

Postgraduate Officer – March Report

Name: Issy Smith

Section 1: General Update

- Student Choice Awards, Education Awards and Honorary Life Membership panels
- NUS Conference (all policies, including one to better support international students passed)
- Postgraduate Summer
- Participated in the 10k UCL Campus Run with Project Active!
- PG Engagement Priorities workshop and strategy
- Russel Group Students' Union residence - our manifesto is soon to be launched and be presented in parliament! Covers a lot of areas around cost of living and international students.
- Handover started :)

Section 2: Sabbatical Officer Priorities

1) Research, Masters and Mature students have an inclusive programme of events and activities; feeling valued as members of our community and supporting their wellbeing.

Postgraduate Summer

- Plans kicked off, period will run from 8th June til 30th August. All teams in SU to be involved. Keen to engage certain teams in UCL too such as SSW and careers.
- Rebrand of initiative by marketing to give it more identity.

PG Social Soc.

- We finally settled on a name! This means that all PGs no matter their level of study or type of study can be involved. Positions are currently open for next years committee (part-time PGTs and PGRs have a consider!) so please get involved.

2) Research and Masters students have a respected voice and are able to make informed choices, to better their education.

Mature students

- Meeting with Mature students actors on our vision for mature students support.
- Main aim is to fill open positions on the new networks and ensure there is central support for the networks by the SU for next year.

- If officer is not one or two of mature/part-time/carer, proposal to have a network position that caters to that, set up in another by-election.
- We also approached the Democracy Team about improving the role descriptions to make it clearer what the network is and what the roles entail, to encourage nominees.

3) Students are financially supported in their time of need, so that they are able to achieve their potential.

No update.

4) Students who work know their rights and are developed, rewarded and recognised by their employer.

PGTAs

- Recommendation around PGTAs to go into Education Report 2024
- Campaign to be started with Marketing around PGTAs and demystifying it. Involve DocSchool?
- In contact with HR: waiting on response to the benchmarking exercise done on PGTAs and update on Talent Link job postings (which will automatically generate contracts).
- PGTA Task and Finish Group report recommendations due to go to University Management Committee. Main recommendations focus around standardising use, ensuring quality of teaching, and improving PGTA training. Another recommendation is that this group continues so that it can monitor progress.

Section 3: Attendance at important Union meetings and events

1) Union meetings attended and main outcomes

Postgraduate summer - firming up our aims for postgraduate summer. Due to submit a plan to Marketing for a rebrand of the initiative and planning for events.

Honorary Life membership panel - chose our HLMS!

Priorities for education report - firmed up some of the recommendations to be featured in the reports, including one on PGTAs.

PG priorities workshop - input on SU experiences engaging PGs, now to create a strategy for the next 1-3 years to give direction to the work we are doing with PGs.

- Section 4: Attendance at important UCL meetings and events

1) UCL meetings attended and main outcomes

Academic Board Statute 18 working group - due to meet with HR heads soon to ask questions around staff complaints process.

- Research ethics change advisory group - new online ethics approval system to come into place soon (by next academic year I believe)!

- UCL200 Strategic delivery group - updates on project, in particular pedestrianisation of Gordon Street (pedestrianisation won't happen before UCL200 but the road will be made more pedestrian friendly, e.g., widening of pavement, dropping curbs, introducing street furniture).
- Student choice awards panel - decided on shortlist and winners for Student Choice Awards.
- Student Life committee - updates on all strands, in particular SU scaffolding, ArtsUCL, Wellbeing Report 2024, and Mental Health and Wellbeing principles for staff and students.
- UCL Food 4 Good - getting closer to securing a community fridge (with due to expire food to reduce waste but also provide for those experiencing food poverty)!!
- Student and campus experience estates board - further updates to the Union Building project, and UCL200 amongst others.
- Information risk governance committee - talking on recent cyberattack on several universities and the impact and mitigations taken.
- Education Committee - discussion on paper to improve the personal tutor programme, degree apprenticeships programme, academic misconduct regulation revision (to be in line with laws restrictions)
- Governance Committee of Academic Board - primary talk around Provost's update
- Education Awards Panel - decided winners and runners up for Education Awards
- University Mental Health Charter Oversight Group - present the SU's Wellbeing Report 2024
- UCL200 workshop - fed back on proposed initiatives for the bicentenary project and provided our own ideas.

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

Policy: Commitment to harm reduction

Policy was taken to UMC but there was concern expressed around some of the elements. SSW are now taking lead and we shall ask for an update at our next catch up.

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- More specific answers to the following:
 - Do we provide free drug testing kits in the union bars?
- We have some kits around spiking, and the bars do have some testing strips but we haven't taken the step to offering reactive agent drug type testing kits. It is mentioned in the UCL policy so we will continue to work with SSW to develop an appropriate offer.
- What kind of wellbeing support do we provide for substance abuse?
- The Advice Service has been in touch with the CUBE clinic and are working on getting some better info/signposting on the Advice Service website. The Advice Service isn't therapeutic and I don't think SPCS offer this support, but we can signpost students to self-refer to CUBE clinic for support.
- Do we/have we provided guidance on substance abuse in Welcome week? (e.g, leaflets, stall etc.)
- Again, the Advice Service is working with CUBE clinic on this. They previously had other local support agencies provide leaflets and info too (but they are slightly out of date now).