



**Date:** Monday 27 November 2023  
**Time:** 18:00 – 20:00  
**Venue:** LG11 Lecture Theatre, Bentham House, Hybrid

## Activities Zone

### Minutes

**Chair:** Aria Xingni Shi, Activities & Engagement Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Abraham Selby, Volunteering Rep	X		
Addina Binti Amran, Volunteering Rep			X
Ahmad Ismail, Equity & Inclusion Officer		X	
Anji Suri, Trans Officer	X		
Ankit Mehani, Volunteering Rep			X
Aria Xingni Shi, Activities and Engagement Officer, Chair	X		
Ashley New, Societies Rep (Performance Art)	X		
Blessing Echefu, Societies Non-Portfolio Rep	X		
Demetri Alvanis, Sports Officer		X	
Elisa de Aragao Bibay, Women's Officer	X		
Elisia Sebastian Swaby, Sports Rep	X		
Ella O'Brien, Societies Non-Portfolio Rep	X		
Ghali Moutawakil El Oudghiri, Sports Rep			X
Himanshu Keshari, Societies Officer	X		
Hrishita Agrawal, Societies Rep (Non-Performance Art)			X
Issy Smith, Postgraduate Officer		X	
Jack Sibeon, Sports Rep	X		
Jiayu Louise Liu, Volunteering Rep	X		
Jingyi Ye and Yalin Chen, Volunteering Officer	X		
Lorcan O'Kane, Sports Rep	X		
Maya Khurana, Arts Officer			X
Micah Gerstner, LGBTQ+ Officer		X	
Nick Miao, Societies Rep (Student Media)	X		
Philip Greger and Suzanna Chen, Disabled Students' Officer		X	
Rawleka Wilson and Rachel Lim, People of Colour Students' Officer	X		
Seth Harris, Societies Non-Portfolio Rep	X		

In Attendance:
Jeff Saddington-Wiltshire, Representation & Democracy Manager
Daniel Edge, Arts & Media Coordinator
Matthew Phuklaewkla, Democracy Assistant (minutes)
Henry Warne, Sports Development Manager
Rupinder Sandal, Head of Societies & Projects
Beth Lewis, Societies Programme Manager
Anne Laybourne, Head of Volunteering
Phil Packer, External Speaker
Brodie Ross, Head of Arts

## **1. Preliminary Matters - Welcome and Introductions**

Aria Xingni Shi (AXS), Activities & Engagement Officer and Chair, warmly welcomed attendees to the Zone.

## **2. Preliminary Matters – Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

Minutes were approved.

## **3. Officer Updates and Questions - Activities and Engagement Officer**

AXS gave updates on a number of items:

- Working on expanding the range of example scenarios in the [Active Bystander Programme](#)
- Expanding and improving on the Cultural Festival in Term 2
- Reviewing commercial products sold at the Union
- [UCL's Festive Light Switch-On](#) on 4<sup>th</sup> December at 5pm
- [The Winter Arts Festival](#) starting on 8<sup>th</sup> December

## **4. Officer Updates and Questions - Equity & Inclusion Officer**

The Equity & Inclusion Officer was not present due to illness, so they were not able to deliver this section.

## **5. Matters for Information – Staff Updates**

Staff gave updates which included:

- Anne Laybourne (AL), Head of Volunteering, gave updates on new posts available for East London operations, as well as a position for a Community Engagement Officer.
- Brodie Ross (BR), Head of Arts talked about plans for the Winter Arts Festival, which includes collaborations with the Arts Team and other Arts charities, as well as a Volunteering Fair for volunteering groups to come on campus and recruit students.
- Moreover, there is a new campaign for the January Welcome Fair – BR would love if any members could donate any used, non-metal stud football boots, to drop off at a charity who does football with unaccompanied minors and refugees.
- Rupinder Sandal (RS), Head of Societies & Projects, gave an update on the Term 1 By-election – results for this can be found [here](#). Also, the first round of [Friends' Trust](#) funding has concluded.
- Updates on the January Welcome Fair (17<sup>th</sup> January). TeamUCL will be present at stalls, amongst other groups. Society stalls will also take place if there is sufficient interest – a form will be sent to societies gauge this.

