Marie Claire Gatt – Secretary

Katrina Grech – Treasurer

Jake Spiteri – Public Relations Officer

Eman Mifsud – Activities Coordinator

Martina Mizzi – Vice-Activities Coordinator

Jonathan Muscat – Social Policy Officer

Jonathan Schembri – Education Officer

Michael Buhagiar – International Officer

Working throughout the year

Minuted executive meetings were held regularly – practically once a week during the scholastic year, breaking up shortly for first semester exams and for the Easter holidays, during which the Swiss-Cubed trip took place. Executive meetings served the purpose of formally presenting items for report, taking final decisions on issues and while organising events and delegating work. Additionally, any refunds or transfers of money were noted in the minutes, with receipts and cheque book records being organised by the Treasurer. The executive continued to actively function via the set executive Google Group, even during breaks from meetings, to efficiently and quickly share information for progression of work.

In addition to executive meetings, two planning weekends were organised to map out the progression of the organisation. Aiming for a directed action plan for the past year, the summer planning weekend was organised for the executive members to brainstorm and address our limitations, goals, aspirations and need for innovative ideas. This was very helpful in producing a framework for the year, keeping the organisation active throughout. Additionally, informative talks by KSU executive members Michela Boffa, on the role of KPS and international opportunities for students and organisations, and Jonathan Falzon on the function of KE and students reps and KSU education resources available for students were given. These were a particularly useful introduction for the new executive members who were as yet green to the organisations scene and required an induction to the workings of KSU, with whom we liaise closely as an organisation to make the best use of the resources and opportunities available and to represent our members more fully.

A second, mid-term planning seminar was held during the Christmas break during which the key problems and limitations faced in the first half of the term were identified and discussed. Plans for the target of the March seminar, possible leisure and entertainment events and educational initiatives in the second semester were set during this half-day seminar between the executive.

Sub-Committees

Throughout the year, a number of subcommittees were set up to take on board projects while allowing other executive members to continue with other S-Cubed commitments. This year's sub-committees were the Media & Publications Sub-Committee, the Careers Week Sub-Committee and the Science Quiz Sub-Committee.

The Media & Publications Sub-Committee was mainly responsible for the compiling of articles for our biannual magazine, In Touch. This was the only permanent sub-committee set up this year, being made up of Stephan Borg, Bernard Brincat and Jan Cutajar and chaired by John Gabarretta as editor of the magazine. Unfortunately, the productivity of this sub-committee

was not as aspired due to commitment and time restriction issues, leading to the sixth issue being published later than had been planned.

The Careers Week Sub-Committee was a joint sub-committee between S-Cubed and IAESTE with the purpose of putting up Careers' Week for Technical Students, an S-Cubed and IAESTE initiative to fill a void at the University. The work went into fruition between the 27th February and 2nd March and proved to be an appreciated success.

The Science Quiz Sub-Committee was a temporary committee. Four of our members, Johann Galdies, Elena Schembri, Rebecca Galea and Alex Hili, chaired by Jake Spiteri as PRO, formed the committee to prepare and organise a science quiz as a small leisure activity on campus.

Day in, Day out

In between one event and the other, the S-Cubed team is balancing a very full student life to produce an experience for our members. Being based at an office in Students' House, our documents and records are upkept and organised for reference and transparency. As Secretary, I have been responsible for organising these records and following the work being carried out and delegated to each exec member between executive meetings. Keeping the work in check throughout the year makes for more efficient results, which shall be reported described in the rest of this year's Annual Report.



Treasurer

Katrina Grech

“ Without the support of students, S-Cubed, could not have organised such successful events throughout this year. Events organised by S-Cubed are affordable to students due to the voluntary work given by the S-Cubed executive itself as well as student helpers.”

Being a non-profit organisation, S-Cubed relies greatly on the income from corporate sponsors together with the grant from the Student Affairs Committee. This funding allows S-Cubed to increase the quality of events while keeping prices as low as possible. By doing this S-Cubed decreased the financial burden on students and allowed for a better turn out during events. It also enabled us to afford regular initiatives such as *In Touch*.

