



Date: 03/06/2020

Time: 13:00-15:00

Venue: Zoom

Education Zone

Minutes

Chair: Ashley Slanina-Davies, Education Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Adrita Kabir, Population Health Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep	✓		
Alexia Koch, Built Environment Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✓		
Ashley Slanina-Davies, Education Officer, Chair	✓		
Baneen Almoud, Population Health Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep			✓
Dory Ghanem, Medical Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✓		
Emer O'Driscoll, Arts & Humanities Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep (Minutes)	✓		
Fei (Sophie) Yuan, Built Environment Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep			✓
Frank Gatheru, Engineering Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep			✓
Georgia Constantinou, Medical Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep	✓		
Graham van Goffrier, Mathematical & Physical Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep		✓	
Habiba Diab, Brain Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep			✓
Haiying Liang, Institute of Education Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep			✓
Honghao Zhang, Built Environment Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep			✓
Izabella Wodzka, Arts & Humanities Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep (Job share)	✓		
Jameela Nagri, Population Health Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep			✓
Jiaqi (Kitty) Guo, Institute of Education Undergraduate Faculty Rep			✓
Jim Onyemenam, Postgraduate Students' Officer	✓		
Jin Li, Social and Historical Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep	✓		
Julian Laufs, Engineering Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep			✓
Katherine Forster, Arts & Humanities Undergraduate Rep	✓		
Khush Thakur, Mathematical & Physical Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep			✓
Lina Algurashi, Laws Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep			✓
Lorenzo Faggiano, Social & Historical Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep (Job share)	✓		
Maria Silva Abreu Lopes Feio, Brain Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep (Job share)	✓		
Nikita Joji, Medical Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep			✓
Philippa Harding, Brain Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep	✓		
Samuel Barnes, Social & Historical Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✓		
Shail Bhatt, Life Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep			✓
Sonam Gordhan, Laws Postgraduate Research Rep (Job share)			✓
Tom Höbold, Mathematical & Physical Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep		✓	
Trevor Clark, Laws Postgraduate Research Rep (Job share)			✓
Umang Pandey, Laws Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✓		
Valentina Spiteri, Life Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep			✓
Zvezdin Besarabov, Engineering Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep			✓

In Attendance:

Caroline Norris, UCL Digital Skills Development Manager

Danielle Swanson, Advice and Advocacy Manager

David Goddard, UCL Head of IT Service Partnerships (ISD)

Frankie Quinn, Policy and Research Coordinator
Liz Carter, UCL Senior Events and Operations Manager
Simon To, Leadership Development and Change Manager
Steve Rowett, UCL Digital Education Developments Team Leader
Student Observers

1. **Welcome**

The Chair thanked everyone coming and for their engagement and work throughout the year. They added that this would be their final Zone meeting as Education Officer, and that the incoming Officer was present and would be taking over from July.

2. **Minutes and Action Points**

The minutes of the last meeting were unanimously approved.

The only action point from the last meeting was to set up a Microsoft Teams site for Education Zone, which was completed.

3. **Matters for Discussion: Digital Common Rooms**

The Chair explained that one of the areas for concern with regard to remote learning was the lack of opportunity for shared social spaces. They invited David Goddard (DG) to speak about the proposed plans for digital common rooms.

DG announced that ISD is planning a project provisionally entitled 'virtual student common rooms'. This is to combat concerns about the impact a socially distanced campus may have on a student's sense of wellbeing and belonging, which may leave them without a sense of the UCL community. They asked members for any feedback or thoughts about the project.

The Chair asked whether the project would incorporate examples of digital interaction already occurring elsewhere, such as Blackboard Collaborate. Caroline Norris (CN) responded that the project is intended to be slightly removed from the academic experience, i.e. a place for more informal, non-academic interaction. There would potentially be pre-made groups for specific interests, as well as the opportunity for students to create their own groups.

An Academic Rep noted that, as a distance learner, they would find this platform to be very helpful. A Faculty Rep suggested that the online gaming community could be used as an example of online collaboration, and UCL could look into the potential of VR chat platforms.

A Rep asked whether this would be temporary, e.g. just for Term 1. CN responded that this would hopefully be long-term. DG added that it would be great if this could be a permanent, full-time service.

An Academic Rep from the Anthropology Dept. noted that they have been working with Caroline Garraway (Vice-Dean Education in SHS) about support for commuter students, and that she might be a useful contact.

An Academic Rep suggested that their remote 'PhD survival group' might be a useful model to look at, consisting of weekly, small-group (max. 6) social meetings over MS Teams.

The Chair suggested that the different needs of taught and research students should be taken into account, as PGR students will require different things from these platforms than UG and PGT students. A PGR Faculty Rep agreed that PGR students would have different needs, including possibly smaller groups.

A Faculty Rep noted that this would be a great idea and suggested the possibility of a channel that led back to Academic Reps.

