

Policy Proposal: UCLSU Sustainability Training

What would you like the Union to do? :

The idea is to have our own UCL Student Union Sustainability Training, and replicate the Active Bystander Model for the implementation of the Training. The need for this training is ever important, it needs to provide strategic context of the climate crisis and science, as well as the urgency of it, as well as linking it to practical tips that students at UCL can adopt to make small but influential behavioural changes. This would include recycling tips, how to embed sustainability into societies and most importantly, engage disengaged students. It needs to be framed as a part of the student inductions during welcome week and refreshers, so that the SU sustainability training becomes part of the SU culture and its identity. This training could be made available for any student to take, but must be embedded in the training of leadership positions (e.g., Sabbatical & Student Officers, Club & Society Leaders, Student Trustees, etc.). The training could be incentivized by making sustainability a criteria for the SU awards and/or creating further awards around sustainability. Finally, this policy proposes that the SU must lobby UCL to make this training (or applicable elements of the training) part of the induction given to first year students.

With this policy the Union's commitment would be the following:

- 1) Immediately start work on scoping the project;
- 2) Immediately start work on researching ways to finance the project;

so that progress can be made as soon as possible.

Why would you like to do this? :

Currently, there is a major gap in sustainability education at UCL. There isn't a single mandatory sustainable training workshop or module. Moreover, UCL's own sustainability training, that is available as an option for students to take, is outdated, below par and is inaccessible as students are simply not aware of it (largely due to lack of advertising arising from a lack of resources from UCL Sustainability Team) and students are also not incentivised to take it.

Therefore, because the SU has so many different communication channels it can encourage uptake of this training, the SU is simply much better positioned to have a sustainability training for students, rather than UCL. To go into the details, the SU could use its own expertise but also that of academic staff at UCL for advice and guidance on the content of this training. I have already spoken with some academic staff that are more than willing to consult the SU on this, such as Dr Simon Chin Yee (professor of global environmental politics).

Our goal essentially is to model the Active Bystander program, and therefore for comparative purposes, this is what the Active Bystander program uptake looks like-

Unique students completing the training so far this year (2020-21), online module and live workshops combined: 6,269

Unique students completing the training so far this year (2021-22), online module and live workshops combined: 9,942

Unique students completing the training so far this year (2022-23), online module and live workshops combined (as of 16 January): 6,160

The cumulative number of all Active Bystanders trained between the first year of the programme (2015-16) and last year (2021-22): 30,338

How will this affect students? :

Sustainability will become a passive thought in every student leader's mind as they will now be encouraged to embed sustainability into all society activities. It upholds the values, mission and vision of the SU, and also increases student engagement with sustainability. It is likely to lead to positive behavioural change in terms of better environmental decisions. Essentially, it is a new and easy way for all UCLSU members to engage with sustainability at their university and union.