In my opinion, the role of treasurer is essential in maintaining stability and independence within any student organisation. By keeping record of payments and assets one can clearly see how the organisations' funds and assets are being used while ensuring transparency. This thus allows the rest of the executive to organise upcoming events in light of any profits or losses made in previous events.

Before an event was organised a reasonable budget was set up. This allowed the executive to prevent unnecessary losses that could otherwise be used for other events requiring higher budgeting, such as *On the Trail*. Any profits made throughout events allowed for the organisation of discounted activities or free activities. These including a site visit and donation to Xrobb l-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre, free entrance to the Santa's A-List Christmas party and the organisation of Careers week For Technical Students.

Without the support of students, S-Cubed, could not have organised such successful events throughout this year. Events organised by S-Cubed are affordable to students due to the voluntary work given by the S-Cubed executive itself as well as student helpers. With this said S-Cubed would like thank those students who are loyal towards the organisation together with our sponsors that have continually supported us throughout the year.



Public Relations Officer

Jake Spiteri

“The creation of a good and transparent network between S-Cubed and its members was vital during the past term because the organisation itself could be influenced and moulded around the needs of our members.”

Introduction

Public Relations are an important and functional communications tool. Being the PRO of S-Cubed, I tried to employ my position to develop a strong relationship between the S-Cubed executive, its members and other non-science students both within and outside the organisation. This was achieved by providing exposure of what was currently happening within the organisation and its future targets. Thus the creation of a good and transparent network between S-Cubed and its members was vital during the past term because the organisation itself could be influenced and moulded around the needs of our members.

Unfortunately, it is a fact that many university students show lack of interest about extra-curricular activities especially on campus and therefore tends to ignore everything else which is not directly related to their course. Besides the usual task of events promotion, my role as PRO also involved the strengthening collaboration between the executive and science students via new and diverse approaches especially by employing direct communication with the student to inform them of the benefits and insights they could gain by participating holistically during the academic year.

Facebook Page

Apart from the usual events promotion via posters and e-mails, this year S-Cubed has launched its new *Facebook* page. The use of social media was important because it provided immediate updates of S-Cubed's work and its point of view on certain issues such as the National Curriculum Framework 2011 ('A Vision for Science Education in Malta'), whilst receiving the feedback from our members by posting their ideas. The use of the page and the

group were also a good platform for uploading photos (both by the exec and members) of many events, showcasing all our activities and reviving the best moments.

Poster Designs

Regarding the branding of S-Cubed, the organisation is undergoing a modernisation process in order to improve the society's image. Along with our poster designers Eric Pace and Sacha Dunlop, we have worked to provide effective posters with the same general template. In this way the audience would gradually get accustomed to our designs and recognize our activities immediately.



Press Releases

Being a Science based organisation, S-Cubed focuses greatly on the Faculty's and national issues which affect directly science students within the University, especially in the academic aspect. In this respect, S-Cubed has published a number of Press Releases on its own initiative and on behalf of our members regarding certain issues. By doing so, the organisation embodies its ideas and provides a clear and tangible contribution for the science community in general. Naturally, throughout the year several Press Releases have been sent to the local media showcasing S-Cubed activities and their purpose.

Some of the Press releases published this term:

National Curriculum Reform 2011

(www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120108/university/Concerns-over-reform-in-Science-education.401512)

Career's Week

(www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120226/university/A-technical-careers-week.408550)

Site visit to CERN

(www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120422/university/Science-students-visit-CERN.416595)

Promoting Sustainability

As the public is becoming more aware about the environment and sustainability, there have been new ideas to come up with sustainable initiatives. Unfortunately, during the promotion of an activity huge amount of paper and other material is consumed. As mentioned previously, a lot of focus has been put in advertising our activities via the social media and mail shots. Additionally, from this term S-Cubed has introduced the concept of online applications which has been implemented for most of our events.

