



Welfare and Community Zone
Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 10 December 2019
Time: 18:00-20:00
Venue: G17, Pearson Building

Chair: Aatikah Malik, Welfare and International Officer

| Members: | P | AP | AB |
|--|---|----|----|
| Aatikah Malik, Welfare and International Officer, Chair | ✓ | | |
| Ahsana Parammal Vatteri, Officer for Students with Caring Responsibilities | | ✓ | |
| Alia Husain, Halls Representative – John Dodgson House | ✓ | | |
| Amelie Clark, Halls Representative – Ramsay Hall/Ian Baker House | ✓ | | |
| Andrew Mok Yuan, International Students' Officer (Job Share) | ✓ | | |
| Anna Golova, Halls Representative – Prankerd and Schafer House | ✓ | | |
| Carol Paige, Democracy, Operations and Community Officer | ✓ | | |
| Chenchen Zhao, Halls Representative – Langton Close/Frances Gardner House | ✓ | | |
| Chun Cho, Halls Representative – Astor College | ✓ | | |
| Clarissa Westwood, External Accommodation Officer | ✓ | | |
| Florentyna Syperek, Halls Representative – Endsleigh Gardens/John Adams Hall | ✓ | | |
| Guendalina Bonifacio, Mature & Part-time Students' Officer | | | ✓ |
| Hanna Jepps, Halls Representative – St Pancras Way and Beaumont Court | ✓ | | |
| Hattie Palmer, Halls Representative – James Lighthill House | ✓ | | |
| Jim Onyemenam, Postgraduate Students' Officer | | | ✓ |
| Johanna Robinson, Halls Representative – Bernard Johnson House | | ✓ | |
| Maë Faugère, Sustainability Officer | | | ✓ |
| Matthew Lee, Halls Accommodation Representative | | | ✓ |
| Ming Teh, Halls Representative – Arthur Tattersall House/John Tovell House | ✓ | | |
| Molly Hartill, Community Relations Officer | ✓ | | |
| Morgan Stoner, Halls Representative – Goldsmid House | ✓ | | |
| Nilisha Vashist, Women's Officer | | ✓ | |
| Pietro Sambuy, International Students' Officer (Job Share) | ✓ | | |
| Sandy Ogundele, BME Students' Officer | | | ✓ |
| Sara Javadian, Halls Representative – New Hall (Caledonian Road) | | ✓ | |
| Saskia Ackermann, Halls Representative – Campbell House East and West | ✓ | | |
| Sinem Gorucu, Halls Representative - Stapleton House | ✓ | | |
| Sophie Nagasinghe, Halls Representative – Ifor Evans Hall/Max Rayne House/Ann Stephenson and Neil Sharp Houses | ✓ | | |
| Tyler Leli, Halls Representative - Hawkridge | ✓ | | |

| In Attendance: |
|--|
| Danielle Swanson, Advice and Advocacy Manager |
| Emer O'Driscoll, Policy Zone Assistant, Minutes |
| Simon To, Leadership, Development and Change Manager |

1 Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the last meeting. There were no objections and the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

The Chair outlined the action points from the last meeting and the subsequent actions that had been taken:

- “All first year students to take the upcoming New to UCL survey.” – Completed
- “All members to consider joining a UCL or SU committee.” – Completed
- “The Chair will present these [the Zone’s priorities for the year] at Union Executive” – Completed
- “Students to respond to the Eugenics Inquiry and the Phineas Consultation” – Completed
- “The Chair to take issues raised to StEC. Members to email sabbatical officers with any additional issues.” - Completed
- “The Postgraduate Students’ Officer and the Officer for Students with Caring Responsibilities to discuss plans for improving childcare facilities.” - Completed

2 **Announcements**

The Chair informed members that the NUS Conference Delegate Elections are now open for nominations. They encouraged them to find out more about it and put themselves forward if interested.

Action: All students to consider nominating themselves for the NUS Conference Delegate elections.

Action: Policy Zone Assistant to send out relevant information in follow-up email.

The Democracy, Operations and Community Officer (DOCO) informed members that the UCL East Student Forum is looking for student representatives from each Policy Zone.

Action: All students to consider putting themselves forward for the UCL East Student Forum.

Action: Policy Zone Assistant to send out relevant information in follow-up email.

The Chair notified everyone that the SENSE survey on mental health is open until the end of term and encouraged members to fill it out and share it with their peers.

Action: All students to fill out and share the SENSE survey

3 **Policy Proposal: Toilet Paper**

The Chair introduced the policy and asked for members’ feedback on the proposal.

A Hall Representative noted that it would be positive for the Union to promote recycling and sustainability.

The DOCO explained that the Union cannot directly mandate UCL to change its business practices, although we can lobby for change. The DOCO also noted that the Union gets its toilet

paper directly from its cleaning company, who are not legally obliged to change their products. The Advice and Advocacy Manager outlined some practical issues in switching toilet paper brand, for instance a new brand would not be compatible with the current toilet roll holders. Issues like these would make switching brand very expensive.

The Leadership, Development and Change Manager explained that the Union cannot endorse one particular brand. If there were to be a switch of brand, there would be significant practical and financial implications.

The Community Relations Officer suggested broadening the idea and creating a more realistic proposal which would address the same concerns and goals, i.e. by considering bigger brands or more practical changes.

