



Date: Thursday 10th December 2020
 Time: 18:00
 Venue: Online

Board of Trustees Minutes

Chair: Carol Paige, Democracy, Operations & Community Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Aining Liang, Student Trustee (AL)		✓	
Aparna Sree Asok, Student Trustee (ASA)		✓	
Ayman Benmati, Education Officer	✓		
Carol Paige, Democracy, Operations & Community Officer, Chair	✓		
Clare Bracey, External Trustee (Non-UCL)		✓	
Deepan Banati, External Trustee (UCL Staff)	✓		
Ilyas Benmouna, Activities Officer	✓		
Petra Barran, External Trustee (UCL Alumni)	✓		
Shail Bhatt, Student Trustee (SB)	✓		
Shoora Shafeeq, Student Trustee (SS)	✓		
Yasmeen Daoud, Welfare & International Officer, Vice-Chair	✓		

In Attendance:
Aarushi Menon, Women's Officer
Alex McKee, Head of Student Engagement & Communications
Anthony Smith, UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs), for item 10
Catherine Barrow, Interim Head of Finance
Debbie Nichols, Head of Operations
Jim Onyemenam, Postgraduate Students' Officer
John Dubber, Chief Executive
Rebecca McLoughlin, Academic Change Coordinator, minutes
Simon To, Leadership Development & Change Manager

1. Welcome & Introductions

The Chair welcomed all those present and asked them to introduce themselves.

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2. Declaration of Interest

The Chair asked if there were any declarations of interest. None were declared.

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3. Schedule of Delegated Authority Annual Update

The Leadership Development & Change Manager asked the Board to note and receive the Schedule of Delegated Authority (January 2020).

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4. Minutes and matters arising from the meeting on 15 September 2020

The Chair confirmed that the actions arising from the meeting of the Board in September had been completed.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) asked if they could have a copy of the changes that had been made to the Refreshed Strategy for 2020-21. The Head of the Student Engagement & Communication confirmed that the 0 main changes were to the 2020-21 priorities that are now based on the priorities of this year's officers. The External Trustee (UCL Staff) asked if there had been any material or strategic changes. The Head of Student Engagement & Communications said that they would get back to them with these changes.

ACTION: The Head of Student Engagement & Communications to get back to the External Trustee (UCL staff) about the changes made to the Refreshed Strategy for 2020-21.

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 15 September 2020 as a true and accurate record.

APPROVED

5. Chair's Action: Refreshed Strategy 2020-21

The Chair confirmed that the Board considered the Refreshed Strategy 2020-21 at its meeting in September 2020. The Board resolved that the Chair take Chair's action to confirm the Refreshed Strategy 2020-21 and circulate the final Refreshed Strategy to the Board. The Refreshed Strategy 2020-21 was approved by Chair's action and circulated to the Board on 24 November 2020. The Chair asked the Board to ratify the action taken by Chair's action.

The Board ratified the action taken by the Chair to confirm the Refreshed Strategy 2020-21.

RATIFIED

6. Appointment of Supervising Trustee and Deputy Supervising Trustee

The Leadership Development & Change Manager outlined that the Disciplinary Policy & Procedures for Sabbatical Officers sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of any disciplinary action being brought against any or all of the Sabbatical Officers. They also stated that the Board of Trustees annually appoints a Trustee to supervise this procedure, as well as a Deputy.

The Leadership Development & Change Manager confirmed that the External Trustee (Non-UCL) has indicated that they are happy to continue as Deputy Supervising Trustee and therefore the Board is asked to invite nominations for the position of Supervising Trustee. The Chief Executive noted that this role does not involve a significant time commitment as there has not been any disciplinary actions considered for many years. The Student Trustee (SB) expressed an interest in the role.

The Board resolved to appoint the Student Trustee (SB) as Supervising Trustee and reappoint the External Trustee (Non-UCL) as Deputy Supervising Trustee for the 2020/21 session.