During this term the responsibility of holding the post as S-Cubed PRO was fulfilling and challenging. Being a volunteer organisation there are no financial benefits, however, the enthusiasm and positive feedback received by fellow science students following various events was enough to drive me through the whole term. I must also thank the rest of the executive for providing help and suggestions to improve by performance along the way. From my point of view I would recommend other students to participate similarly in such organisations like S-Cubed because it enhances your personality and eventually would serve as an additional asset beyond university life!



Activities Coordinators

Eman Mifsud

Martina Mizzi

“ *The idea behind these events was to continue enhancing the student social life while at university.*”

Introduction

Activities are essential tools to achieve the main aim of S-Cubed, mainly to *promote unity among all students and potential students of science through social and educational activities*. A variety of interests are targeted in order to cater for the majority of students in the faculty. Apart from the educational aspect of our organisation, social activities are an important characteristic since through these events, students get to know one another in an informal environment yet instil the values of the society.

Diving

S-Cubed, together with Divemed organised a try dive session for students during the summer. Students were provided with all the equipment and knowledge necessary beforehand, and professional assistance was given throughout the dive. This gave students the opportunity to acquire a taste of diving, which was useful especially for students studying biology considering Malta is an island, thus marine biology is an important field of research.



Clean Up

In continuation with the previous clean-up activities, this second clean-up at Il-Ballut served to complete the job started during the initial event. Being still in the dry season, previously unreachable areas of the place could be cleared out, paving the way for a more complete renovation of the place to begin. A small group of helpful volunteers, mainly science students, was present to ensure this activity was yet another success. The scope of these events was to promote greater awareness towards the safeguarding of the natural environment and the ecology of areas around Malta and to engage with University students on a hands-on basis, in an effort to promote active citizenship.

Freshers' Week

Once again, significant efforts were made to try to make the information provided more relevant. A leaflet was compiled with useful information about several University-related issues as a sort of FAQ. Information about our international affiliate networks, namely the RSC and IOP, as well as the society's magazine *In Touch* was also provided. Several stickers were also printed and free



drinks were handed out as freebies to students. This year, S-Cubed also initiated a number of tours around the University grounds to familiarise themselves with the campus and the distribution of the faculties around University. The second hand book database was also available on a computer screen for students, and an electronic database was created to input all students visiting the stand. All in all, several students commented positively on the presence and help the members of the S-Cubed executive were able to provide throughout the week.

Exposure

Throughout the year, S-Cubed engaged in various campaigns to promote and give exposure of the organisation and its events. This was done on a University level through Green Expo week, with the aim of promote scientific concepts to all students at University as well as to broaden our network amongst science students in order to be more in touch with our organisation. Furthermore, S-Cubed took part at the Malta Trade Fair at MFCC in order to promote the organisation of a national level.

Seminar

The 7th Annual Seminar was held at Baystreet hotel and was characterised by an overwhelming attendance of over 110 students, many of whom were in their first year. The

weekend activity was packed with activities, talks and social events, which gave room for the participants to socialise with each other while still gaining new knowledge about a variety of topics:

- Welcome Keynote Presentation by Mr. John Gabarretta (S-Cubed President)
- Student Representation at the University of Malta by Mr. Jonathan Falzon (KSU Education Commissioner)
- Dielectric Properties of Body Tissues by Ms. Lourdes Abdilla (University of Malta PhD student at Physics Department)
- DNA Forensics by Dr. Marisa Cassar
- Closing Talk by Prof. Charles Sammut (University of Malta Dean of Faculty of Science)



The seminar also included several social events. An ice-breaking session held partly in conjunction with IAESTE was held in between the coffee breaks and talks. This allowed participants to get to know each other in an informal atmosphere and also focused on team-building. The Friday night activity was included a Karaoke and Wine night, which turned out to be a very successful

event. The event on Saturday night featured a themed party: Rave On. Again, these social activities aided the participants in getting to know each other whilst providing a relaxed atmosphere. All the participants were finally awarded a certificate of participation.

