



Date: Monday 28 October 2024
 Time: 18:00 – 20:00
 Venue: Institute of Education, C3.09

Activities Zone

Minutes

Chair: Ana Boikova, Activities & Engagement Officer, Chair

Members:	P	AP	AB
Adam Shaw, Volunteering Rep	x		
Amanda Ng & Rory Clarke, Trans Officer	x		
Ana Boikova, Activities and Engagement Officer, Chair	x		
Ashley New, Arts Officer	x		
Claudia Rueda Munoz, Sports Rep			
Bella Gilbert, Sports Rep	x		
Danilo Paganelli and Anji Suri, LGBTQ+ Officer	x		
Darcy Lan, Postgraduate Officer	x		
Deniz Cicek, Societies Non-Portfolio Rep		x	
Dilmeet Kapoor, Societies Non-Portfolio Rep			
Eda Yildirimkaya, Equity & Inclusion Officer	x		
Elisa de Aragao Bibay, Women's Officer	x		
Francis Deng, Sports Rep	x		
Jack Sibeon, Sports Officer	x		
James Roberts, Sports Rep	x		
Jennifer Tan, Sports Rep			
Jingyi Ye and Yalin Chen, Volunteering Rep		x	
Philip Greger and Suzanna Chen, Disabled Students' Officer			
Rawleka Wilson & Sharvari Patil, People of Colour Students' Officer	x		
Robert James Delaney, Societies Rep (Student Media)	x		
Sai Sreenivedita Cavuturi, Societies Officer	x		
Sejal Jain, Volunteering Officer			
Seth Harris, Societies Non-Portfolio Rep	x		
Umesh Keraba Shinde, Volunteering Rep	x		
Zuha Malik, Volunteering Rep		x	

In Attendance:
Colum Mackey, Head of Policy Representation & Evaluation
Jayne Flowers, Representation and Democracy Coordinator
Madeline MacIntyre, Democracy Assistant, Minutes
Orlando Teng, NUS Delegate
Ashley Toi, President, Engineering Society
Bhavy Metakar, President, Fleming Society
Adam Cleary, Observer
Manaal Tariq, International Students' Officer
Daya (Cheese Grater)
Rhi (Cheese Grater)
Alice (Cheese Grater)
Tumo (Cheese Grater)

Andrea Bidnic, Investigations Editor (Cheese Grater)
Sam (Cheese Grater)
Angi (Cheese Grater)
Malvika Murkumbi, Investigations Editor (Cheese Grater)
Yuen (Cheese Grater)
Nick Miao, Editor-in-Chief (Cheese Grater)
Ben Scanlan, Accommodation & Housing Officer

Preliminary Matters

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair introduced themselves, explaining their responsibilities in overseeing extracurricular activities, including clubs, societies, and volunteering. They also provided a brief background summary. Other sabbatical officers then introduced themselves, each giving a quick overview of their roles and responsibilities.

2. A brief overview of the Activities Zone

The Chair provided an overview of the meeting process, outlining what occurs before, during, and after meetings, and clarifying the distinction between an idea for discussion and a policy proposal.

- Pre-Meeting Preparations: The Chair and staff team review submissions related to both discussion topics and policy proposals. These items are then organized into the Activity Zone agenda. The Chair emphasized the importance of fostering an open, collaborative environment during zone meetings to encourage discussion and engagement.

Policy Proposal Stages:

- The Chair meets with the Representation and Democracy team to determine the appropriate course of action in consultation with the relevant department or team. The Research and Policy team then drafts a briefing document.
- The policy proposal is presented at the zone meeting, where members vote on it. If rejected, the proposal does not progress to the next stage.
- If approved, the proposal is forwarded to the Union Executive for final ratification.

The Chair explained that the Union can adopt stances on key issues affecting students, both on and off campus, as long as these issues impact students in their roles as students. These stances may involve pledges to implement changes within the Union or campaigns to advocate for changes at UCL, within the local community, or nationally. Policies are typically broad statements reflecting the Union's beliefs or objectives regarding specific issues. Any student may submit a policy proposal, but only Zone members are eligible to vote on them.

