



Date: Monday, 7 October 2024
Time: 18:00 – 20:00
Venue: Bo6, Drayton House, Hybrid (Teams)

Union Executive

Agenda

Chair: Goksu Danaci, President

| Members: | P | AP | AB |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Eda Yildirimkaya, Equity & Inclusion Officer | X | | |
| Ana Boikova, Activities and Engagement Officer | X | | |
| Rachel Lim, Welfare & Community Officer | X | | |
| Darcy Lan, Postgraduate Officer | X | | |
| Shaban Chaudhary, Education Officer | | | X |
| Goksu Danaci, President | X | | |
| Anji Suri & Danilo Paganelli, LGBTQ+ Officer | X | | |
| Suzanna Chen, Disabled Students' Officer | | | X |
| Rawleka Wilson & Sharvari Patil, People of Colour Students' Officers | X | | |
| Elisa de Aragao Bibay, Women's Officer | X | | |
| Alan Salazar Guerra, Sustainability Officer | X | | |
| Elected Officer from Education Zone | | | |
| Elected Officer from Activities Zone | | | |
| Elected Officer from Welfare and Community Zone | | | |

| In Attendance: |
|---|
| Ana Boikova, Activities and Engagement Officer |
| Rachel Lim, Welfare & Community Officer |
| Goksu Danaci, President |
| Frini Bitzeni, Analogue Magazine Society, President |
| Mackalia Grocher, Analogue Magazine Society, Welfare Officer |
| Alan Salazar Guerra, Sustainability Officer |
| Elisa de Aragao Bibay, Women's Officer |
| Danilo Paganelli, LGBTQ+ Officer |
| Sharvari Patil, People of Colour Students' Officers |
| Darcy Lan, Postgraduate Officer |
| Eda Yildirimkaya, Equity & Inclusion Officer |
| Simon To, Director of Policy, Governance & Advocacy [Students' Union Staff] |
| Colum Mackey, Head of Policy, Representation & Evaluation [Students' Union Staff] |
| Madeline Macintyre, Democracy Assistant [Students' Union Staff] |

| Actions Log 2024/25 | Responsibility | Update due: |
|---|--|--------------------|
| Explore the use of student testimonials and social media platforms to improve accessibility of SU communications. | EI Officer, Sustainability Officer | 11 November 2024 |

| | | |
|--|------------------------|------------------|
| Assess the feasibility of extending active bystander and consent training to the entire committee. | WC Officer, AE Officer | 11 November 2024 |
| Investigate the logistics of introducing a hot food vending machine at UCL East to provide more affordable meal options. | Chair | 11 November 2024 |

Preliminary Matters

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the zone meeting.

The Chair emphasized the need for students to have a dedicated space on campus where they can foster connections, explore new interests, and engage in activities they enjoy. They stated that students have waited long enough for such a space and deserve this opportunity. They further highlighted that the Students' Union is well-positioned to advocate for students' interests and ensure they have a positive experience during their time at UCL. Additionally, the Chair underscored the importance of amplifying the student voice beyond UCL, particularly with local and national government, to ensure that student needs and interests are considered in broader decision-making processes.

The Postgraduate Officer expressed the importance of empowering master's students to enhance and confidently articulate their skills and experiences, contributing to their future employment and life opportunities. They also noted that Academic Representatives are actively engaged and empowered to represent the student body. These representatives work in partnership with staff to ensure that student voices are heard, leading to improvements in the overall learning experience. Furthermore, the PG Officer highlighted that research students are supported within a thriving academic community where they feel a sense of belonging and are valued for their contributions.

The Activities and Engagement Officer highlighted that students are encouraged to make the most of their university experience through self-discovery, learning from one another, developing skills, and having fun. They emphasized the availability of a thriving arts programme that broadens students' horizons, creates new opportunities, supports wellbeing, and contributes to skill development. Additionally, the AE Officer underscored the central role of sports in student life, noting that participation helps students grow, build resilience, and overcome challenges to reach their full potential.

The Education Officer's (not present) slides emphasized that students are considered true partners at UCL, with empowered, connected, and respected Academic Representatives playing a central role in decisions that impact them at a local level. They also noted that students remain a key focus for the government, ensuring that all students feel valued and supported, which enables them to learn, grow, and broaden their perspectives. The Education Officer highlighted that students are provided with valuable and recognized opportunities to develop their future prospects while also improving their wellbeing, contributing to a wholesome and well-rounded university experience. Additionally,

they stressed the importance of authentic and supportive assessments that reduce stress, enhance learning, and equip students for their future careers.

The Equity and Inclusion Officer highlighted the importance of students feeling confident in making connections with their peers, fostering a supportive environment where they feel safe, reassured, and inspired. They emphasized the need for students to feel proud and accepted for who they are within a community that promotes safety and a high level of cultural understanding. Additionally, the EI Officer underscored the commitment to ensuring that all students, regardless of their background or location, have an equitable experience within a united and inclusive community.

The Welfare and Community Officer emphasized that students have access to quality mental wellbeing services, ensuring they receive the support they need when required. They highlighted the importance of financial support for students to meet their basic needs, enabling them to focus on and succeed in their studies. The WC Officer also stressed the need for an accessible, supportive, and affordable living environment at UCL, designed to meet students' needs and foster a sense of community. Additionally, they noted that students are encouraged to find their community and explore new opportunities that contribute to their overall wellbeing.

Announcements

2. Rep Elections

Chair gave a reminder that nominations close on 14 October.