In March we organised a second seminar named SUSTAIN – The Science Seminar, which was attended by a total of 32 students. The theme of this seminar revolved around conserving resources and featured talks on conserving fish stocks, by Anthony Debono from the Fish4Tomorrow campaign, conserving water, by Vince Gauci from the Malta Water Association, and an overview of what funded research on environmental research is like by Geoffrey Saliba. This year, an astronomy night was organised as an evening activity to have a change from the parties which are usually organised and present a new yet interesting experience. Dr. Sandro Lanfranco guided this activity together with a student who brought a telescope, making the event a successful one.

Social Gatherings

S-Cubed also organises various social gatherings during the year. The idea behind these events was to continue enhancing the student social life while at university. S-Cubed as an organise

has always felt that the social part of the student's development is important and hence continues to participate in organising these events.

In December, S-Cubed organised yet another one of its well-established outdoor activities – *On The Trail*. This one night camping event included a BBQ and a variety of ice-breaking activities, the focus of which was the challenging Treasure Hunt - clearly not for the faint-hearted!

Several parties were hosted by S-Cubed including End of Summer BBQ where the main scope was to bring science students together in an informal atmosphere where they can socialise together. Other parties, such as Summer '11 Kick-off party, Freshed up, Santa's A list and End of exam Drinks at Anvil were co-organised between a number of student organisations. S-Cubed main aim was that of promoting integration between science students and students from other faculties in a social atmosphere. This succeeded since a good proportion of students who attended were science students

Recruitment Night

S-Cubed organised an informative recruitment night in April encourage individuals that aspire to help the organisation either through joining the S-Cubed executive in the upcoming year or being active members in the student representative body. During the night, a presentation regarding a general idea of S-Cubed focusing on the individual roles were explained, following various hands-on scenarios for the participants to facilitate their understanding of being in a student organisation. The night ended with some refreshments and nibbles to form a social environment amongst the students present.

Looking forward

A special thanks goes to the students who attend and support our events as without them, events would definitely not be successful since they would not fulfil their potential. Another thanks goes to the rest of the executive for the constant co-operation throughout the year, without which such events would not be flourishing. Finally, a thanks goes to all those who provided us with their support or advice throughout the year.

Continuity and innovation are essential keys in order to continue building on present events to achieve better successful activities. This can be done by knowing the interest of students and working as a team to promote events to every student in different ways by emphasizing on face to face communication, and by treating each student as an individual and not a number. A possible idea for the future would be that of forming a subcommittee for the promoting department in order to expand on exposure of S-Cubed's activities.



International Officer

Michael Buhagiar

“ S-Cubed has always felt the need to strive to break new frontiers and increase its international profile, and the creation of a specific role to address this need is evidence of this.”

Introduction

This year the need was felt to create the role of International Officer which was entrusted to me, a role I have embraced and grown in. S-Cubed has always felt the need to strive to break new frontiers and increase its international profile, and the creation of a specific role to address this need is evidence of this.

International Affiliations

As part of my role as international officer, I have sought to maintain established affiliations with renowned international Science organisations as well as the creation of new affiliations for the benefit of a wider range of Science students. The main aim behind such affiliations, apart from increasing the presence of the organisation beyond our shores, is to facilitate networking and contact-making as well as to benefit from the numerous educational resources available to students for free or for a small annual fee.

The affiliation with the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) which has already been in place was renewed and students were encouraged to take up its affiliate membership scheme which offers a multitude of benefits such as the purchasing of books at a reduced price, a monthly copy of its magazine *Chemistry World*, access to a large collection of journals and papers, and much more. We believe that the RSC has much to offer both our organisation and the individual, with a number of resources still being untapped. The challenge in the coming years will be to continue to exploit these resources for the benefit of our students.

