

# Changing the title of the Union Affairs Officer role to President

## What would you like the Union to do?

We would like to propose that we rename the 'Union Affairs Officer' to 'President'. The change could either be made immediately or be put into place as part of the 2024 Leadership Race.

The role would remain as an equal trustee with other members of the Sabbatical Officer team, but calling the role President would be more transparent to students about its responsibilities and help increase student influence in UCL decision-making.

To ensure a continuation of the non-hierarchical structure, the job description and communication with the wider student body, particularly in the context of the Leadership Race, should clearly show the role has equal decision-making responsibilities with other officers and that all Union trustees have an equal say in Union meetings. This point should be further emphasised as part of Sabbatical Officer induction.

There will be a review in two years' time to ensure that the role has been effective and to decide whether it should continue into the future. The outcome of this review should be presented to Union Executive in the 2025-26 academic year.

## Why would you like to do this?

The Union Affairs Officer already has the responsibilities held by the role of President in many other students' unions. Changing the title to 'President' would increase the influence of students in UCL decision making, helping to ensure that the voice of students is more impactful on UCL Council and in other key university committees. It would be a more accurate description of the role's current responsibilities, making it clearer and more transparent to students that this post is the Chair of the Union's Board of Trustees and Executive and leads on the Union's relationship with the Provost. The change may also make the role more attractive to students and encourage more candidates and higher turnout for this position in the Leadership Race.

The title of 'President' is also more familiar role for our student groups, for example, our Societies typically have Presidents. This would therefore create more consistency in our democratic structures.

The change will also enable our Union to have more influence in national student decision making, with a Union President having more status and influence in Russell Group Students' Unions and NUS policymaking.

There would be no change to the responsibilities of the role, this is just a change to the role's title.

### **How will this affect students?**

This will increase student influence in UCL's decision making, helping student issues to carry more influence in UCL committees.

We anticipate that more students will be interested in nominating themselves and voting for the President role as part of the Leadership Race. Hopefully the wider student body will be better able to recognise and connect with the Sabbatical Officer team.

### **Is it affordable?**

Yes, there will be no costs to making these changes, as new materials are developed each year for the Leadership Race.

### **Is it sustainable?**

Yes. There are no additional printing requirements.

### **Is your idea new and unique?**

This is a new idea at UCL. However, the vast majority of other Students' Unions have a Union President. UCL is unusual in not having this position, putting it at a disadvantage compared with other SUs.

### **Is your idea inclusive?**

Yes, this is just an operational change to the current Union Affairs Officer role title. This would make the responsibilities of the role more transparent to all students. It may also encourage a wider pool of candidates for the role in future as at present not all students understand the responsibilities of the Union Affairs Officer.