

SCIENCE UNION 2023

Best Faculty Society



1. COLLABORATION

1.1 - Guild:

Science Union has long held a strong relationship with the guild and its individual departments, something we pride ourselves on and is reflected in our events and initiatives. At its base this is expressed through our involvement with Guild Education Council and Societies Council – but in truth amounts to much more and benefits our student constituents enormously. This of course can be seen in our whole hearted involvement in events such as O-Day and both club carnivals, staples of the guild event calendar.

We also make a pointed effort to be involved in less broadly attended events, such as Guild on the Green in Semester One, at which we were one of only 2 faculty societies in attendance. Our involvement, of course, doesn't end with the orientation period and throughout the year we have remained involved in guild events such as our pot painting collaboration with Guild Welfare and on-going talks and collaboration with UDub Radio to improve student engagement with Tav Wednesday's. Science Union as a whole has also made a pointed effort to utilise or social media platforms to further guild initiatives, including posts about support for the NTEU bargaining period, sharing stories for the Women's Day Abortion Rally, and sharing out the UWA Pride Department's post series on IDAHOBIT.

1.2 - Clubs & Societies:

By our very nature, Science Union is predisposed to collaborating heavily with other student clubs and faculty societies, especially with our subsidiary and affiliate clubs as laid out in our constitution.

So far this year, not including our upcoming events for the rest of semester two, we have run 9 separate collaborative events across all of our portfolios, excluding marketing. Our social portfolio collaborated with both Leisure Social Club and UEC for our Fresher Social Outreach event, and our welfare portfolio similarly collaborated with Leisure to form a team for the Red Bull Wings for Life charity event. Our external affairs portfolio has collaborated with Arts Union, PsySoc, Health Student's Society, and SNAGS along our series of networking and industries nights across both semesters. Our education portfolio has also run a collaborative debate night with Arts Union and BPhil Union and a resume writing and LinkedIn skills workshop, also in collaboration with Arts Union.

Beyond this very tangible level of collaboration, we also strive to engage with each of these other clubs and societies on an extended basis, maintaining contact with the executives of each club on a personal basis and ensuring there is equal and frequent discussion between each of our clubs, regarding our events, our representative duties, and our roles and challenges as leaders of our committees.

In many cases this manifests in Science Union aiding clubs and societies with high committee and executive turnover, ensuring they are aware of the things they need to know and aiding them cope with the at times confronting way events like SCC, AGMs, or Education Council is run, but can also include sharing and promoting other events which align with our values such as the WAMSS endometriosis panel night.

1.3 - University Bodies:

One of our strongest connections to University bodies is, unsurprisingly, the Science Student Office and through them, the Student Life team. We are in continual contact with the team here, collaborating with them with our event promotions, elections, and most notably the five undergraduate orientation panels we have collaborated on. This event is one that Science Union has historically always been involved in, and this year included 3 panels as part of O-Week semester one, and a further two for the current semester.

We similarly maintain an open communication with the Barry J Marshall Science Library. We are particularly proud of relationship with UWA Sports this year, which has grown off of increased efforts last year. With the us holding the most number of unique sign ups this year, and our renewed social sports teams across both semesters this is a rapidly growing arrangement that is set to develop even further next year.

We also are thankful to have a strong relationship with the School of Human Sciences, through which we have been fortunate enough to organise tenancy in the Physiology building and be granted 24/7 after-hours access for those on committee who need it.

This has been particularly for both our events and those of other clubs without such access as we are able to quickly and securely store items on loan from the GSC for late events such as networking night, pubcrawls, and quiz nights.

2. *STUDENT REPRESENTATION*

Science Union has always held student representation as a core part of our purpose, being one of the faculty societies to already have a student feedback form, and using this to develop a general use one to be disseminated through the education council. At the start of this year we focused primarily on representing first year students - ensuring they had the necessary support they needed in what is by and large the most confusing time of the entire University experience.

One of the most impactful examples of this is the creation and distribution of the Science Union Fresher Handbook, a annual booklet that is the largest orientation booklet made by a student group at 30-40 pages. These booklets are distributed at O-Day, both as physical copies and QR Codes as well as being made available online. We also relaunched our first year Facebook group to allow first years to ask questions about their studies, club culture, and guild - which this year had record engagement with 230 members joining over the course of the year.

We also strive to represent the experiences of all of our members, across all fields, levels, and experiences of studying - a goal which is primarily enabled by the Science Student Feedback Form which we shared with the Education Council to develop a generic form for all FacSocs and shared across our socials and to all science Unit Coordinators. This form has been incredibly active this year and has allowed us to better fill our role as student representatives at all levels, including Education Council and the Student Consultative Committee. We also utilise this and our connections with students as a whole to act as Guild appointed undergraduate representative on the Board of Studies for Life, Health and Natural Sciences.