Announcements

3. Rep Election Results

Chair congratulated elected representatives for 2024/25. Some statistics mentioned:

- 2,172 students voted
- 7,677 individual ballots across 47 positions
- 5.44% voter turnout
- 63 candidates elected
- Full results: <https://studentsunionucl.org/election/rep-elections-2024>

Officer Updates and Questions

4. Activities & Engagement Officer

The AE Officer, Ana Boikova (AB) provided an update on current projects and discussions within the Activities and Engagement portfolio:

- 1) Campus Facilities for Societies and Clubs:
 - AB has been in discussions with the UCL Estates team regarding the shortage of facilities on campus for student groups, including both sports and arts spaces. These discussions include exploring ways to utilize spaces such as the Bloomsbury Theatre and other UCL sports facilities.
 - AB is also working with Goksu Danaci (President), who is leading separate discussions focused on Union building facilities.
- 2) Transparency and Support for Clubs and Societies:
 - To improve transparency and support for clubs and societies, AB has introduced weekly "Activities and Engagement Officer Surgeries" every Thursday, where club and society members can ask questions, get assistance with forms, or receive advice. Additional surgeries are hosted by sabbatical officers on Mondays in the Print Room Café, often focused on specific clubs or societies.
- 3) Awareness of UCL East Facilities:
 - In collaboration with the Clubs and Societies team, AB is working on increasing awareness of the available spaces at UCL East. Guided tours will be organized for club and society leaders to familiarize them with these facilities, providing more options for bookings.
- 4) Refreshers Program:
 - AB is collaborating with Rachel Lim, the WC Officer, on a program tentatively called "Refreshers." This initiative will offer weekly open taster sessions for non-members across various clubs and societies, aimed at enhancing student welfare and providing societies with an opportunity to attract new members throughout the year.
- 5) Cultural Initiatives:
 - AB has been involved in the Discover UK program, which includes plans for a Cultural Summit open to all clubs and societies. This initiative will focus on promoting cultural engagement within the student community.
- 6) Support for Student-Led Volunteering Projects (SLPs):
 - AB discussed efforts to streamline the process for student-led volunteering projects (SLPs) led by clubs and societies, a key priority on their manifesto. The aim is to make

SLPs easier to set up and more accessible, ensuring structured support from the societies team.

7) Varsity Project:

- AB is working on expanding the Varsity project, with plans to make it a bigger and better experience for all involved.

5. Equity & Inclusion Officer

The EI Officer, Eda Yildirimkaya (EY) provided an update on current initiatives and projects in the equity and inclusion space:

1) Black History Month Activities:

- Black History Month was an active period, with notable contributions from TeamUCL, including collaborations with the African and Caribbean Society (ACS) on various events.
- The Officer highlighted the first Black History Month Sports Night, featuring a student DJ, which received positive feedback.
- EY also initiated a major project to transform Phineas into an art gallery space. Phineas, typically a bar, is used by students during the day as a workspace, but feedback has indicated it lacks appeal outside of sports and jazz nights.
- The project aims to create an accessible art space for students from marginalized communities, addressing the scarcity of attainable art spaces in London. Applications for the gallery are currently open.

2) British Sign Language (BSL) Classes:

- EY is collaborating with the BSL Society to expand BSL class availability to all students, making campus more accessible.
- The BSL Society is growing in size, creating a need for additional space to accommodate classes and student interest.

3) UCL Student Experience Board:

- EY announced their role as Co-Chair of the UCL Student Experience Board alongside Kathryn Woods, Pro-Vice-Provost for Education and Student Academic Engagement.

6. Staff Updates

Carl Salton-Brooks, Director of Student Experience at the Students' Union, provided an update on extracurricular activities and initiatives for the year:

- Student Life Strategy: This is the second year of delivering the strategy aimed at enhancing engagement with extracurricular activities across UCL. The focus areas include community and belonging, mental and physical well-being, skills and attainment, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Investment in Arts Programme: There has been an increase in staffing to support the arts at UCL, launching entry-level programmes like the artsLab and Artists Connect, which offer students opportunities to access arts education and skills development through masterclasses and performance opportunities.
- Expansion of Participation in Sports: Continuing the success of mass participation events, such as the campus run, and expanding TeamUCL. Funding for sports clubs has returned to pre-pandemic levels, increasing support for sports groups.

- Support for Departmental Societies: Efforts to expand and support departmental and faculty-based societies are underway, with staff now in place to assist these communities.
- Intercultural Engagement Initiatives: The Impartial Chairs programme is expanding, offering two experiential learning trips to Northern Ireland. A new informal language and cultural discovery programme is set to launch in February, along with a framework for international volunteer programmes.
- Discover London Programme: Designed to engage international students with the city's offerings, this initiative will provide opportunities to explore the UK and London.
- Student Social Enterprise Programme: A programme aimed at helping students understand their entrepreneurial potential while connecting with social causes will begin at the end of the year.
- Pro Bono Research Service: A pilot programme is planned for term 3, focusing on providing research support to students.
- Postgraduate Engagement: There will be a targeted effort to enhance postgraduate engagement in extracurricular programmes, recognizing the need to remove barriers to participation.