An Academic Rep suggested that there should be the option for students to have anonymous names in chatrooms, especially if there are chatrooms where students are talking about their problems.

A Faculty Rep added that the Slade School of Fine Art has been using online platforms to allow students to interact pre-enrolment for years, which could be a good source of expertise.

DG and CN asked students to email them with any further feedback and ideas.

4. Matters for Discussion: Remote Teaching and Learning/Student Survey Results

The Leadership Development and Change Manager (LDCM) gave an overview of the results of a Padlet activity, circulated to Reps the day before, which gathered feedback on positive elements of remote learning and points to be improved.

Steve Rowett (SR) explained that the Digital Education team have been collecting feedback on how students are finding remote teaching and learning. The most common problems revolved around access to internet and technology, access to study spaces, difficulty in focusing when remote learning, and connecting with other students. They asked students for any feedback on the topic.

A Faculty Rep noted that many students have been dissatisfied with 24 hour exams, as they feel the expectations are higher due to the increased time. It was noted that 24 hour exams should not require additional work, as the 24 hour time extension is only to allow students in all time zones to complete the exam. It was suggested that the issue is primarily to do with staff conveying their expectations for assessments.

5. Matters for Discussion: Graduations

The Chair explained that a number of options are being considered for graduation ceremonies for this year's graduates. These include both virtual and in-person ceremonies.

Liz Carter (LC) outlined the two options for virtual ceremonies currently being considered:

- A. A less personal video ceremony that students could watch at any time. This would not include any names and degree titles being read out. This would take less time to prepare.
- B. A more personal online ceremony with names and degree titles being read out. This would take more time to prepare.

A Faculty Rep suggested that they would prefer Option B, as it is more personal. They asked whether this would just apply to students graduating in July 2020 or also those graduating later. LC responded that this would apply to undergraduate students graduating in 2020 and postgraduate students who graduated by November 2019.

A Faculty Rep noted that they had already had two graduation ceremonies and that the main thing students want is an experience that is special and memorable. They added that some universities have hosted virtual graduation ceremonies via Minecraft.

An Academic Rep added that students would appreciate graduation ceremonies being as personal as possible.

LC gave an overview of the four options for in-person ceremonies currently being considered:

- A. Attend a graduation ceremony at the Royal Festival Hall (where this year's ceremonies would have been)
- B. Attend a graduation ceremony at the Royal Festival Hall and celebrations on UCL campus, giving students the opportunity to return to campus and 'say goodbye' properly. This would include departments holding local celebrations.
- C. Attend a graduation ceremony in Logan Hall in the Institute of Education
- D. Not attend a ceremony but return to campus to collect a gown and have photographs taken, with departments holding celebrations.

These would provisionally take place after Easter 2021, or whenever it was safe to do so.

A Faculty Rep suggested that Option D might be the safest option. Several Faculty Reps stated that they would prefer Option B.

The Chair asked what would happen if the entire thing was cancelled again, in the event of a second wave of COVID-19. LC explained that there would be flexibility in the contracts, so that events could be postponed until it was safe to hold them.

A Rep suggested that some students might not be able to attend later graduation ceremonies due to work commitments. LC noted that they would try to provide as much notice and flexibility as possible.

It was noted that this year's graduates will have their certificates posted to them in the summer.

6. Policy Proposal: Creation of New Feedback Mechanisms

The Faculty Rep for Social and Historical Sciences (UG) introduced their policy proposal. They explained that new, anonymised feedback systems would be helpful to academic reps. They noted that that Unitu has been discussed, and that it has been trialled with limited success, so something more Union-based would be good.

The meeting was inquorate, so an advisory vote was taken.

Vote	Number
For	12
Against	0
Abstain	0

The vote passed and the Chair stated that they would take the policy forward to the next meeting of Union Executive.

7. Policy Proposal: Paid Teaching Opportunities for PhD students

The Chair introduced the proposal and explained that the requested resolves are not within the Union's power. They suggested amending the proposal to mandate the Union to work for fair and equal opportunities for all PhD students, however they could not mandate all PhD students to be PGTAs. There were no objections to the amendment.

The meeting was inquorate, so an advisory vote was taken.

Vote	Number
For	9
Against	1
Abstain	2

The vote passed and the Chair stated that they would take the policy forward to the next meeting of Union Executive.

8. Any Other Business

The Chair noted that an amendment to governing documents is being taken to Union Executive by the Postgraduate Students' Officer which will request the addition of a PGTA Representative to Education Zone. This is an idea that has previously been discussed by the Zone.

The Chair provided a brief update on the outcomes of the committees they are involved in, including changes to online exams and assessments, a pilot scheme for re-opening UCL, and the release of a new temporary operating model. There were no further questions.

The Chair and the Postgraduate Students' Officer thanked all the Reps for their hard work

and input throughout the year.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Ashley Slanina-Davies, Education Officer
Signature:	
Date:	