This executive team also saw the establishing of new affiliations with other international organisations. We were pleased to join the Institute of Physics (IOP) as well as the International Association of Physics Students (IAPS) on the advice of a physics student during

last year's AGM. The possibility of partnering with other international organisations relating to other fields of Science which we represent were also explored however the right associations with the students' best interests at heart were not found and nothing materialised. The IOP also offers many free resources for students following physics related courses at university, in particular is their free online portal called *Physics World*, or a monthly copy of their magazine bearing the same name for a small annual fee.

Both membership with and general awareness about the RSC and IOP were promoted amongst students particularly during Freshers' Week, with the annual influx of first year students visiting our stand, by handing out a number of leaflets and speaking to students informally, and occasionally throughout the year via our online and social portals. Next year's challenge will be to continue improving on these affiliations by establishing new ones. We have recently been contacted by the Society of Biology (SoB) and we will explore this possibility particularly because of the large number of students who study biology at undergraduate level. Another challenge will be to increase the awareness amongst students of the multitude of resources available to them through the international organisations, as they are also a good opportunity to make good contacts especially if one is interested in pursuing a career abroad or even reading for a degree in the UK, yet the general feeling is that our students are not aware of these opportunities. For this reason I believe the role of International officer is of great importance in ensuring constant exposure for students, and to seek new innovative ways of expanding the organisation's horizons.

Swiss-Cubed 2012 – The International Trip

Following the previous executive's successful international trip to England, which included visits to Oxford and Cambridge University, as well as University College of London, an educational trip to Switzerland was organised between the 9th and 13th April 2012, which saw a group of 50 students reading for various degrees within the Faculty of Science visit the CERN premises in Geneva and LHCb, which is currently breaking barriers in its attempt to uncover



the origins of the Universe – hence the timing of this trip could not have been more adequate.

Throughout this four night stay, students had the opportunity to stay in both Geneva and Zurich, two of Switzerland's most prominent cities, getting to know each other better and making new friends at the same time.

The visit also included visits to the Salt Mines of Bex, a two hour tour deep beneath the ground, where students learnt about this once precious resource, as well as a day visit to

Technorama, an interactive Science Centre full of exhibits and demonstrations encompassing a wide spectrum of fields, designed to teach science in a fun and informal way while providing great entertainment for all ages. Finally the students were also able to appreciate the beauty of the Rhine falls.

This trip was one of the major activities which I had the pleasure of working on and it was a challenge which I responded to and through it I gained necessary skills and knowledge such as logistical planning, dealing with hiccups occurring along the way, budgeting etc. Planning for this event began early last summer, with a number of travel agents contacted in order to find the best possible prices keeping in mind the country we were going to visit and what we planned to do. We finally went for Tristar travel Ltd who were very helpful and helped us keep the price as reasonable as possible. The anticipation for this trip was very high with all 50 places available being taken within the first two hours that applications were being accepted.

The trip as a whole was rather ambitious since no trip had been organised on such a large scale before, but I am pleased to say that we pulled it off, and received lots of positive feedback. The trip's success was also based on the fact that the students really got to know each other well and most of them were first year students who were not regular attendees of our events, but who came back home with enthusiasm to attend more events in future. This meant the trip fulfilled its intentions in line with our aims as detailed in the statute. This trip was also well publicised with several articles being featured in the local media.

Next year's challenge will be to organise another successful trip to another European destination keeping the same standards and also keeping an eye for the educational aspect which was evident throughout this entire trip.

Careers Week for Technical Students

This year S-Cubed together with IAESTE Malta organised a Careers Week for students studying Science, Engineering, IT, Pharmacy and Architecture with the aim of exposing students to the career opportunities available to them once they graduate. Although not relating directly to my role as International officer, I had the pleasure of forming part of the subcommittee for this event together with my colleague Jonathan Schembri and



two other members from the IAESTE executive. This was another ambitious project which was carried out with minimal expenditure and resources but nonetheless was pulled off on a large scale. Work began on the project during the Christmas recess and proceeded pretty much up to the actual week, between the 27th February and 2nd March 2012.