An attendee commented on the extension of the Impartial Chair scheme and asked about plans for utilizing the chairs more extensively within the Students' Union. They noted that while there were opportunities advertised last year, the options were limited, and they believed many societies would benefit from using the chairs.

Carl responded positively, acknowledging the good point raised. He mentioned ongoing discussions about creating more opportunities for trained impartial chairs, particularly for them to engage with societies. Carl emphasized the importance of developing community guidelines to navigate issues of power dynamics and privilege without infringing on freedom of speech. He also mentioned exploring opportunities such as podcasts for impartial chairs. Carl offered to follow up with Talia for an update on the initiative at the next zone meeting and encouraged anyone with specific questions to reach out.

Matters for Information

7. Club and Society Grant Allocation 2024/25

Chair began by providing an overview of the current grant allocation for societies, mentioning that grants for sports clubs have returned to pre-pandemic levels. There is increased funding for facilities and coaching grants, especially as more societies are applying for cultural grants, with a notable rise around events like Diwali.

Key points discussed:

- 1) Grant Levels:
 - Grants for sports clubs have increased significantly, allowing for enhanced facilities and coaching support.
 - More societies, particularly cultural ones, are seeking funding, which is encouraging.
- 2) Clarifications on Grant Applications:
 - There were questions about whether the grants apply only to sports clubs or also to societies. The officer clarified that grants are available for any society event at UCL.

- There was a recognition that the application process should be more accessible for societies, and efforts are underway to encourage more applications.
- 3) Funding for Media:
- A discussion arose about the student media's role within the student life strategy and how it overlaps with sports. The officer acknowledged the need for better integration and more robust media coverage of sports at UCL.
 - There are plans to review the student life strategy in relation to media to explore potential enhancements.
- 4) Society Budgeting and Funding Sources:
- Societies can specify their funding needs in grant applications and may tap into UCL East funds to support activities.
 - The officer emphasized the importance of aligning budgets with grant applications to maximize available resources.
- 5) Concerns Regarding Venue Costs:
- Concerns were raised about the financial burden of bar tabs for societies wanting to host events. The officer explained that these costs are primarily to cover staff wages and are not profit-driven.
 - Suggestions were made for potentially waiving or restructuring these costs to support smaller societies.
- 6) Availability of Campus Venues:
- The Chair mentioned that while UCL has several venues, access can be limited due to departmental control. Societies can book spaces, but availability may vary.
 - The need for more accessible venues for society events was acknowledged.

The Chair concluded with an acknowledgment of the ongoing discussions to enhance the support for societies and clubs. Further updates will be provided as initiatives develop.

8. Affiliations, disaffiliations, disciplinary actions

- **Disaffiliations:** Several societies have been disaffiliated due to a lack of leadership (no president or treasurer) or failure to complete registration forms, which were significantly overdue.
- **Consequences of Disaffiliation:** Disaffiliated societies will no longer receive support or resources from the organization. They will also not be able to participate in promotional activities, such as being listed on the calendar or having a dedicated page for their society.
- **Affiliation Process:** The process for reaffiliation involves a panel review. Societies must submit their registration forms and ensure that their committee members complete necessary training. The timeline for starting activities depends on completing these steps.
- **Engagement Patterns:** There was a discussion about membership engagement across all societies, indicating an overall increase in membership this year, though some societies still struggled to attract candidates for leadership roles.
- **Future Reaffirmation:** Societies wishing to reaffirm their status have specific timelines to submit their applications. If they do not engage for three years, they may lose their status, and their funding may be reassigned.

- Encouraging Participation: There is a desire to engage more societies and ensure they are involved in the organization's activities and events, highlighting a commitment to inclusivity.

Matters for Approval

9. Appoint Rep to Somerstown Community Sports Centre User Group

The Somerstown Community Sports Centre User Group is established to represent the views of various stakeholders and users of the Sports Centre, including representatives from Regent High School and UCL Union, who also serve on the full Board. The group also includes community representatives from local organizations, such as the Somers Town Youth Club, which represents the interests of young people in the area, and Mohammed from the Holborn Badminton Club, who speaks on behalf of adult bookers. Additionally, UCL Clubs and Societies appoint two representatives to convey the perspectives of student users. The primary goal of the User Group is to maintain high standards for all customers, identify areas for improvement, and discuss potential future projects. For example, student representatives have requested additional storage space for equipment, which the Centre has accommodated in several instances. Recently, Bella Gilbert, serving as the Sports Rep, nominated herself for a position within the User Group and was democratically elected with an impressive 94% approval rate.

Bella Gilbert nominated herself and was democratically elected with a 94% approval rate.

