

**Date:** Monday 2 Dec 2024**Time:** 18:00 – 20:00**Venue:** C3.09, IOE**Welfare & Community Zone****Minutes****Chair:** Rachel Lim, Welfare & Community Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Alan Salazar Guerra, Sustainability Officer			X
Alanis Hernandez Vasquez, Hall Community Officer for New Hall - Caledonian Road	X		
Amanda Ng & Rory Clarke, Trans Officer	X		
Anam Eijaz Ahmed Choudhary, Welfare Rep (Societies)	X		
Arkh Rishi Goyal, Hall Community Officer for John Dodgson House		X	
Benjamin Li, UCL East Student Officer			X
Benjamin Scalan, Accommodation & Housing Officer	X		
Danilo Paganelli and Anji Suri, LGBTQ+ Officer			X
Darcy Lan, Postgraduate Officer	X		
Eda Yildirimkaya, Equity & Inclusion Officer	X		
Elisa de Aragao Bibay, Women's Officer	X		
Karrar Hashim, Hall Community Officer for Endsleigh Gardens and John Adams Hall	X		
Kelly Chow, Social Class & Mobility Officer	X		
Kenloy Smith, Hall Community Officer for Stapleton House	X		
Lampros Mallios, Postgraduate Hall Community Officer for 109 Camden Road (Ann Stephenson, Ifor Evans, Max Rayne and Neil Sharp House)			X
Manaal Tariq, International Students' Officer	X		
Oskar Barltrop, Undergraduate Hall Community Officer for 109 Camden Road (Ann Stephenson, Ifor Evans, Max Rayne and Neil Sharp House)	X		
Pooja Murugakannan, Hall Community Officer for Ian Baker House and Ramsay Hall	X		
Rachel Lim, Welfare & Community Officer	X		
Rawleka Wilson and Sharvari Patil, People of Colour Students' Officer	X		
Richard Hebblethwaite, Mature, Part-time & Carers Students' Officer	X		
Sasha Lawson, Welfare Officer	X		
Sneha Acharya, Hall Community Officer for Frances Gardner House and Langton Close		X	
Souhridyo Bose, Hall Community Officer for James Lighthill House	X		
Yiming Yao, Welfare Rep (Societies)	X		
Yoki Wang, Hall Community Officer for Astor College		X	

Quorum: 12

In Attendance:
Jayne Flowers, Representation and Democracy Coordinator
Colum Mackey, Head of Policy, Representation & Evaluation
Johnathan Doone, Student Support and Wellbeing Business Partner

Actions Log 2024/25	Responsibility	Update due:
Rachel Lim will follow up with the SRA team about the training the Student Resident Advisors receive regarding the clinical psychological support they provide.	Welfare & Community Officer	27 January 2025
Darcy to connect the Research Students' Network & Mature, Part-Time & Carers Network	Postgraduate Officer	27 January 2025
Rachel will investigate the work of adding 'trans-friendly' as a tag to the SU Flatmate Finder.	Welfare & Community Officer	27 January 2025

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Welfare & Community Officer (WC) Officer, Rachel Lim (RL), briefly introduced herself and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

2. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Minutes Approved

Announcements

2. Bye-Election Update

WC explained that the Union recently held by-elections to fill roles that were vacant after the Rep Elections. She warmly welcomed them to the Zone, offering for them to reach out and connect to start working together soon.

Hall Community Officers

- Hall Community Officer for Astor College
- Hall Community Officer for Endsleigh Gardens and John Adams Hall
- Hall Community Officer for James Lighthill House
- Hall Community Officer for New Hall - Caledonian Road
- Hall Community Officer for Stapleton House
- Hall Community Officer for John Dodgson House

Club & Societies

- Welfare Reps (Societies) (2)

3. Updates on actions from previous meeting

Following on from the previous meeting, RL wanted to highlight any related progress around the Mums & Dads Scheme, Project Period and the Agreed Priorities for the year.

Mums & Dads Scheme: Creating Community

RL highlighted that a similar discussion had taken place in the Education Zone, and it is clear that students are increasingly asking for more avenues of support that come from their peers and others that reflect their identities. It was then explained that Sabbatical Officers are going to do some cross-Zone work to formulate a broader policy that encompasses the nuances of this issue.

Project Period

The Chair updated everyone on the progress of the project period policy that was submitted by the Women's Officer. This policy has now been ratified at the Union Executive. The first working group for Project Period alongside UCL has now taken place; the first action being that the WC will be creating a business case on broadening Project Period to cover the whole campus which will be presented by the end of the academic year.

