



Date: Monday 04 March 2024
Time: 18:00 – 20:00
Venue: Taviton Street 14-16 Room 347, Hybrid

Union Executive

Minutes

Chair: Mary McHarg, President

Members:	P	AP	AB
Ahmad Ismail, Equity & Inclusion Officer	X		
Aria Xingni Shi, Activities and Engagement Officer	X		
Elisa de Aragao Bibay, Women's Officer	X		
Grace Yang, Sustainability Officer		X	
Issy Smith, Postgraduate Officer	X		
Mary McHarg, President	X		
Micah Gerstner, LGBTQ+ Officer	X		
Philip Greger and Suzanna Chen, Disabled Students' Officer	X		
Rawleka Wilson and Rachel Lim, People of Colour Students' Officer	X		
Shaban Chaudhary, Education Officer	X		
Sophie-Jayne Bush, Elected Officer from Education Zone	X		
Ella O'Brien, Elected Officer from Activities Zone			X
Donna Amewu, Elected Officer from Welfare and Community Zone	X		

In Attendance:
Simon To, Director of Policy, Governance & Insight
Jeff Saddington-Wiltshire, Representation & Democracy Manager
Anji Suri, Trans Officer
Manaal Tariq, International Students' Officer
Nick Miao, Societies Rep (Student Media)
Seth Harris, Societies Rep (Non-Portfolio)
Altay Shaw, Student Media
Matthew Phuklaewkla, Democracy Assistant, minutes

Actions Log 2023/24	Responsibility	Update due:
MM to look into the number of forms required to be filled out for the Participation Fund	MM	07/05/2024
MM or AXS to contact Activities Team about room bookings.	MM/AXS	07/05/2024

Preliminary Matters

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Mary McHarg (MM) warmly welcomed members to the zone.

2. Approval of minutes from UE2304, AZ2304, EZ2304, WCZ2304

Minutes were approved.

Sabbatical Officer Updates

3. Sabbatical Officer Reports

The Sabbatical Officers gave updates alongside their February Reports – more information on this can be found in the reports attached to these minutes.

Firstly, Equity & Inclusion Officer Ahmad Ismail (AI) gave updates:

- Community guidelines for [Impartial Chairs](#) will be done at the end of the month
- [LGBTQ+ History Month](#) just concluded! AI said if anyone would like a free Pride lanyard, to please approach him
- £200 has been raised for the [Gender Expression Fund](#)
- Working with Trans Officer Anji Suri (AS) towards trans-inclusion in the [Active Bystander Programme](#)
- Launched the Equality Monitoring and Assessment Group (EMAG) as an alternative to Stonewall
- In addition to EMAG and [LUKI \(LSE, UCL, King's, Imperial\)](#), AI would like to continue conversations with further external assessors
- Started conversations around UCL accommodation finances, and looking to be involved in all further conversations regarding the accommodation masterplan
- The expansion of arts at UCL is going well

Next, the President, MM gave updates:

- A new student common room will be opening at UCL East as part of a year-long trial run, and the Union is free to do whatever they want with it
- Continued good progress on the new Union building - MM had a meeting with the [Finance Committee](#) earlier today
- Extended Learning Opportunities is planning a myriad of events for Term 3 in order to improve the student co-curricular experience.

- Good progress on the [Russell Group Students' Unions \(RGSU\)](#) manifesto
- As advised by the [University Management Committee \(UMC\)](#), MM is taking the Harm Reduction policy with [Student Support & Wellbeing \(SSW\)](#) to be discussed at the [UCL Council](#) in April.

Education Officer Shaban Chaudhary (SC) gave some updates:

- The [Student Staff Partnership Committee \(SSPC\)](#) is now involving Faculty Reps more by allowing them to come along and discuss key issues
- Working on transitioning from [2 self-certified Extenuating Circumstances \(ECs\)](#) to 3 free EC passes which do not require certification.
- Working with International Students' Officer Manaal Tariq (MT) on streamlining attendance systems across UCL
- Currently holding discussions about expanding spaces at UCL
- Working with Sports Consultants to plan the Union's sports strategy, and exploring options for more sports spaces for TeamUCL
- The Student Priorities for Education Report has kicked off, which has now been looked at by all [Staff-Student Consultative Committees \(SSCCs\)](#).
- The [UCL Senior Education Team](#) came to the most recent Education Zone last week
- The Union deposit account is now being changed to Nationwide Bank
- Embarking on a 'toilet trip' tomorrow to address issues within the Student Centre toilets

Some of Postgraduate Officer Issy Smith's (IS) updates:

- The last few weeks have been focused on addressing the Mature Student experience at UCL
- [Postgraduate Teaching Assistant \(PGTA\)](#) rights discussions are coming to a head.
- Working on improving PGTA rights, usage and contracts
- Improving and feeding back on PGR and PGT Welcome and Induction, and linking it to the SU
- Launching and coordinating a SU-wide collaborative working group on increasing PG engagement with SU services
- Looking into doing a BBQ for postgrads, as well as a main quad takeover with child friendly spaces, lots of seating and food
- Current working on inclusive, central-based postgrad summer plans

- To address Cost of Living, a ‘community fridge’ is currently being set up, which will give away surplus food from CH&Co. MM added that once this is set up, more selections of food will be added.