Several site visits and interesting talks were organised during this week. The main highlights however were the company contact session which was held during degree plus hours and saw around 25 companies from various sectors and fields occupying stands in the common room to speak to the students about their company or organisation. Several big companies as well as



relatively unknown companies attended this event. The other highlight was the IAESTE wine night which we helped out in too. This served as a networking session and conclusion to the event. We also reached out beyond our subcommittee and roped in other student organisations namely, UESA, ICTSA, MPSA and SACES. This event was well publicised with a press release being issued and being featured on several local media newspapers and websites.

We hope to establish this as an annual event and look forward to building on this year's success to bring in more companies and continue to work towards the benefit of students on a wider scale.

Challenges and Way Forward

As the world becomes one globalised village, one cannot continue to stress the importance of reaching out beyond our shores and building up an international profile. Despite the disadvantage of not having an International Science Student Organisation to serve as an umbrella for all student organisation like ours, one must exploit other avenues such as tapping the resources available through funding schemes offered by European entities such as the EUPA, looking into the possibility of co-ordinating a student exchange or some other form of non-formal learning scheme which involves mobility of students. This unfortunately is still an unrealised dream, but one which we must strive to achieve. Other possibilities which may be looked into are the sending of students on educational conferences abroad, many of them offered by the organisations we are affiliated with already. One must not be disheartened by these suggestions which may seem daunting, but rather we must focus on the positive work that has been achieved and continue to build on it in the years to come.



Education Officer

Jonathan Schembri

“S-Cubed will continue to strive to make itself approachable and available to deal with the education-related needs of the students.”

Introduction

The appointment of an Education Officer within the S-Cubed executive team has this year once again been deemed an important factor in addressing education-related matters. My role has in fact been to see through the aims of the organisation in stressing the importance of the academic sector in student life.

From the start of the academic year, it was seen vital to help new science students find their bearings within the university system. The organisation of tours around the Faculty of Science during *Freshers Week* was an initiative which aimed to make the settling-in period less challenging. A *Second Hand Books* database was also set up during *Freshers Week*, facilitating both the selling and buying of books for the students within the faculty.

Site Visits

S-Cubed considers site visits essential in bridging the gap between a student’s coursework and the work that exists outside of the lecture room.

As part of KSU’s Environmental Expo in November, a site Visit to Xrobb I- Ghagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre was organised, a visit which involved a technical explanation on the renewable energy projects being carried out on site.



Meanwhile, as part of the *Careers Week for Technical Students* organised by S-Cubed and IAESTE Malta in February, three site visits were organised in relation to potential future job opportunities. The site visit to Arrowpharm, a well-

established pharmaceutical company both in Malta and abroad, provided students with a tour of the laboratories. A visit to the Sant'Antnin Waste Treatment Plant in Marsaskala provided insight about the treatment of waste and the potential job opportunities for both science and engineering students. Furthermore, a visit to Farsons included an informative tour of the brewery. Such visits aimed to provide students with a better understanding of the applications of science at the industrial level.

The final site visit of the 2011/2012 scholastic year was a familiarisation visit to STMicroelectronics Ltd. targeted towards Chemistry students in their final year, with the aim of demonstrating to the students the various projects being carried out by the company.



From an environmental perspective, following up on previous years, a clean-up at 'Il-Ballut', Marsaxlokk, was organised in conjunction with Greenhouse in September 2011. The aim of this visit was to promote the safeguarding of the natural environment, while also encouraging active citizenship by bringing together University students who worked together for a good cause.

School Visits

In an attempt to reach out to younger students who have not yet entered the fray of university, S-Cubed became involved in a Science Communication Team whose aims were to portray science as an interactive learning experience. A visit to the Higher Secondary School in Naxxar was organised in February 2012, where a number of demonstrations related mainly to Chemistry & Physics were performed to sixth form students. The organisation of such demonstrations was also seen as an opportunity by S-Cubed to promote student participation in such initiatives, and bring together students from within the faculty of science to work towards the same aim, putting across the fun side of science in an informal manner. The activity also served as a means of informing those students, who, at the sixth form stage, might not yet have had a clear view of what a science course at University could involve.