In particular this year our role as student representatives has led to us working with a number of stakeholders to manage sensitive issues across a number of courses and units, notably our work with the Education Council and Postgraduate Student's Association in mitigating the impact of mismanagement in the Master's of Biotechnology resulting in the entire cohort receiving ungraded passes and fee remissions. We've also had to work with the Senior Academics within the Science Student Office and the School of Human Sciences to investigate and control a great level of controversy with an academic within the NEUR2210 Human Neurobiology unit in semester one.

We have made a consistent effort to centre our efforts on representing students and building a reputation of fairness and professionalism with our faculties and schools and feel that this is represented clearly in our work and achievements.

3. EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Science Union operates our external affairs portfolio slightly different from other faculty societies due to the broad scope of whole we represent, especially in comparison to groups like a Blackstone who have a strongly defined cohort. Rather than focusing efforts on what would, ultimately, be a fruitless struggle to gain sponsorship from a medical or chemical engineering company we strive to form strong relationships with local companies and charities. That is not to say we receive no formalised sponsorship, as we do have official agreements with both GradReady GAMSAT Prep and the GAMSAT team under Fraser's Medical. Both of these companies provide us with financial support, discounts for all of our members and support and collaboration on a number of events.

One of primary focuses is building relationships with venues and businesses that we use to run our events, particularly social events which can often come with quite a degree of financial risk. This can be particularly be seen in 3 of our core relationships; including our contact with Magnet House Nightclub which we often utilise to gain free entry for all our attendees after larger social events. We also has a strong mutual relationship with the employees of the newly rebranded gopartybus company which often nets us discounts and promoters codes for local events. Of topical interest is the relationship we have built with Perth Mess Hall as our hall venue since last year granting us greater flexibility and upgraded catering packages for our annual ball.

We are also proud to hold a number of more frequent contacts and relationships with external groups, one of which being Lazer Blaze Australia who have recently sponsored a number of prizes for a relay for life fundraising event that we plan to run in the coming weeks. We have also begun to form new relationships with suppliers for our merchandise, and have since moved over the supply of our sports shirts, winter release jumpers, and 2023 shirts to new suppliers and have enjoyed much benefit from the better quality and lower cost that we have gained through this partnership. We also enjoyed a unique partnership with Voodoo priestess coffee who supplied us with 1,000 discount vouchers to offer for all of our O-Day signup financial members.

This new pivot in our external affairs strategy has yielded us a great many benefits and opportunities for our members - and though it may have led to fewer flashy one off sponsorships common previously, we have a greater quantity of truly high-quality relationships which, in the long run, and far more beneficial for our members and the reputation of Science Union and the UWA Community as a whole.

4. WELFARE, EQUITY & DIVERSITY

This year, Science Union has gone above and beyond in demonstrating our commitment to not only maintaining, but also significantly enhancing student wellbeing through a range of events and initiatives executed by our welfare and marketing portfolios. Our dedication to making a positive impact on the community is shown through examples like our participation in the 'Lovin from the Oven' program at Ronald McDonald House in QEII. Ronald McDonald House Charities is an international not-for-profit organization that provides support for families with sick or injured children. Science Union has consistently shown support for this international not-for-profit by actively participating in these sessions, where we prepare nutritious meals for those who are housed there.

In addition, we introduced the 'Helping Hands' event this year, which was designed to create opportunities for the broader student community to earn transcript-recognized volunteer hours. During this session, we crafted dog biscuits to donate to the Doge Refuge Home in Shenton Park and sewed joey pouches for Kanyana Wildlife Reservation Centre in Lesmurdie. These events not only helped both people and animals in need, but also benefited students by providing a respite from the stress of university.

Furthermore, our commitment to promoting diversity and inclusivity in the field of science was showcased through our annual 'Gender Diversity in Science Breakfast.' This event not only celebrates the remarkable achievements of women and gender-diverse individuals in STEM but also provides a safe and supportive environment for students to network and grow.

Science Union took proactive steps to foster physical health and social engagement through our 'Social Sport' program. By offering discounted participation fees, we removed barriers, making it easier for students to engage in sports and social activities, thus contributing to their overall wellbeing.