Activities & Engagement Officer Aria Xingni Shi (AXS) gave updates:

- Term 3 Clubs and Societies Affiliations – more information about these can be found in the AZ2304 papers.
- Work is currently being done on the Student Network Scheme to cater for PhD students
- Work on fostering arts and cultural exchange with overseas partners; there is currently an international opportunity for arts students available.
- The Napping Zone will launch on 21st April in the [Garden Room](#). It will be outfitted with cosy furniture and will have areas reserved for disabled students, as well as a booking system.
- Work on an East Asian Student Engagement & Experience Working Group

Matters for Approval

4. Follow up on action points from previous meeting

There were no action points from the previous meeting.

Policy Proposals

5. Taster Membership Voting Rights

Firstly, AXS gave a brief summary of this policy. More information about this policy can be found attached to these minutes.

A question was asked about if this will affect this year’s elections – MM said the summer by-elections will be affected, but not this current set of elections.

SC gave some thoughts on the policy that it would be slightly discouraging to those struggling with the cost of living crisis, as taster memberships are a way for students to enjoy activities and feel included in society matters such as voting, without any financial commitment.

In response to this, Simon To (ST), Director of Governance, Policy & Insight, highlighted the existence of the [Participation Fund](#), which assists with clubs & society participation costs.

LGBQ+ Officer Micah Gerstner (MG) suggested that there should be more promotion of the Participation fund – ST welcomed any suggestions and said for anyone with feedback to get in touch.

Several members suggested for Participation Fund info to be included at various places such as Welcome Fair stalls, hall induction booklets and programme induction welcome packs.

A question was also asked about how long the fund takes to be processed once applied for. MM said that this is normally 2 weeks, but there is an emergency grant of £150 available for students who are in urgent need of money.

People of Colour Students' Officer Rachel Lim (RL) raised an issue that accessing the Participation Fund requires an excessive number of forms to be filled out, which could be a barrier to certain people who wish to access the fund. **Action: MM to look into Participation Fund forms.**

This policy proposal was voted on by Zone members, and passed with 100% voting 'for'.

Matters for Information

6. Updates from and into the Board of Trustees

The Summer Festival is coming up at the end of May, when exams are wrapping up. The Main Quad will be taken over for 3 weeks, with pop-up bars, balls, an awards ceremony, and a proper festival.

Any Other Business

Jeff gave an overview of [Leadership Race](#) numbers, which are all higher compared to last year:

- 3358 candidates in total
- 59 Sabbatical Officer candidates across 6 roles
- 51 Student Officer candidates
- 11 Student Trustee Candidates across 2 roles
- 18 candidates across the 4 Networks

As a separate matter, AI brought up that the Welfare & Community Zone (WCZ) has been inquorate for the past two meetings, which has caused a backlog of policy proposals to be approved. To address this, he would like to launch a review of the Zone. MM asked members for ideas to attract attendees back to the meeting so that policies can be voted on. Some feedback:

- Elected Education Zone Officer Sophie-Jayne Bush (SJB) suggested that a party could be held, with pizza and free food to encourage people to come.
- SC suggested that more accommodation-related items could be included on the agenda to encourage Hall Community Officers (HCOs) to come, as this is within their remit.
- MM suggested that there could be better integration of HCOs at the beginning of the year.

AI added that even though the policies have not passed through Zones yet, he is already proactively working on them as he thinks they are good policies.

On a separate matter, MG brought to attention that UCL recently [hosted a speaker known for their gender-critical views](#). Also, MG asked for progress on room bookings and also part-time officer

renumeration. MM said that discussions are still being held regarding renumeration; room bookings could be discussed with AXS, as she is doing similar work in this field. Additionally, **Action: MM or AXS to contact Activities Team about room bookings.**

Finally, with no more AOB's to discuss, MM thanked members for coming and concluded the meeting.

(The meeting finished at 19:40, with 'slay' count: 26)

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Mary McHarg, Union Affairs Officer
Signature:	Mary McHarg
Date:	04/06/2024