Update on agreed priorities for this academic year

RL summarised the confirmed priority areas for the Zone during this academic year. They are as follows:

1. **Improved Communication of Services:** One priority is to simplify and communicate the range of student services available at UCL. This would include creating a flowchart that helps students understand where to seek help and ensures they are directed to the right resources.
2. **Flourish Programme Enhancement:** There's a desire to improve the Flourish programme, which organizes events for students in residences. The aim is to make these events more relevant to students' interests and more accessible, especially considering issues with timing and location.
3. **Accommodation Challenges:** International students face issues with accommodation due to delayed admissions, which results in missing priority deadlines and being placed on waitlists for expensive options. There is a push to address the affordability and accessibility of accommodation for students on the waitlist.
4. **Diverse Mental Health Services:** A major concern raised was the need for more diversity in mental health service providers, particularly those who are POC or have disabilities. It's been suggested that UCL look into peer-to-peer support programs with psychology students while waiting for broader diversity improvements in mental health services.
5. **Direct Action and Accountability:** A recurring issue in accommodation has been the lack of effective management action when issues are raised. A proposal is to work on better communication and access to decision-makers in accommodation services, ensuring that concerns are addressed promptly and meaningfully.

Officer Updates & Questions

4. Welfare & Community Officer

RL provided an update on her current projects and the tasks she is working on to get to the final part of term. RL has been meeting with the Hall Community Officers (HCOs) to introduce herself and discuss collaborative initiatives for the upcoming academic year. In addition, she will be participating in the Personal Tutor Working Group, where the focus will be on developing a unified personal tutor policy for the 2025/2026 academic year in collaboration with UCL. This initiative aims to improve the personal tutoring experience for students and ensure consistency across faculties.

RL also travelled to Ireland to take part in the Impartial Chairs trip. This trip will provide a platform for sharing best practices and strengthening their approach to impartiality during chairing and complex conversations. She will also be working with the Union to ensure trips like this will be promoted thoroughly through our comms channels. Finally, she is involved with the Office for Students (OFS) E6 commission, where the primary objective is to improve sexual misconduct reporting procedures within the higher education sector. All universities have one year to provide better reporting procedures and support practices.

5. Equity & Inclusion Officer

Eda Yildirimkaya, the Equity and Inclusion (EI) Officer, updated her initiatives.

She began with the panel event on Women's Safety at Camden Town Hall, highlighting concerns about safety in collaborations with the local homeless shelter. Eda emphasised the need to protect students and shelter participants and encouraged students to voice their concerns.

She then discussed the Gender Expression Fund, proposing that the Trans Officer and LGBTQ+ Officer be included in discussions to clarify fund allocation and its community impact. Eda also announced the separation of the LGBTQ+ Network and the Trans Network to better address each group's unique needs.

Next, she advocated for including British Sign Language (BSL) in the Extended Learning Opportunities program, stressing the importance of accessibility and inclusivity in education. She also highlighted that Professor Alison Koslowski, the Pro-Provost for Equity & Inclusion, is on board with this initiative.

The EI updated the projects at UCL East. This included a 'tell us anything' stall to get student feedback on any areas related to their time at UCL East. In addition to all the positive feedback, students have also raised period products, health & safety concerns and improved provision for mental well-being, which is essential for shaping future initiatives. The EDI strategy at UCL East was reviewed for its implementation and effectiveness in fostering an inclusive environment.

Lastly, the logistics for the upcoming Christmas dinner for Liberation Officers were discussed, which aims to build community and celebrate their contributions.

6. Postgraduate Officer

The Postgraduate (PG) Officer, Darcy Lan (DL), introduced several important initiatives aimed at enhancing the postgraduate student experience.

DL began by detailing the Postgraduate Career Supercharger. This initiative is dedicated to helping students develop essential soft skills that are critical for career advancement. Workshops and training sessions will be offered to strengthen areas such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership.

The second project is Postgraduate Networking Practice. This program provides a supportive and friendly environment for students to refine their networking abilities. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in practice sessions with alumni, allowing them to build confidence and make valuable connections in their respective fields.

DL's third project is PGR Community Building. This initiative focuses on increasing awareness of the student union and its role in supporting postgraduate students. The goal is to foster a sense of community among students and to highlight the various resources and services available to help them succeed.

Finally, there were PG/PGR Updates on recent successful events. The recent Project Active bowling event was a resounding success, offering a fun and engaging way for students to socialize and build camaraderie. Plans for future events and activities are in the works, promising more opportunities for students to connect and participate in community-building experiences.

ACTION: Darcy to connect the Research Students' Network & Mature, Part-Time & Carers Network

Matters for Information

7. Welfare & Community Teams Update

- Intercultural Engagement:
 - o Listening Circles
 - o Impartial Chair Program
 - o Language and Cultural Discovery program
 - o Discover the UK Program
 - o Cultural Celebrations Program

The chair asked students to refer to the paper that will be circulated with the minutes.

8. Outcomes from and inputs to UCL committees

RL personally met with Denise Long, Director of Student Support and Wellbeing Services. They have initiated working on a strategy to focus on well-being in accommodation.

Next, RL spoke about the Student Partnership Committees. These are how the Union works with UCL to deliver on the Student Life Strategy. A prevalent topic was space for students to engage in curricular and non-curricular activities.

Finally, RL touched on the work she and the Activities & Engagement Officer (AE) are doing to revamp Refreshers in January. This includes allocating funds to create one-off events to encourage society participation.