Building upon our impressive track record of running the most laps and raising the most money for a faculty society in Relay for Life last year. This year, we organized fundraising events such as 'Silly Soccer for Life,' 'Bingo Night,' and the ever-popular 'Sausage Sizzle,' all of which not only raised funds for cancer research but also benefited both the wider community and UWA students by providing opportunities for social and physical health.

Our newly established marketing portfolio has also played a pivotal role in enhancing student wellbeing by spreading important messages and initiatives through our social media channels. From sharing light-hearted memes to our stories during exam week to uplift students during a difficult time in the semester, to participating in international and national movements like 'R U OK Day,' 'Women's Day,' and 'International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism, and Transphobia,' and our support of the SymbioticA protest; advocating for the world's first art-biology lab. Science Union has consistently used our platform to promote mental health awareness and initiatives that positively impact our student body.

Science Union's dedication to student wellbeing is not just a promise but a tangible reality, reflected in our diverse array of events and initiatives that continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and the broader community.

5. SOCIAL EVENTS

Over the course of this year, the Social Portfolio of Science Union has been dedicated to fostering a vibrant and inclusive campus culture for students across all academic levels. Through a series of carefully curated events, our primary objective was to rekindle the spirit of campus life, a rejuvenation after the prolonged effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused major disruptions to in-person events for the past 3 years. This mission to reignite a passion for campus life was central and led to us creating a series of events with a focus on a welcoming and interactive atmospheres to bridge the social gaps between cohorts from before and after Covid.

Our events have seen resounding success, resonating with students of all academic levels, notably selling out within days of social media announcement. They have become eagerly anticipated opportunities for students to unwind amidst their often demanding schedules. Early in the year, we prioritized fun events for first-year students, introducing them to the exciting possibilities within UWA culture.

Science Union's annual first-year camp, revived after last year's COVID-19 hiatus, was particularly important to us as we aimed to re-ignite the spark of this long-standing traditional event that connects first year students to each other and with older student leaders who volunteer to run the event. We delivered a quality event for this year's group, having provided a safe, inclusive environment for over 60 first-year students. Overall, the event promoted healthy friendships and a positive, inclusive space for students to step outside their comfort zones. It majorly helped to ease the first-year student's stress about their upcoming transition into university life and fostered essential connections between the cohort of first years and the student leaders. This year we saw an incredible retention of first year's involvement in the club with over 20 of the students from camp running for one of our 8 first year positions within committee. An even larger percentage consistently attended/attends Science Union's other events, both social and otherwise, solidifying camp's role as a gateway to Science Union involvement and even broader involvement in campus culture. In semester 2, we run a camp reunion as a continuation of the camp event to ensure that we are continuing to support those who attended.

The other first-year events that we ran this year include a first-year outreach event with Leisure UWA Social Club. This event runs for a few hours, on campus and both Science Union and Leisure run small bonding activities for first years who attend to participate in. This facilitates strengthening relationships between first years and between students and both clubs. We then individually ran an event a week later where we had a BBQ and played some games with the first-year students to provide first years with friends who are more experienced in uni life and culture that would remain throughout this year and beyond.

As ever, our social events are broadly attended by students old and new, with all our events from both of our pubcrawls to quiz night selling out and being safe and enjoyable nights for all involved without compromising the club or the guild's values.

6. INNOVATION & STUDENT NEEDS

6.1 Innovation in Events:

After winning both most laps and most money raised in the facsoc category for last years relay for life, we have put a lot of focus on innovating our relay for life fundraisers and creating 3 new events as part of our efforts this year. The first of these new events is a Bunnings sausage sizzle, which we have not run in years previous (even though it's a well established event). We have also workshopped two independent events, a come and try style soccer event which will be hosted at UWA, and a fundraiser bingo night which we will be hosting at a local lawn bowls club. None of these events have been run by Science Union before, and will all contribute greatly to our fundraising this year.

We have also established a number of other new events outside of our relay efforts, including our collaborative debate night with Arts Union (for which they are submitting an application for Best New Event). This event ran extraordinarily well, utilising the entire interior ground floor of the Tavern and drawing a number of teams to debate a number of lighthearted topics from Arts Union, Science Union, and our moderators BPhil Union. We've also ran a number of smaller new events under our education portfolio, including a Fresher Bootcamp which was dedicated to explaining a lot of the intricacies of uni such as the specifics of report writing in science and the rules surrounding UAAPs and special consideration.

We similarly worked with PsySoc and Arts Union to develop a new style of career event that specifically worked to investigate the unique overlap between science and arts that psychology occupies as a discipline.

