



Date: Tuesday 03 December 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 Clearey, Societies Rep (Non-portfolio)	X		
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		
Bella Gillbert, Sports Rep		X	
Claudia Rueda Munoz, 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			X
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	X		
Jingyi Ye and Yalin Chen, Volunteering Rep	X		
Manaal Tariq, International Students' Officer		X	
Suzanna Chen, Disabled Students' Officer			X
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			X
Seth Harris, Societies Non-Portfolio Rep	X		
Tianying Xue, Societies Rep (Non-portfolio)			X
Umesh Keraba Shinde, Volunteering Rep	X		
Zuha Malik, Volunteering Rep	X		

In Attendance:
Jayne Flowers, Democracy Development Coordinator
Madeline MacIntyre, Democracy Assistant, Minutes
Carl Salton-Brooks, Director of Student Experience
Nick Miao, Editor-In-Chief, Cheese Grater
Elgin Edison, Student Participant
Sreja, Student Participant
Jasmin, Graphics Editor

Preliminary Matters

1. Welcome

Chair welcomed members to the second Activities Zone meeting of the year and announced that the Sports Rep and Societies Rep (Non-portfolio) roles have been filled.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from AZ2401 were approved.

Officer Updates and Questions

3. Activities & Engagement Officer (Ana Boikova)

1. Refresher Project Update

- AB provided an update on the ongoing refresher project designed to make taster sessions accessible in various clubs and societies. The project has successfully secured funding approval, allowing clubs and societies to apply for grants to subsidize or even fully cover the costs of events, making them accessible to students facing financial difficulties.

2. Continuation of Taster Sessions

- The initiative will continue throughout terms two and three, extending into the next academic year as a regular program. This will allow students to join clubs and societies via taster sessions post the welcome period.

3. Boston Trip Insights

- AB recently returned from the ACUI conference in Boston, accompanied by the Education Officer, Shabaun. The trip included visits to prestigious universities like MIT and Harvard to explore their facilities and gather insights on enhancing student life and accessibility at their own university. Key learnings from this visit will soon be shared in an upcoming video featuring highlights of the trip.

4. Development of Art Societies

- Efforts are underway to introduce development plans for art societies, similar to those existing in sports societies. These plans aim to culminate in awards or prizes by the end of the year, with implementation potentially beginning in term three or the following academic year.

5. Varsity Series Expansion

- The varsity series has been expanded to include a range of new clubs and sports, such as cycling, kendo, karting, and e-sports. The series now spans seven days and promises an exciting lineup of events.

6. Alumni Engagement and Volunteer Initiatives

- AB discussed ongoing projects aimed at enhancing alumni involvement with clubs and societies, both financially and through mentoring current members. A new 'Discover UK' program has also been launched, offering heavily subsidized trips to places like Bath for international students and others unfamiliar with various parts of the UK.

7. Facilities Development

- Following their return from Boston, discussions are ongoing about leveraging insights gained to enhance their own university facilities.

4. Equity & Inclusion Officer (Eda Yildirimkaya)

1. Safety Initiatives in Camden

- EY attended a workshop at Camden Town Hall focused on women's safety. Although it was more community-oriented, the discussions were relevant to student safety, particularly around bars and cafes near the university. Concerns about student safety, especially related to homeless shelters and paths students take at night, were raised, with plans to implement additional safety measures.

2. British Sign Language (BSL) Accessibility

- Efforts to make BSL accessible to students were discussed. EY highlighted the high costs of BSL classes offered through the Centre of Languages and International Education, which conflicted with the union's goal of affordability. A partnership with Alison Koslowski, the Pro-Provost of EDI at UCL, was established to integrate BSL into an extended learning opportunity, potentially easing the load on the BSL society and making classes more accessible and affordable.

3. UCL East Stall Initiative

- EY reported on the successful launch of the UCL East stall, which gathered student feedback on various aspects of university life, including requests for period products and therapy dogs. This feedback will inform plans and improvements for the upcoming term.

4. Media Suite Developments

- Updates on the media suite included struggles to convince the School of Culture and Communication Industries to open up space for student use. Plans are now set to launch media suites in term three, providing a space for media society workshops and enhancing student experience in the media sector.

5. Campus Lighting Policy

- A new lighting policy is being worked on in collaboration with university estates to improve campus safety. This initiative aims to ensure that students can safely stay on campus during longer hours for their activities and events.

Matters for Information

5. Student Experience Updates from Carl Salton-Brooks (CS), Director of Student Experience at the Students' Union.

Welcome Period and Event Engagement

- CS reported on the success of the welcome period, noting the university hosted 794 events, with a significant increase in alcohol-free options. A total of 52,471 event tickets were booked, surpassing last year's 35,000, with 17,000 individual students participating.

Club and Society Engagement

- Engagement in clubs and societies reached new highs, with membership hitting targets a month ahead of schedule. Departmental societies grew to 43 groups from 31 last year, increasing membership significantly.