RESOLVED

7. Appointments to Committees of the Board

The Chair confirmed that the following appointment remains unchanged:

Governance Committee

- Clare Bracey, External Trustee (Non-UCL)

The Board noted the above appointment.

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The Chair noted that the following appointments had been received and asked the Board to confirm these:

Finance Committee

- Aining Liang, Student Trustee
- Shoora Shafeeq, Student Trustee

Governance Committee

- Aparna Sree Asok, Student Trustee

Remuneration Committee

- Petra Barran, External Trustee (UCL Alumni)
- One further External Trustee

Risk & Audit Committee

- Deepan Banati, External Trustee (UCL Staff) as Chair
- Shail Bhatt, Student Trustee

The Chair noted that the Remuneration Committee has a remaining vacancy which needs to be filled by an External Trustee. The Chief Executive added that the Remuneration Committee only meets once a year so this role does not require significant time commitment. The External Trustee (UCL Alumni) asked for further information on the role of the committee. The Leadership Development & Change Manager replied that the main role of this committee is to review the remuneration of the Chief Executive and sabbatical officers. The remaining vacancy for the Remuneration Committee will be considered at a later date, once the External Trustee (Non-UCL) is able to be present.

The Board resolved to confirm the above appointments.

RESOLVED

The Chair noted that the following appointments have been made by the Sabbatical Officer Team:

Finance Committee

Chair: Ilyas Benmouna, Activities Officer (Sabbatical Trustee)

Governance Committee

Chair: Ayman Benmati, Education Officer (Sabbatical Trustee)

Two other Sabbatical Officers: Carol Paige, Democracy, Operations and Community Officer
Jim Onyemenam, Postgraduate Students' Officer

Risk & Audit Committee

Three Sabbatical Officers: Ayman Benmati, Education Officer
Ilyas Benmouna, Activities Officer
Aarushi Menon, Women's Officer

The Board noted the above appointments made by the Sabbatical Officer Team.

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8. Sabbatical Officers' Report

The Vice-Chair gave an overview of the Sabbatical Officers' Reports and highlighted the following:

- The Digital Welcome Fair and Livestream was a huge success, with over 10,000 clubs and societies memberships bought.
- Extenuating Circumstances policy and process reform is underway. The officers were currently working with UCL to co-create a policy design led by students. They noted that the Education Officer and Welfare & International Officer are the sabbatical officer leads on this project.
- Officer Portfolio Review is underway, with the external consultants meeting the officers and other stakeholders as part of the process.
- The Activities Officer are in talks with UCL Estates, our Sports Development Manager, and Chief Executive on the future of the Shenley Sports Ground.
- The Chair confirmed that the Sustainability Strategy is now complete and will be considered by the Board later in the meeting.
- The Education Officer confirmed that the research for the Student Manifesto for the incoming Provost is being organised, with a survey going out to students soon and the manifesto being written over the Christmas period ready for the Provost's arrival.
- The Postgraduate Students' Officer noted that Senate House Hub has now been made a postgraduate space rather than exclusively postgraduate research (PGR). More PGR-exclusive spaces, as well as a pilot facility for child-friendly study spaces, are set to be made available in Ramsay Hall.
- The Vice-Chair confirmed that an Amendment to the Governing Documents was passed at the last meeting of Union Executive to include Welfare Reps as part of Welfare and Community Zone. They are planning to have conversations with the Activities Team as well as Leadership Development & Change Team on how best to move forward with these reps. They are also in talks about the issue of no alcohol-free evening social spaces at the Union to various people, including the Chief Executive. This will be included in conversations regarding potential new Union spaces and how we can use those to accommodate all students.
- The Women's Officer noted that they are in conversation with UCL's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion team regarding streamlining of the Report + Support tool, which is happening alongside work being done on the Race Equality Toolkit. They also noted that there has

been a relaunch of the group working on free period products after a 6-month hiatus due to COVID-19.

The Chair suggested that the Board look at the Officers webpages for a more in-depth look into what the Officers had been involved in.