6.2 - Internal Innovation:

With an almost entirely new exec this year there was a strong focus internally on restructuring the way we work and communicate across all levels of Science Union to create a more cohesive and effective working and social environment that will improve the experience of both committee and financial ordinary members. One of the most important changes we made was introduction of an automated system to allow our committee members to request a meeting with the executive or administrative team or personally with our president. This has removed much of the complications of maintaining professionalism and non-biased access to the executive team while working with what is essentially our main social and friend group. Creating this separate and distinct space has made the committee feel safer and more certain in requesting meetings and has reduced the need for any disciplinary or pulse check meetings with individuals once possible issues have progressed too far.

We have also restructured the relationship previously held between the the executive and our subcommittees as, previously, the sub-committee was at will included or excluded from council meetings or committee events depending on either the topic of discussions or the will of the secretary.

This created a confusing flow of information but also meant that the chain of authority for subcommittees was no different from committee and lead to a greater work load for the administrative team. We have now formalised the portfolio vice-presidents as the chair of their subcommittees and increased the number of internal portfolio meetings, meaning information is communicated better and a lesser need for large and difficult to organise whole council meeting, delineating the difference between committee and subcommittee as well as the chain of reporting and authority whilst maintaining executive authority

6.3 - Merchandise and Marketing:

The model we used for the large portion of our merchandise has been unchanged for many years, excluding the recent decision to broaden sales of our custom jumpers to people beyond the committee. We strove to change this - creating a more stylish rather than niche design for our shirts and shifting out sports shirts for an earlier order schedule than previous years to increase sales. We also developed a number of increased deals on the purchase of merchandise in bundles or in conjunction with a membership with an event ticket which pulled a lot of interest.

With the establishment of the marketing portfolio last year we were able to gain a lot more insight into our social media analytics than year's previous which allowed us to develop new strategies to drive our reach and engagement for 2023. We made a number of changes, primarily including a strong shift towards instagram advertisement with the slow decline in Facebook engagement, a rejuvenation of our LinkedIn which has in years past gone under utilised and the creation of Science Union Tiktok in anticipation for our ball.

Each of these changes have come together to streamline the capability we have for creating and selling both our merchandise and events, as well as improving the reach of the initiatives we spearhead or share out. It also has the further benefit of improving our analytics and making us a more desirable partner for a number of sponsorships as well as strengthen the relationship we have with our current partners.

6.4 - Final Comments:

Science Union has always considered ourself to be strongly in tune with the student experience and a very close knit community, and we are always making changes at every level to ensure we do the best we can for everyone we engage with. Our dedication to equity and our genuine passion for the events we run and the students we engage is what drives our innovative and welcoming nature, not change and innovation for the sake of change. It is this adaptability that has allowed to survive and strive for coming up on 100 years and grow to be a diverse and vibrant community and society.

Final Comments



Science Union occupies a unique niche when compared to many of the other faculty societies and clubs, as the second oldest faculty society our structure has an incredibly broad constituency and no direct postgraduate cohort or clearly defined faculty or school. This pushes us to develop events that are safer, more organised, and more appealing to students rather than relying on exorbitant spending or cohort tradition

- Keegan Mitchell, President (They/Them)



After the constant disruptions and low engagement in events that has been experienced across the board in 2021-2 many clubs and societies are faced with the issue of an aging committee and a decreased recognition among newly enrolled students. With this comes a lack of experienced volunteers and a complete overhaul of branding and event marketing tactics. Science Union certainly met this challenge this year and, with one of our smallest committee intakes in recent years, have formed an amazing team that has put their all in to organising and running a never ending series of truly enjoyable and worthwhile events, and have managed to turn profit for the first time in a number of years.

This has been an incredibly rewarding year, not just for our executive, but for everyone last one of our members and everyone who has joined our committee and sub-committee. This is what we see as the purpose of the best faculty society award, a recognition of the hard work of the dozens of people who have engaged and carried our events, and in most cases will run to continue their efforts for another year to bring Science Union to even greater heights for our centennial year.

We hope that as you've read through this application you've gained insight into the work we've done, the challenges we've faced, and the objectives we've moved towards throughout this year, and that, more than anything, you see the worth in what we do as a faculty society - whether that leads us to winning this award or not.

Whether we win or lose, this effort and worth isn't diminished but we hope we are at least in consideration for these efforts to be recognised by the Guild. All of Science Union extends our thanks for taking your time to review this application and give our words and commitments serious weight - either way you'll have 3 tables full of us present at the Cruickshank-Routley Ball cheering as loud as we can whether us or our peers win.

To another year!

- On behalf of our committee, subcommittee and members
The Science Union 2023 Executive Team