3. Save the date! Policy Zone Summit - 26 October

Chair gave a reminder of the meeting date.

4. Matters for Approval

No action points from previous meeting.

Sabbatical Officers

5. Sabbatical Officer Priorities & Updates

Chair introduced the Sabbatical Officers for 2024/25.

6. Questions & Discussion

No questions asked.

Matters for Discussion

7. Existing Union Policies & Questions

The Chair briefly summarized the key policies passed during 2023/24, including:

- Scrutiny of Union processes by student media
- Good Night Out training
- Pronoun integration at UCL
- UCL providing affordable meals
- Lobbying to end UCL's relationship with arms companies
- Active bystander and consent training
- Posters detailing emergency helplines and support services to be placed in toilet cubicles
- Commitment to harm reduction
- Re-affiliation of RUMS clubs
- Sustainability training
- Supporting the campaign for a London-wide rent freeze
- Including the Latino community as part of Enrolment data
- The Union's initiative to bring all outsourced support staff at UCL in-house
- Supporting students in sex work
- Opposition to the use of Amazon vouchers and products
- Plant-based food policy
- Other various policies

Discussion:

The President of Analogue Magazine Society raised the issue of rising food costs at UCL East and suggested the possibility of introducing a hot food vending machine at that location. A question was posed regarding active bystander and consent training, which currently involves scenario-based sessions both online and in-person (for chairs only). It was suggested that, in the future, the entire committee should participate in the training. There was also a query about whether the training is refreshed annually, with concerns raised about its long-term effectiveness. The WC Officer, along with the AE Officer, explained that they are focusing on pushing for initial training, with annual refreshment as a potential future goal. The Sustainability Officer inquired about UCL's relationship with arms companies, to which the Chair was unsure how to respond, clarifying that this is a position held by UCL, not the Students' Union. The Women's Officer mentioned a policy that was not included in the Chair's table—concerning student safety at night and the need for better campus illumination.

8. Rental Reform

The Chair provided an update on the Renters' Rights Bill currently progressing through Parliament. The bill is sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government under Angela Rayner MP, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister.

Originally introduced by the Conservative government, the Renters Reform Bill has been reintroduced by the current Labour government and is now undergoing its second reading in the House of Commons. While the bill is likely to pass, the National Union of Students (NUS) and the Renters Reform Coalition are advocating for several changes.

The NUS is calling for the removal of the guarantor requirement, arguing that it places undue pressure on poorer, estranged, and international students. Additionally, a student exemption for "no-fault" evictions, which was added during the committee stage in November 2023, remains in the bill. This exemption creates a "two-tier housing market", exempting a whole class of people (students) from rental rights that others would enjoy if the bill passed.

Officers will go to Parliament on 23rd October to discuss these concerns with MPs.

9. UUK Blueprint Paper

The Chair presented the University UK Blueprint, emphasizing its recommendations aimed at addressing inequalities in higher education (HE) and enhancing the impact of universities.

1. **Expanding Opportunity:** The Blueprint highlights the need to tackle inequalities in HE admissions. It recommends reinstating maintenance grants for students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and increasing maintenance loans in line with inflation.
2. **More Responsive and Collaborative Tertiary Education:** It advocates for streamlining educational processes and implementing a lifelong learning entitlement (LLE) to better cater to the diverse needs of learners.
3. **Generating Local Growth:** The Blueprint stresses the role of universities as major employers and economic engines. It recommends collaboration with metro mayors and local growth plans, as well as partnerships with the NHS to bolster local economic development.
4. **A World-Leading Research and Innovation System:** The importance of establishing a robust framework for research and innovation is emphasized.
5. **Global Reach, Reputation, and Impact:** Recommendations include developing global strategies for universities, addressing immigration costs for staff, and advocating for a prolonged Turing Scheme.
6. **Putting Universities on Firm Financial Footing:** A two-phased approach is proposed to stabilize university finances, which includes linking tuition fees to inflation, restoring the teaching grant, and reversing the decline in quality-related research funding.
7. **University-Led Transformation:** The Blueprint underscores the significance of efficiency, income generation, philanthropy, and the removal of VAT on shared services.
8. **Better Regulation:** It calls for a more effective regulatory framework in England, with specific recommendations for the Office for Students (OfS).

9. Improving Assessment of University Impact: The Blueprint advocates for capturing both private and public benefits of universities to inform public policy decisions and spending.

During the discussion, the Chair highlighted concerns regarding immigration costs associated with these recommendations. The Director of Policy, Governance & Advocacy noted a historical trend where certain groups paying more results in increased costs for all, emphasizing the need to assess university populations and consider the impact of higher maintenance loans. They pointed out that not all graduates pay back their loans in full, suggesting the necessity for alternative methods of funding and considering the broader implications. The Activities and Engagement Officer raised concerns about the awarding gap linked to higher maintenance loans, while personal anecdotes were shared regarding international students who often pay their rent upfront, ranging from three months to one year.

10. Any Other Business

The Activities and Engagement Officer raised a question regarding how to improve transparency within the SU, which is a consistent issue. The Equity and Inclusion Officer and Sustainability Officer noted that despite increased transparency, there can still be a lack of accessibility due to marketing challenges. To address these concerns, the idea of utilizing testimonials and enhancing information shared on the SU's Instagram was discussed as a means to better circulate information to students.

(The meeting finished at 19:57)

| Minutes approved as a true and accurate record | |
|---|--------------|
| Chair: | Goksu Danaci |
| Signature: | Goksu Danaci |
| Date: | 6/11/24 |