S-Cubed's Position on the National Curriculum Framework 2011

In response to the proposed changes to the National Curriculum Framework, S-Cubed felt the need to publicly issue its concerns on the matter, in particular reference to the consultation document "A Vision for Science Education in Malta".

A press release was issued, and the main points brought forward pinpointed the lack of inclusion of syllabi detailing the content which would be delivered in the newly proposed secondary level science subjects, and their transition to higher levels of education. S-Cubed

appealed for greater consultation with current members of the science student body to better highlight the underlying issues in science education.

S-Cubed believes that it is important to implement such an active approach in response to national issues, on behalf of the science students that such decisions may eventually influence.

Looking Forward

The levels of interest which came with education-related matters such as site visits & educational talks and workshops, including those within seminars, which more often than not brought with them encouraging attendances, augurs well for years to come. More education-based initiatives should definitely be considered in the near future, and a degree of innovation, such as that which brought together the *Careers Week for Technical Students* and the positive response which came with it, is encouraged. S-Cubed will continue to strive to make itself approachable and available to deal with the education-related needs of the students.



Social Policy Officer

Jonathan Muscat

“ During this academic year, various subjects arose for discussion during the KPS meetings on which policy papers were formulated and voted upon.”

Introduction

KSU's Social Policy Commission (KPS) is the body in which all student organisations on and off campus are brought together to discuss and develop social policies on university related, national or international issues which affect students in general.

S-Cubed, being a senate recognized organisation is part of this commission, and being the Social Policy Officer, I attended these meetings regularly representing the organisation's views and all students from the faculty of science on the subjects discussed.

Discussions and Votes taken during KPS

During this academic year, various subjects arose for discussion during the KPS meetings on which policy papers were formulated and voted upon. By representing S-Cubed and all of its members I attended these meetings discussing various topics such as: The Drug Policy reform in Malta, The Public Transport Reform report, The Reaction to Pre-Budget Document, ACTA and The Reaction to National Environment Policy amongst others.

The Green Expo

The environment and the importance of renewable energy sources has become one of the most issues discussed internationally. This has also been reflected by The Green Expo; an activity organised by the Social Policy Commission which S-Cubed took part in.

An event which was organised for this week was a site visit to Xrobb I-Ghagin Nature Park where attendees were informed



about projects related to renewable energy sources which are being carried out on the site.

S-Cubed also supported the tree planting activity d by KSU during this week by donating money for a tree. A stand was also set up during the whole week were we promoted the site visit and our clean-up initiatives.

Organisations' Days

During the first week of March, S-Cubed also took part in Organisations' Days; an event organised by the social policy commission, were a stand was set up showcasing work done by S-Cubed, upcoming events and also promoting the official magazine; In Touch. A quiz for students within the faculty of science was also organised during this week as part of Organises Days events, with questions from different areas of science.

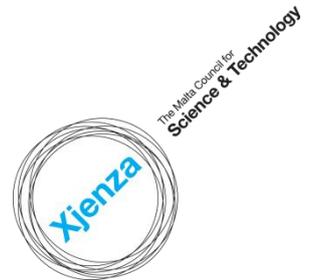
Smoking on Campus Report

An initiative produced by our organisation was the Smoking on Campus Report. This outlines the current situation with regards to the proportion of members of the Faculty of Science that smoke and what the general opinion on smoking in doorways used by a large number of people regularly is. These buildings include most prominently the Library, Faculty Building and Chemistry Department. The results of a survey conducted are outlined and illustrated in this short report which is available from our website.



S-CUBED EXECUTIVE 2011-2012

Photo courtesy of Rachelle Zammit
www.rachellezammit.com



S³ Science Students' Society