

Equity & Inclusion Officer – January Report

Name: Ahmad Ismail

Section 1: General Update

In the past month, I have worked on advancing many of my priorities, especially around LGBTQ+ inclusion, inclusive arts, and accommodation matters. We are gearing up for a very exciting LGBTQ+ history month, progress has been made on pronoun inclusion through UCL systems, and more!

Section 2: Sabbatical Officer Priorities

1) Students have access to affordable and good quality accommodation, where they are an active part of a community, are valued and comfortable at home.

Not much progress on this priority. It was raised as something the London Student Assembly can focus on collectively lobbying for in the last LSA meeting. It was also raised at the last meeting with the Provost, where I highlighted the need for setting aside a certain number of bedrooms for returning students, who we increasingly see want to be able to stay in halls beyond the first year; this was warmly received by him. Next steps: continue lobbying the accommodation team and relevant stakeholders on this.

Some problems identified with what the HCOs can do to create a sense of community and the restrictions placed on accessing funding and what types of events they can put on by the accommodation team. Next steps: working on getting HCOs access to mailing lists to email fortnightly hall updates and ongoing hall events. To do: setup a meeting with HCOs and potentially Carl to roll this out in a structured manner.

2) Students feel like partners who are empowered and have a voice at the table on matters that affect where they belong or who they are.

Part-time officer review concluded. Currently identifying different support structures for the expanded networks for next year and where that will sit within SU departments to have a clearer delineation of work amongst network officers and their committees.

3) We are one diverse and empowered community that looks out for each other, sharing our lived experiences to strive for a more inclusive university.

Conversations with EDI and DW team taking place on how to effectively enable disagreeing in a safe, respectful space and manner. Within the SU, the work on writing up community guidelines for impartial chairs that are enforced by them but are the framework all panellists/attendees adhere to is currently underway.

Working with central EDI in identifying which departments to start an EDI rep programme in.

4) Trans students feel that they are part of our community is not only aware of their struggles but actively works to educate and create a safer space.

I will be having the "Town Hall" with Kathy Armour, where the LGBTQ+ Action plan will be the central point of discussion. This will help share some of the frustrations students still have and get to see what UCL is doing. From another angle, the Trans officer, LGBTQ+ Officer and I are meant to have a Sabbs on a Sofa episode to talk through the action plan and make it more digestible for students.

Had a meeting with Meg where potential additions to both the in-person and online workshops have been discussed. These additions centre around the diversity of the trans and non-binary experiences, recognising the role different cultural perceptions of what being trans/GNC means and how to best respond to that as an active bystander. The impact report for the Gender Expression fund is also underway. Next steps: use some of the data collected in the impact report to launch a social media campaign on how to be a good ally and what we can do as a community.

5) Students have access to an inclusive and cross-cultural arts programme where they can thrive and develop new skills and common interests.

Fortnightly meetings with Brodie have been setup, and 2 have happened where many ideas have been thrown around and a few potential ways of opening up the doors to being in performances as beginners with the potential of Mullys being advertised by the Union as a performance space and opening bids centrally for that space through the Union.

Currently planning a structure of achieving the update on using Mullys for bids done centrally but in collaboration with the relevant societies as mentors but not as the ones holding the bids for shows. With that structure, bids can be accepted through beginners that are tailored to people wanting to be involved early on and still supported by the expertise and breadth of each ArtsUCL society.

Section 3: Attendance at important Union meetings and events

1) Union meetings attended and main outcomes

We got a statement out!

Submitted a policy for part-time officer remuneration for the next UE

Section 4: Attendance at important UCL meetings and events

1) UCL meetings attended and main outcomes

N/A

Section 5: What progress have you made on your assigned policy proposals?

Policy: Pronouns in Class

Working with UCL to be able to get systems synced to transfer pronoun data. They are currently looking at an overhaul of the way they are inputted, which involves changing infrastructure on 6 systems.

Policy: Support the London-wide rent freeze

We have lobbied UCL for a rent freeze, which unfortunately will not be able to happen but we have ensured that UCL would freeze the rents on certain halls. UCL has introduced a new rent classification system, which is better on the long run. The increase in nomination hall prices is extortionate and UCL has chosen to continue with them, which has inevitably meant a big increase in the rents for those. Overall, the increase in UCL halls has been 5.7%

Policy: Supporting students in sex work

No update.