



Date: Tuesday 8 March 2022
 Time: 18:00
 Venue: South Wing G12 Council Room

Board of Trustees Minutes

Chair: Ayman Benmati, Education Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Arifa Aminy, Equity Officer (Sabbatical)	✓		
Ayman Benmati, Education Officer (Chair)	✓		
Beth Beasant, External Trustee (UCL Staff)	✓		
Clare Bracey, External Trustee (Non-UCL), Vice-Chair (External)	✓		
Ilyas Benmouna, Activities & Engagement Officer (Sabbatical)	✓		
Jenna Ali, Student Trustee (JA)	✓		
Meg Day, Student Trustee (MD)	✓		
Muhammad Chaudhary, Student Trustee (MC)	✓		
Osman Teklies, Union Affairs Officer (Sabbatical)	✓		
Petra Barran, External Trustee (UCL Alumni)		✓	
Viktoria Makai, Postgraduate Officer, Vice-Chair (Sabbatical)	✓		
Yasmeen Daoud, Welfare & International Officer (Chair)	✓		
Zaheer Badat, Student Trustee (ZB)		✓	

In Attendance:
Alex McKee, Director of Student Engagement & Communication
Debbie Nichols, Director of Operations
Dorota Dominiczak, Director of Finance
John Dubber, Chief Executive
Katerina Alexandropoulou, Leadership Team Executive Assistant, Minutes
Simon To, Policy, Governance & Insight Manager, Secretary

1. Welcome & Introductions

The Chair welcomed all those present and asked them to introduce themselves.

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2. Declaration of Interest

The Chair asked if there were any declarations of interest. None were declared.

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3. Minutes and matters arising from the meeting on 9 November 2021

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 9 November 2021 as a true and accurate record.

APPROVED

The meeting moved to discuss Item 5 of the Agenda before Item 4.

5. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive summarised the highlights from their report including:

- Welcome to UCL Survey satisfaction scores that showed improvements for the Union's activities
- Winter Arts Festival amongst other events.
- Student Referendum.
- Leadership Race has attracted the highest number of sabbatical officer candidates in recent years, with all but one student officer position attracting candidates.
- Grab & Go outlet in the Lewis's building is now operating, cafes management has been improved as well as for The Hanger, both contributing to the student community feeling, sustainability shop also up and running.
- Budget 2022-23: Forecasts indicate a standstill budget. We have submitted two strategic funding bids to UCL for clubs and societies grants and academic reps support; we are waiting to hear back in April.
- UCL Strategy consultation: we have been working to increase consultation responses for UCL capital investment in the Union; we would welcome any support as it is an once in a generation opportunity for getting a new Union building and improved sports facilities.
- Student Central: after the disappointment with regards to the listed status of the building, we are continuing to monitor the situation.

The Chief Executive offered the following clarifications after questions by members:

- Staff pay increases follow national pay negotiations for career staff, whilst student staff pay is pegged to the London Living Wage. Increasing student staff pay could be looked at as part of the budget setting process. The first step would be a benchmarking exercise against other local employers to be able to compare levels of pay and reward.
- Next year's budget position remains unclear due to uncertainty around commercial and UCL funding. However, it is likely that the Union will be able to achieve a break-even position based on a standstill budget.
- The timescale for completion of the UCL Strategy is not yet clear but we are keeping in touch with UCL stakeholders that can influence decisions.

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4. Sabbatical Officers' Report

The Vice-Chair (Sabbatical) summarised the highlights from the Sabbatical Officers' Reports and gave the following clarifications on questions raised by members:

- Postgraduate Teaching Assistants pay: There are still problems; working to rectify this and have raised with the UCL Doctoral School. The External Trustee (UCL Staff) advised on who is the best UCL personnel to approach for this.
- Gender Neutral Toilets: We are working on appropriate platforms in making toilets accessible to all students.

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6. Strategy 2022-25

The Chief Executive noted that the draft Strategy 2022-25 had been prepared based on consultation with stakeholders including focus groups with students. They asked the Board to share their thoughts for the draft and recommend their preference amongst the two options for our Vision. They added that the UCL Asks sections are a new element in the Strategy. They further added that Union staff will implement the Strategy through their objectives.

The Director of Student Engagement & Communication presented a summary of the strategy and explained the process and key milestones in drafting the Strategy.

The Union Affairs Officer indicated their support for the draft and noted that a lot of consultation has taken place so far in drafting the Strategy.

The Vice-Chair (External) noted that their preference would be the second option for our Vision. They suggested communicating the top priorities and UCL Asks and including a section on what we are not doing in order to align to our strategy. The Chief Executive responded that putting together a Strategy for a students' union is challenging as we are complicated and diverse organisations. They added that effort was made to make the Strategy relevant to all areas of the Union and make it different and fresh with additions such as the Arts programme. They explained that departmental managers will create operating plans which will feed into the Union's overall Operating Plan, this would be considered by the Board.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) suggested adding a section on how we are going to deliver the Strategy, so that it feels more tangible, as well as framing the priorities on an annual basis and connecting them to the budget as well as referencing the annual officer priorities.