Matters for Discussion

9. Peer to Peer Mental Health Support

EY raised this matter of discussion about peer-to-peer mental health support. She also acknowledged that Shavari Patil, People of Colour Officer (SP), had raised similar ideas, and therefore, the two officers have decided to work together on this project. EI said she is looking into mental health support, focusing on supporting and uplifting marginalised students.

EY also acknowledged that a short-term solution is needed due to a widespread mental health crisis in Students. The purpose of bringing this to the Zone is to get an idea of whether there is a demand & need for this service.

SP suggested the idea that it would be a peer-to-peer service that connects psychology students currently training in clinical psychology with individuals seeking support. This initiative serves as a volunteer-based opportunity for these students to gain practical experience that is essential for their professional development. Participants will benefit from the guidance of currently-training psychology students, while the students will have the chance to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios, enhancing their skills and confidence in the field. This program aims to create a supportive environment that fosters learning and personal growth for both the students and the individuals they assist.

Issues identified by RL:

- Adequate supervision for training psychotherapy students
- What model would be used to support this service? One-off or structured long-term?

Discussion:

Richard Hebblethwaite, Mature, Part-time & Carers Students' Officer (RH), asked, "Are there any other service models used at other Unions?"

Danielle Swanson, Head of Advice & Wellbeing (DS): Outlined that there is a working group that is about looking at peer-to-peer support at UCL, in direct liaison with Psychology and Language Sciences (PaLS) and Kings SU. She also noted that the focus currently is on peer-to-peer training of these students, not support. This is because the main sector concern is the clinical risks in terms of safeguarding and support for the peer-supporters. DS also referred to previous models the Union have participated in, such as the PaLS and OFS PsychUp pilot which had paid advisors as student staff, similar to the Nightline model. There was also the ReTHINK pilot, which was about delivering peer-designed mental health interventions such as workshops.

EI then opened the discussion to the floor.

Karrar Hashim, Hall Community Officer for Endsleigh Gardens and John Adams Hall (KH) – Highlighted feedback that students have lots of different pathways for support, so would this be too much in addition?

Manaal Tariq, International Students' Officer (MT), asked if psychological services are part of what UCL already provides or separate.

DS answered that the Union is usually the delivery partner for these structures, as we are seen as 'separate' and, therefore, more accessible. However, this was about working with the academic Department of Psychological and Language Services because that clinical provision is linked to the university clinic rather than being Student Support & Wellbeing Services.

MT then asked whether there would be a clinical risk assessment form with minimum entry requirements for the volunteers.

SP explained that a part of this is students being able to access support from those with reflective identities like theirs, but it is still essential that they have background and training!

MT also acknowledged that Student Residential Advisors receive similar training and may, therefore, be a good resource for understanding how we could train peer-to-peer advisors.

RL thanked attendees for their feedback.

ACTION: Rachel to follow up with the SRA team.

Any Other Business

10. Any Other Business

The Chair opened the floor for any other business, inviting attendees to raise any topics or issues.

Student Experiences with GPs

RL began by discussing the student experiences of UCL-affiliated GPs so that she could better understand what issues need to be raised with those GP practices. EY also noted that she wishes to focus on working with Ridgemount to better facilitate marginalised communities' feeling empowered to access their services.

KH – Shared their experience with feeling like the UCL-associated GP does not seem to have the capacity to serve lots of students.

Yimin Yao, Welfare Rep (Societies) (YY) – Spoke about the physical distance between home & the GP, meaning that it can be difficult to physically access the practice.

Kenloy Smith, Hall Community Officer for Stapleton House (KS) - Offered a postgraduate perspective. The different GP seems smoother and better equipped to look after Students at that level.

Amanda Ng, Trans Officer (AN) - They reflected that the English GP services seem overburdened. Therefore, it seems like there are more barriers to accessing the service, primarily due to how long waitlists are to join.

WC also gave a teaser that Student Registry Services (SRS) will attend the next Zone. She asked attendees to think about how their induction went to feedback to SRS.

AN suggested that VISA timelines conflicted with pre-enrolment, which meant these students were disadvantaged when picking modules.

RH flagged that despite a student's age being on their profile, there is no clear indication that they are mature. There should be a better link between students being identified as mature and being notified that there is a network for them!

KH flagged the poor conditions of some halls, including vermin and insect issues, that were not resolved swiftly. This is a longstanding issue that UCL seems passive about.

WC shared that this is an ongoing conversation in terms of these conditions and is directly following up with accommodation teams.

KS highlighted the students working at the beginning of the year helped make them feel more comfortable and orientated in coming to a new University & new country. Suggested how-to videos

RL has invited members to come to an after-zone dinner. January 23rd. ACTION: Rachel to send sign-up form. RL said the zone will be moved to 5:30 to 7:30.

AN raised worries about the Flatmate Finder not being 'trans friendly' and suggested amending this to help students feel more welcome.

ACTION: Rachel to investigate this and work to add 'trans-friendly' as a tag to the SU Flatmate Finder.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Rachel Lim
Signature:	Rachel Lim
Date:	06/12/24