10. Appoint 1 Rep to Bloomsbury Fitness User Group

The Gym User Group aims to enhance the experience for UCL students who use the gym by improving both the provisions and amenities of Bloomsbury Fitness and fostering a more inclusive environment for all gym users.

James Roberts nominated himself and was democratically elected with a 94% approval rate.

11. Elect One person to Union Executive

Each Policy Zone requires the election of a member to serve on the Union Executive.

For this position, Seth Harris, Rob James Delaney, Sai Sreenivedita Cavuturi, Jack Sibeon, Ashley New, and Francis Deng all nominated themselves, each presenting a brief pitch to the group. Ultimately, Jack Sibeon was democratically elected, securing the position with a 31% approval rate.

12. Agree on priorities for the year

- Prioritizing Engagement and Representation: A significant goal is to increase awareness and participation in student roles, such as sports reps, and to clarify the responsibilities of officers and reps. This could improve engagement across different student forums and lead to better feedback from a broader range of students.
- Promotion and Communications: There was an emphasis on enhancing promotional activities, particularly for events, clubs, and societies. Improving UCL Union's presence on social media was seen as a way to make support more visible and accessible, helping students know whom to contact and encouraging involvement.

- **Expanding Active Bystander Training:** There's interest in expanding active bystander programs, potentially making it mandatory for committee members across societies. This would strengthen campus culture by promoting safe and supportive environments.
- **Funding and Accessibility Issues:** Many students struggle with the rising cost of participation in activities, sports, and societies due to the cost of living crisis. Suggestions included lobbying for dedicated funds to help make these activities more affordable. There was also mention of streamlining the funding process to allow quicker decisions, which would help students secure event tickets or pay for society memberships before they sell out.
- **Research on Underrepresented Groups:** A proposal was made to commission research to understand why some demographic groups are less engaged in extracurriculars. The goal would be to identify specific barriers and work towards solutions that make campus involvement more inclusive.
- **Transparency and Access to Funding:** For some students, particularly those in sports, the high cost of memberships remains a barrier. Participants called for clearer guidelines on available funding and for more timely processing, so students can make quick decisions on participation.

13. Increasing Union Transparency in Activities & Engagement

- **Publishing Data on Engagement:** Proposed sharing engagement statistics, such as event attendance, standard membership numbers, and society-specific engagement data, to help new and current students understand involvement levels in different societies.
- **Clarity on Membership Types:** The Officer highlighted a need for clearer communication on the differences between "taste" memberships and standard memberships, addressing common misconceptions that arise, especially for insurance purposes.
- **Funding Transparency and Accountability:** Suggestions were made to make funding allocation information accessible, particularly for student media and sports clubs, to ensure fairness and transparency. However, there were concerns about GDPR and the feasibility of publishing detailed financial information.
- **Reimbursement Process for Societies:** Attendees noted that small societies often face delays in reimbursements and financial support, which can be challenging for organizing events. Improving the reimbursement timeline could significantly aid societies, especially those with limited resources.
- **Support for Low-Engagement Societies:** Mentioned the importance of supporting societies with low engagement or those struggling to meet membership requirements. Making coordinator support more visible and accessible was suggested as a potential solution.
- **Promoting Zone Meetings:** The idea was raised to publicize zone meetings more effectively so that students beyond those directly involved would be aware of these discussions and have an opportunity to participate if interested.

Matters for Discussion

14. Club & Society Sponsorship Guidance

The Students' Union (SU) currently provides guidance on its website regarding sponsorship for clubs and societies, specifying certain types of sponsors that are not allowed, such as fossil fuel companies.

A potential conflict of interest was disclosed due to previous and possible future employment with Shell. It was assured, however, that sponsorship decisions would be made collaboratively with other officers, including the Sustainability Officer, to maintain transparency.

While there is existing guidance discouraging certain sponsors, it is not yet a formal policy. This ambiguity has prompted discussions with the Climate Action Society and other stakeholders about solidifying the SU's position on sponsorships associated with fossil fuels and similar entities. To avoid confusion, it was suggested that the SU either formally adopt a policy to support this guidance or remove the guidance entirely.


The proposed approach involves seeking input from the Sustainability Officer and other key stakeholders on sponsorship decisions, with the goal of aligning the SU's sponsorship practices more closely with its sustainability commitments.

15. Magic Wand Solutions...

This agenda topic was not discussed in the zone meeting.

Any Other Business**16. Any Other Business**

It was noted that updates are in progress regarding CMISGo access, with an ongoing effort to open up access to treasurers, who currently lack permissions within the system. Discussions are underway to address technical restrictions and the potential role of UCL in facilitating this access, though it was acknowledged that certain controls over CMISGo remain strict.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Ana Boikova, Activities and Engagement Officer
Signature:	
Date:	06/11/2024