The Activities & Engagement Officer agreed with the suggestion to prioritise the UCL Asks. They gave their preference for the second option of our Vision. They also suggested adding a short explanation for each of our Values so that there was common understanding of these.

The Student Trustee (JA) noted that the second option for our Vision seemed better but may be too broad. They then asked for more information about the focus groups. The Director of Student Engagement & Communications explained how the focus groups were selected and run. They confirmed that after an all-student email, focus groups were held in January 2022. They then emphasised the hard work the officers are putting into influencing UCL decisions and processes.

The Chair asked the Board to vote on the two options of our Vision.

The Board resolved to adopt the second option for our Vision which states:

An outstanding experience for all UCL students and to be one of the best students' unions in the UK and the world.

RESOLVED

The Board resolved to endorse the Strategy 2022-25 in principle subject to final drafting amendments being presented at the next meeting of the Board.

ACTION: The Chief Executive and Director of Student Engagement and Communication to update the draft Strategy in light of the Board's comments and bring an amended version for final approval to the Board meeting in May.

RESOLVED

7. Management Accounts (Quarter 2)

The Director of Finance referred to the Management Accounts for Quarter 2 that had been circulated and reported that these were previously discussed by the Finance Committee. They reported that there was a £270k surplus after six months of trading. They added that Forecast 2 was underway and will assess whether the surplus will remain the same at the end of financial year.

The Director of Finance clarified that the historical figures show an underspend at this time of the year but reallocation of savings needs to be discussed with departmental managers as well as consideration of the commercial performance before making any decisions with regards to the surplus.

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8. Review of arrangements for Student Trustees

The Policy, Governance & Insight Manager summarised the discussions so far and options available. They noted the current election arrangements for the student trustees have been in place since 2011, so it is good time to look into reviewing these arrangements. They added that Governance Committee had posed three questions to the Board for consideration.

The Board considered the need for ensuring greater continuity for the Board. The Board noted that there was no perfect solution but there may be options that improve on the current provision. The Board felt that two year terms might be a solution to greater continuity as well as potentially staggering the elections.

The Board resolved to feed the discussions back to Governance Committee to take this forward.

Action: The Policy, Governance and Insight Manager to feedback the Board's comments on the process of election of the Student Trustees to the next meeting of Governance Committee.

RESOLVED

9. UCL East update

The Director of Operations presented the update on this matter. They added that they were hoping that UCL would come to a decision soon about whether the Union would be offered the convenience store and/ or the café in the Pool Street West building at UCL East and asked the Board to reach a decision in principle and pending UCL's decision on the allocation of funding.

The Chief Executive noted that due to time constraints, the Board is asked to agree in principle to release the necessary capital funding required, subject to agreement with UCL to cover potential losses in the first year when student numbers will remain very low.

The Board discussed the need to cover potential losses and also the importance of having a strong presence on the new campus at UCL East. The Board suggested that a further meeting of Finance Committee be considered to further scrutinise the proposals once a decision from UCL was reached.

The Chief Executive clarified that the UCL East proposal had been discussed at a recent Board Briefing and at Finance Committee. They suggested we wait to receive UCL's decision to see levels of potential risk. They added that losses can be managed by controlling stock levels and staff wages depending on footfall at UCL East.

The Board resolved to approve the investment in the convenience store and café in principle subject to UCL offering to cover any losses in the first year. The Board requested that a formal decision on the required capital investment be taken via email when we are informed of the decision by UCL.

ACTION: The Director of Operations to liaise with the Secretary to arrange for the Board to be informed, once UCL have made a decision about the café and convenience store and arrange for the Board to take a decision via email on the required capital investment.

RESOLVED**10. Register of Interests****RECEIVED****11. Update on Capital spending and Designated reserves**

The Vice-Chair (External) asked whether the estimated total spend was in line with budget. The Chief Executive responded that it was a higher than initially anticipated.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) suggested having a clear differentiation between capital and operational spending. It was agreed that this would be reflected in next year's budget and that future reports on capital spending would show the variance to the original budget.

RECEIVED**12. Union Policy Update****RECEIVED****13. Health & Safety Report (Quarter 2)****RECEIVED****14. Report from the meeting of Governance Committee on 3 February 2022, GC2102 (Draft Minutes)****RECEIVED**

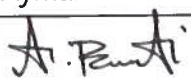
15. Report from the meeting of Finance Committee on 1 March 2022, FC2102 (Draft Minutes)

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16. Any Other Business

There was none.

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Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Ayman Benmati
Signature:	
Date:	06/06/2022

Action Note	
The Chief Executive and Director of Student Engagement and Communication to update the draft Strategy in light of the Board's comments and bring an amended version for final approval to the Board meeting in May.	Chief Executive and Director of Student Engagement and Communication
The Policy, Governance and Insight Manager to feedback the Board's comments on the process of election of the Student Trustees to the next meeting of Governance Committee.	Policy, Governance and Insight Manager
Director of Operations to liaise with the Secretary to arrange for the Board to be informed, once UCL have made a decision about the café and convenience store and arrange for the Board to take a decision via email on the required capital investment.	Director of Operations