- Updates on the [International Festival](#) during February: forms will be sent to groups who want to take part and run activities during the festival.
- The Media Suite is now open for art and media societies to use.
- Daniel Edge (DE), Arts & Media Coordinator gave an update on the Winter Arts Festival: Workshops and talks will be run from Monday to Friday next week – these can be found on the [Union website](#) or the [SU Instagram](#). On Friday, there will be a Main Quad takeover by the main Arts Societies and the Union. In addition to this, there will be food vendors, a farmers' market, Union bars and a craft market.
- Henry Warne (HW), Sports Development Manager gave updates on the London Varsity Series 2024; Disability History Month at TeamUCL; Staff recruitment updates. More information about these can be found attached alongside these minutes. Apart from these updates, TeamUCL are getting ready to wind up for end of the successful BUCS term - with some teams at the top of the pyramid.
- Jeff Saddington-Wiltshire (JSW), Representation & Democracy Manager gave an update on staff vacancies as Julia Rooke is sadly moving on from the Union on 31<sup>st</sup> January. A new post for a Representation & Democracy Coordinator will be open for applications. Other updates from JSW include preparations for the Leadership Race, as well as the large amount of incoming Policy Proposals, with twenty-nine being submitted in the last twenty-seven days! He encouraged students to keep [sending more](#) and to speak to either himself or Rhiannon Ellis (Representation & Democracy Coordinator) as they will help prospective Policy Proposers to develop their proposals.

## **6. Matters for Information – BRIT Challenge 2024**

Phil Packer, an external speaker, gave a talk to ask students for their support and initiative for the [BRIT Challenge 2024](#). After his speech, AXS thanked Phil for coming to the meeting and talking.

## 7. Matters for Information – Affiliations, disaffiliations, disciplinary actions

Beth Lewis, Societies Programme Manager, gave information on the latest Union affiliations, disaffiliations and disciplinary actions.

<b>Affiliated clubs and societies</b>	<b>Potential affiliations (pending additional information)</b>	<b>Disaffiliated clubs and societies</b>
Darts Club	Desi Society	Beer Pong Society
Padel Tennis Club	Moroccan Society	Doggo Society
AgTech Society	Arts for Mental Health Society	Holography Society
CyberSecurity Society	Enigma Society	Libertarian Society
Biomedical Sciences Society	ClashSoc	Orthoptics Society
Swing Dance Society	UCLTA (Teluga Association)	Retail and Luxury Business Society
Somali Society	Human Rights Society	Socialist Society
Sla(y)de School of Fine Art Society	Archery Club	Tree Society
Formula 1 Society		
Women in Tech Society		
US Law Society		
Game Development Society		
Canoe Polo Club		
Wingchun Club		
Football Fans Society		
Music Business Society		
STS Lunar Society		
Financial Literacy Matters Society		

Staff explained that clubs and societies may be disaffiliated for a number of reasons including: no principal officers; no registered documents; lack of membership. Also, it was highlighted that clubs and societies are required to run six or more activities during the academic year, and may consult the Union for more help with this.

There were no disciplinary actions.

## 8. Matters for Information – Grant Allocations

Information was given on grant allocations from the Union towards clubs and societies. A grant allocation mastersheet has been attached alongside these minutes for viewing.

## 9. Policy Proposals – Scrutiny of Union Processes by Media Societies

This policy was proposed by Nick Miao (NM), Societies Rep (Student Media), who gave an overview:

- Having spoken to many people over the last couple of years, NM gets the general feeling that there is a lack of sufficient scrutiny of Union processes.
- He argues that transparency is good for healthy democracy, and that students should be adequately informed to be able to scrutinise their own Union.
- He understands that Union meeting minutes are publicly available, but would like to make it easier to facilitate student media coverage by officially inviting these groups to Zone meetings as well as adding them to the distribution list for meeting minutes and agendas.

93% of those attending voted ‘for’ on this policy proposal – meaning that it passes on to Union Executive for further discussion.

## 10. Matters for Discussion – Student Officer Review

JSW gave a talk on the Union’s currently ongoing Student Officer Review (SOR), which aims to optimise the delivery of the Student Officer system in order to best fulfil its purpose, which is to:

- Represent marginalised identities or common interest amongst students
- Form vibrant and inclusive communities to promote a greater sense of belonging
- Advocate and influence positive changes within the Union

As a summary of actions in the SOR:

- Keep Activities-related Student Officers same for the 2024 Leadership Race
- However, review the portfolio of Activities and Welfare Reps for the 2024 Rep Elections

More information on this can be found in the slides attached alongside these minutes.