Arts and Sports Participation

- Arts and sports participation remains strong, with about 6,000 students involved in arts and over 10,000 in sports. The Project Active sports program saw an increase to 2,248 participants from 1,700 last year.

Active Bystander Program

- The Active Bystander program has engaged over 5,000 students so far this year, continuing to thrive and expand its reach among the student body.

Discover UK Program

- The new Discover UK program launched successfully with a trip to Bath that sold out quickly, prompting the addition of another trip to accommodate student interest.

'Taste Like Home' Student Cookbook

- CS highlighted the launch of a student cookbook featuring recipes from 17 countries, illustrated by a PhD student and driven by elected officers. Proceeds from the cookbook sales are directed to the UCL hardship fund.

External Speakers and Events

- Over 600 external speakers have been hosted this year, a significant increase from previous years, enhancing the breadth and depth of student engagement and learning opportunities.

6. Student Life Strategy Update from Carl Salton-Brooks (CS), Director of Student Experience at the Students' Union.

Bloom Debris Fitness Refurbishment

- The Bloomsbury Fitness centre is undergoing a comprehensive refurbishment, including new flooring, equipment, and a reception area, with a rebranding set to elevate the facility to a higher standard.

Festival of Student Life (UCL 200)

- CS discussed the early planning stages for a festival of student life to be held in June 2026, designed to celebrate student achievements and impact. This five-day event will showcase student-led initiatives and provide a platform for student talent and leadership.

Winter Festival

- The ongoing winter festival on campus features mulled wine, music, and crafts, contributing to a vibrant community atmosphere.

7. Affiliations, disaffiliations, disciplinary actions

New Societies Affiliation

- The Chair provided updates on the recent affiliations of new societies, detailing the process and noting that information about these societies is available on the calendar invites. The new societies have been granted a page on the website without the need for elections for initial officer roles such as President, Treasurer, and Welfare Officer.

Public Availability of Society Information

- A question was raised about the extent of publicly available information regarding new societies. The Chair clarified that detailed pages for newly affiliated societies, including their constitution, risk assessments, and contact details, would be published on the website. Social media connections for these societies would also be set up.

Probationary Period for New Societies

- Clarification was sought regarding the probationary period for new societies. Carl Salton-Brooks responded, explaining that there is no official probationary period. However, new societies must secure at least 30 members by the next academic year to maintain their affiliation, which informally acts as a probationary measure.

Development Support for New Societies

- Carl emphasized that while there is no formal probationary period, the union provides development support to help new societies thrive. If a society fails to attract the required number of members, disaffiliation may be considered.

Upcoming By-Elections

- It was noted that positions within the newly affiliated societies would open up for elections in the following year to ensure leadership renewal and ongoing engagement.

Matters for Discussion

8. Exemption from class if you play a match representing UCL nationally (BUCS).

Scheduling Conflicts:

- Students involved in sports often face scheduling conflicts, particularly on Wednesdays, when many matches are scheduled. Members noted concerns about classes running into the usual sports times, affecting students' ability to participate in matches.

Recording Lectures and Online Participation:

- There were suggestions about recording lectures or allowing online participation to accommodate students who must travel for matches. However, issues were raised regarding departments that do not record lectures due to sensitive content or policies aimed at ensuring in-person attendance.

Exemption Criteria and Implementation:

- The potential developing of a policy that might include exemptions for students on official team lists for match days was discussed. The feasibility of such a policy would depend on cooperation from academic departments and adherence to UCL policies.

Equity and Inclusion Concerns:

- Some participants expressed concerns about fairness, pointing out that students who work part-time to support themselves might also need similar exemptions. The discussion highlighted a broader issue of balancing academic, work, and extracurricular commitments across the student body.

Support for International Students:

- The specific needs of international students were emphasized, especially those whose visa conditions require attendance verification. The possibility of providing targeted support to these students was discussed, considering their unique challenges.

9. Feedback about Activities Zone

Communication Improvements:

- A participant suggested improvements in communication, specifically receiving emails and notifications about meetings and discussions earlier to better prepare for participation.

Importance of Timely Feedback:

- The Chair emphasized the importance of receiving feedback early in the academic year to implement changes in real-time, ensuring that activities and policies remain relevant and effective.

Presentation of Papers:

- There was a discussion about how papers are presented through the "What's on Calendar," with a focus on reducing the number of clicks required to access information, aiming to streamline the process for better accessibility.

Future Planning:

- Looking ahead to future meetings, the Chair planned to base agendas on the feedback and ideas brought up during discussions, underscoring the participatory nature of planning in the Activities Zone.

Any Other Business

10. Any Other Business

No other business.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Ana Boikova, Activities and Engagement Officer
Signature:	ANASTASIJA BOIKOVA
Date:	16/12/2024