The Chief Executive advised that the Black & Minority Ethnic Students' Officer is currently on sick leave and they will return to work initially on three days a week to support their return.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) commended the Officers on their fantastic work and asked for feedback on how they have found student engagement this term and also how they think students have found the quality of engagement with the Officers. The Postgraduate Students' Officer replied that engagement with Clubs & Societies and Academic Representatives has been really good. The feedback they have received from Academic Representatives has been really positive. Regular newsletters are sent to students and generally students will get in contact if they have issues. They noted that further work has started on how we communicate the good things the Union is doing in students' interests.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) also asked about students who have been put up in other Student Residences which are perhaps not convenient for them. The Chair responded that UCL did not want to fill up the Student Residences to full capacity due to COVID-19 mitigation and students do not need to be physically on campus at the moment which negated the need to travel. The biggest issue was getting UCL to permit students to be released from their contracts early.

The Student Trustee (SS) stated that there has been issues especially with not having tutorials or practical's but all things considered it has been okay. The Activities Officer added that the Union has hosted many online events but obviously students are not receiving the full University experience and the lack of in-person activities and teaching is an issue.

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9. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive provided highlights from their report including:

- The Union's very successful Welcome Period where engagement was really high.
- Government restrictions have been a huge challenge for the Union especially with changes at short notice. The Union has been trying to keep as much open as possible whilst keeping within the Government guidelines.
- So far this year the Union is operating ahead of budget.
- UCL are enabling the Union to take on the running of the UCL Shop in 2021. The Chief Executive thanked the Chair, the Head of Operations and their team for all the work that went into the proposal for this. They also thanked the External Trustee (UCL Staff) who initially suggested this.
- We have attracted an additional £295k of grant funding from UCL to support a significant expansion of student activities in terms 2 and 3. This is the largest increase in grant funding

that the Union has received in many years and we intend to ensure we make a huge success of this funding.

- The Union's relationship with UCL continues to strengthen, with continuing close involvement of the Sabbatical Officers in decision making.

The Chief Executive concluded that the University of London is in the process of selling a long lease of the Student Central building. The Union is in talks with UCL about this opportunity. UCL Estates are looking at the space needs of the Union. They noted that this was confidential and asked the Board not to discuss this outside the Board meeting. The External Trustee (UCL Alumni) asked about the other options that UCL are considering for the building other than the Union. The Chief Executive replied they are considering the following options:

- Students' Union and UCL Culture
- Students' Union and Student Support Services (ISD & UCL Careers Service)
- Department of Computer Science with no Students' Union presence

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) suggested to the Chief Executive that it would be a good idea to compile a brief report on what the Union has spent the additional funding on. The Chief Executive agreed that the Union need to compile an impact report for the University especially when looking for additional funding in the future.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) asked if maybe a committee should be set up to discuss the estates issues at Shenley and Student Central.

The Chief Executive added that they are very keen to get feedback from the Board regarding the possible bid for Student Central especially as decisions made need to be made quickly. They suggested that an informal group is set up outside the Board to meet informally to discuss the extra costs and operations that will arise with Student Central. The External Trustee (UCL Alumni) confirmed that they would like to be involved in this group. The Chair added that if UCL are able to purchase the building, this will be discussed at UCL Council and Finance Committee early in the New Year, so decisions will need to be made very quickly. It was agreed that a Board Briefing would be arranged early in the New Year once a further update has been received from UCL Estates.

ACTION: The Leadership Development & Change Manager to arrange for the Board to discuss Student Central early in the New Year.

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10. Discussion and Q&A with Anthony Smith, UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs)

The Chair welcomed Anthony Smith, UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) to the meeting and introduced them to the Board. The UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) spoke about how difficult this time has been for students and how this has strengthened the relationship between UCL and the Union as they have been working in partnership throughout the pandemic.

The UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) went on to explain how the pandemic first affected the University and how discussions evolved with how to deal with this. They confirmed that they realised early on the need for clear communication with students and worked very closely with the previous Education Officer and current Postgraduate Students' Officer on this. They confirmed that the Sabbatical Officers were invaluable during this time. They also noted that during the first lockdown the Digital Education team had to provide lots of resources to support remote learning for students as there was no face-to-face teaching.

The UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) commended the brilliant work that has been done to make the campus COVID-secure. However, they noted that the next few months will be difficult but UCL has a sufficient operating model to get through this. They concluded that they would soon be welcoming the new Provost and that they will be rethinking the Education Strategy as it is due to be refreshed in 2021.

The Education Officer commented that there has been record engagement between UCL staff and Academic Representatives and they asked how could the Union work in partnership with the University to continue this support. The UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) responded that we need to continue to invest in the training and development of Academic Representatives and suggested that they are given more leadership development.

The Postgraduate Students' Officer asked about 2021 and how we can retain some of the learning from this year. The UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) replied that 2021 will be difficult as we do not know what the new normal will look like or how long the vaccine roll out will take. They said that they have been looking at the outcome of student assessments and what lessons can be learnt from this. Also, 2021 will be a different year due to the number of undergraduate students. Usually UCL has an intake of around 6,000 undergraduate students but this year it had over 8,000 due to the issues with the A 'Level results. UCL will need to look at how they support these students in their second and third year. They added that they hoped we will be able to welcome students back onto campus before we move into 2021/22.

The Postgraduate Students' Officer asked if this meant that there will be a lower intake of first years next year. The UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) responded that there will have to be some compromise in terms of space which will mean either reducing the intake of first year students or postgraduate taught students.

The Activities Officer asked about the UCL's bid for Student Central and where does UCL stand on providing that space to the Union. The UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) replied that the bid was only put in this morning and there is a lot of competition for the space. They confirmed that they would like the space to be used for the Union as it is a purpose built student building. A world-class University needs to have world-class facilities for its students and the current Union space is not ideal. They concluded that they will suggest this to the incoming Provost.

The Welfare & International Officer asked why there is not a No Detriment Policy this year as they have received a lot of questions and queries from students regarding this. The UCL Vice-Provost

(Education & Student Affairs) responded that this year, students have had to learn to work in a different way at very short notice. They confirmed that UCL cannot rely on using predicted grades as past data has shown that this is not a fair system. This is different with postgraduate taught students as most are only here for a year.

The Chair thanked the UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) for their attendance at the Board meeting.

The UCL Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) thanked the Board for inviting them as they have never had the opportunity to meet with the Board before.

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11. Establishment of Vice-Chair (External)

The Leadership Development & Change Manager outlined that a review of governance arrangements was undertaken in 2019 and included a recommendation to introduce an external Vice-Chair. The Governance Review Action Plan responded with the action to establish two Vice-Chair roles, one being an External Trustee and the other being a Sabbatical Trustee. The Leadership Development & Change Manager asked the Board to formally establish the role of Vice-Chair (External) and noted that expressions of interest for the role of Vice-Chair (External) to be given by 22 February 2021. The External Trustee (UCL Staff) asked if the appointment could be postponed until the External Trustee (Non-UCL) returned.

The Board resolved to establish the role of Vice Chair (External) with the deadline for expressions of interest to be postponed until the External Trustee (Non-UCL) returns.

RESOLVED

12. Management Accounts (Quarter 1)

The Interim Head of Finance presented the management accounts for quarter 1 and outlined the headline points. They noted that year to date contribution is a deficit of approximately £100k but the expectation in the budget was that the operational deficit would be £270k at this stage. This is partly due to delayed expenditure in student activities. The commercial outlets have been operating in quarter 1 but the cafés have generated much less income than predicted, however, the bars, gym and shop have exceeded budgeted income. They concluded that the commercial contribution has been protected by the extension of the furlough scheme, covering a large proportion of the fixed staff costs budgeted in the overhead.

The Head of Operations commented that it has been a difficult term with such a low footfall on campus.