Some questions were asked:

*What is the difference between an officer and a representative?*

Officers are lead contacts, while representatives gather feedback in order to support the officers.

*What are Hall Community Officers (HCOs)?*

They were originally Hall Representatives who gathered feedback and suggestions for discussion at Zones, but HCOs are now taking a larger role in forming communities (as part of a trial period).

*How will voter turnout be increased for the next elections?*

This is something to be considered in the next stage of the interview. At the moment, the goal is to narrow down the pool of Student Officers so that there is a clearer distinction between roles in order to avoid duplication.

*What does 'avoiding duplication' mean?*

Examples of duplication were given – for example, the Union has a Sustainability Officer, as well as the Sustainability Council, Sustainability Ambassadors and a whole range of Sustainability-focused societies. Volunteering is also very duplicated.

The presentation sparked considerable debate amongst the Zone members. Some topics of discussion were:

Discussion on voter fatigue:

There was a mention of 'voter fatigue' in the presentation. Touching on this, Zone members gave the general opinion that the voting user interface (UI) could have been better in last year's Leadership Race. Members recalled that voters had to go through a long list of individual, unrelated candidates in order to vote for the one that they wanted. Some thoughts on this from the Zone members:

- This system was quite fatiguing, and especially difficult for those with learning disabilities to navigate through the form as it may appear as a massive task with accessibility issues
- Moreover, there is the possibility that voters may give random votes in order to get to their chosen candidate quickly, which gives non-representative results
- Members generally agreed that a better system would be to organise the candidates by roles
- There was a search function available to find candidates, but each desired candidate, a separate search would have to be made again, which got fatiguing if voters were voting for multiple candidates..
- However, there was some praise towards the 'long list' UI as it introduces roles which voters might not have even known existed. Some members objected to this, saying that if voters are unaware of the range of roles available, then this is a responsibility for Marketing.

In response to this, JSW said he is currently in conversations with the Union Systems Team about how best to present candidates to students. RS said the intention behind the 'long list' system is to allow voters to see all voting positions in one place, and highlighted that voters are always able to skip candidates that are not interested in.

Discussion on voter engagement:

One of the goals of the Student Officer Review is to increase student engagement in democratic structures at the Union. Some thoughts on this:

- Anne Laybourne (AL), Head of Volunteering posed a question, asking to what extent is disengagement a result of insufficient communications, rather than just voter fatigue. She also mentioned the challenge of changing culture in order to make voting a meaningful activity.
- One member gave his personal reason for his lack of engagement, which was that he didn't know who the Student Officers are, owing to the lack of videos and coverage on them.
  - One member said that a way to get people to vote more would be to get them more interested in the roles.
  - Another member suggested that it would be good if the current Officers made a video to explain their roles.
  - Another said that the Union should hold more publicity events for Officers so that people can recognise their faces and roles more. This means more prominent displays of Officers from the Union's side of responsibility, as opposed to the current system where Officers must publicise themselves through communications channels.

Discussion on the organisation of reps and societies

There was some discussion on some areas of reps and societies which could potentially be better organised and communicated:

- There was a view that the distinction between Societies Reps and actual societies themselves could be more clear. Moreover, the difference between Non-Performance and Performance Arts could be made more clear.
  - A member mentioned how some students thought that 'Non-Performance Arts' referred to every single other society in the Union, not just its own separate category of societies.
- Adding onto this, another member said that it would be good if the Union gives a list that maps each society out to a category. RS said that this was possible.
- There was however also some concern that some societies would be hard to describe using only one category. For example, Rare FM and Cheese Grater overlap with multiple categories but are technically only registered to a single category. This would stop members from voting in Media Rep elections, for example.

Finally, Head of Arts Brodie Ross (BR) acknowledged all the helpful comments and suggestions for Arts at UCL, and would like to make things clearer going forward in future. He plans to bring people together to discuss more about this.

**11. Any Other Business**

Women's Officer Elisa de Aragao Bibay (EAB) invited guests to the free breakfast in support of the [16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence](#).

<b>Minutes approved as a true and accurate record</b>	
Chair:	Aria Xingni Shi, Activities and Engagement Officer
Signature:	Aria Xingni Shi
Date:	12/12/2023