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13. Budget 2020-21 Forecast

The Interim Head of Finance outlined the headline points from the Budget 2020-21 forecast. They noted that this forecast has been compiled following a detailed review of the current income and expenditure, and likely trends for the remainder of this year for each Union department.

It has been based upon similar planning assumptions as the original budget, but these have been updated to take account of the lower campus footfall and the impact of changing Government restrictions.

The Chief Executive added that whilst we have tried to save money we have also been trying to provide the best service possible to our members. They commended the Interim Head of Finance on their work on the Budget 2020-21 forecast. They asked the Board to support the Union in releasing funds to enable the Union to refurbish and open the UCL shop in the Wilkin's Building as a new Students' Union convenience store.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) thanked the Interim Head of Finance for the clear budget forecast. They asked if the benefit from the furlough scheme had been included in the forecast. The Interim Head of Finance confirmed that it was and went on to explain how this had been included.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) asked if the Union were accounting for a full economic costing regarding the additional £295k funding and if the additional staff time used has been costed in. The Head of Student Engagement & Communication responded that they have used a full costing. The Chief Executive added that this costing had to be turned around in a week so a full economic costing was not possible but we were generous in our budgeting so should be able to account for some of the overhead costs in the additional grant.

The External Trustee (UCL Staff) asked at what level of our deficit is the UCL funding kicking in. The Chief Executive replied that this would happen when the Union's free reserves were exhausted. They noted that the Board needs to discuss the Union's reserves position and pension deficit at the next Board meeting once the 2019-20 annual accounts are finalised.

ACTION: The Board to discuss the reserves position and pension deficit at the next meeting of the Board.

The Board considered the budget forecast and agreed £70k of capital investment from the Union's designated reserves, required to enable the Union to refurbish and open the UCL shop in the Wilkin's Building as a new Students' Union convenience store in time for next academic year.

RESOLVED

14. Health & Safety Update

The Head of Operations gave an overview of the Health & Safety Report and noted that the Union passed all COVID-19 compliant criteria and all submitted risk assessments were approved by the UCL Health and Safety team and UCL's Chief Operating Officer. They confirmed that the Union is looking to recruit a part-time Health & Safety Coordinator to ensure the highest possible standards of health and safety across the Union's services.

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15. Union Global Engagement Strategy

The Welfare & International Officer confirmed that the Union has developed a Global Engagement Strategy in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders which the Union believes will help increase our reputation and reach in this important area of work. They gave a summary of the Global Engagement Strategy and asked the Board to consider and approve the Students' Union UCL Global Engagement Strategy 2020-25 which will set the direction of our international work for five years.

The Board resolved to approve the Global Engagement Strategy 2020-25.

RESOLVED

16. Union Sustainability Strategy

The Chair summarised the Union Sustainability Strategy and asked the Board to approve the Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2020-24.

The Board resolved to approve the Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2020-24.

RESOLVED

17. Returning Officer's Report for Elections 2019-20

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18. Report from Meeting of Finance Committee on 30 November 2020 (Draft Minutes)

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19. Report from Meeting of Governance Committee on 24 November 2020 (Draft Minutes)


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20. Any Other Business

The Chief Executive reminded the Board that the Student Central bid was confidential and should not be discussed outside of the Board meeting.

The Chair reported to the Board that the Union Executive had voted on presenting Michael Arthur, UCL Provost, with a lifetime membership to Students' Union UCL.

The Chair thanked the Board and wished them a pleasant break.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Carol Paige, Chair of the Board
Signature:	
Date:	05/03/2021

Action Note	
The Head of Student Engagement & Communications to get back to the External Trustee (UCL staff) about the changes made to the Refreshed Strategy for 2020-21.	Head of Student Engagement & Communications
The Leadership Development & Change Manager to arrange for a Board Briefing to discuss the Student Central bid in early 2021	Leadership Development & Change Manager
The Board to discuss the reserves position and pension deficit at the next meeting of the Board.	Interim Head of Finance