There were no objections to this suggestions. The Chair moved to not vote on this proposal and look into creating a new, broader policy on sustainable products.

Action: The Chair to look into creating a new policy regarding sustainable products.

4 **Policy Proposal: Reduce Printing, Increase Digital Signage**

The Chair introduced the proposal and asked for feedback.

The DOCO noted that the Union's marketing department is already investing a lot in digital signage. They explained that committing to a complete ban on printing would be extremely problematic and impractical, but suggested amending the motion to state that digital signage should always be the default position when producing marketing materials.

The DOCO reported that they and the Activities Officer are working on a paperless Welcome Fair for 2020/21.

The Hall Representatives then discussed the various pros and cons of the printed materials given out in Welcome Week. Many reps felt that the amount of paper given out was wasteful and unnecessary. Some reps appreciated having paper copies of some things, as it made the information easier to digest and acted as a physical reminder of important information.

The DOCO and the Advice and Advocacy Manager pointed out that paper copies of information can often be necessary from an accessibility standpoint.

Some Halls Representatives suggested that more training should be given on how to recycle, especially for new students who are unfamiliar with U.K. recycling practices. The DOCO noted that 'Environmental Collective UCL' runs regular recycling workshops.

The Chair suggested amending the policy to state that the Union would commit to reducing printing and increasing digital signage. The policy would be based on a principle of only using printed materials where necessary.

There were no objections to the amendment.

The Chair moved to a vote.

| Vote | Number |
|---------|--------|
| For | 10 |
| Against | 2 |
| Abstain | 1 |

Decision: The policy was carried.

5 Policy Proposal – Paper Cups

The Chair introduced the policy and asked for feedback.

The DOCO explained that they are involved with Sustainable UCL’s ‘Ditch the Disposable’ campaign, which is funding a lot of research on this issue. They asked anyone who is interested in participating in the campaign to email them.

The DOCO then noted that they would be very hesitant to endorse this policy, as an outright ban on paper cup won’t change consumer behaviour but will have a significant financial impact on the Union. They also noted that there are significant accessibility implications in banning disposable cups. They suggested possibly amending the proposal to become an educational campaign.

It was noted that all UCL cafes offer a 20p discount for customers who bring their own reusable cups.

The Halls Representative for Langton Close and Frances Gardner House asked if it would be possible to provide reusable cups for Halls-based events. The DOCO responded that we could lobby UCL to provide these and that the Union is working on providing reusable cups for clubs and societies’ events.

Student reps asked if the Union could increase the prices of disposable cups to deter usage and/or decrease the price of reusable cups.

The DOCO responded that increasing the price of disposable cups would remove the Union’s price advantage over commercial venues, which would negatively affect the Union’s income and give us less money to invest in sustainable initiatives. They also noted that the Union currently sells reusable cups at cost price and so cannot reduce those prices.

The Advice and Advocacy Manager noted that the Union is currently running a Consent Campaign where students can receive a free ‘I ♥ Consent’ keep-cup by completing online consent training.

The Chair suggested amending the proposal to be a reduction in the use of disposable cups, rather than an outright ban. Hall Reps also suggested offering free reusable cups at the Welcome Fair, instead of tote bags, pens etc. If this would be too expensive, there could also be a stall selling cups at the fair.

The DOCO reported that they are attempting to establish a 'Zero Waste Corner' in the Union shop, which would sell only sustainable products.

The Chair decided that, as work on this issue is ongoing, it would be unnecessary to vote on the proposal.

Action: Any members interested in joining the 'Ditch the Disposable' campaign to email the DOCO (doc.officer@ucl.ac.uk).

Action: Officers to take rep feedback into consideration when planning the Welcome Fair and commercial ventures involving disposable cups.

6 **Policy Proposal: Surveys on Plastic Usage**

The Chair introduced the policy and asked for feedback.

Some reps worried that additional surveys would not be effective, due to the amount of surveys that students are already required to fill out.

The DOCO suggested creating a BuzzFeed-style quiz, which students might find more enjoyable to engage with. The International Students' Officer suggested also running polls on the Union's Instagram account.

The Chair suggested that the Union could take these actions without having a formal policy on the issue. There were no objections and so the proposal was not voted on.

Action: The DOCO to work with the Union marketing department on finding engaging ways to collect student feedback on plastic usage.

7 **Policy Proposal: Mental Health Support Specific to Medical Science Students**

The Chair introduced the policy and noted that it had been discussed at length at Education Zone before being deferred to Welfare & Community Zone.

The Chair explained that the Union does not have the funds to establish a new advice or counselling service, as the policy requests.

The Advice and Advocacy Manager mentioned that the Advice service is available to all students and offers confidential advice, but that advisors are not trained counsellors and they cannot provide crisis services. They noted that the main issue raised by the proposal is anonymity and

that all UCL and Union advice services are confidential, unless there is an immediate risk to life.

The Leadership, Development and Change Manager noted that the proposal showed a misunderstanding of the confidentiality of the current services available. The Advice and Advocacy Manager suggested that the Union should encourage departments, especially in Medical Sciences, to provide more accurate and comprehensive advice about the support available to students, particularly with regards to Fitness to Practice.

There was no vote on this proposal.

Action: The Union to encourage departments to circulate more accurate information about mental health support, confidentiality, and fitness to practice to students.

8 **Policy Proposal – Security Personnel**

The Chair introduced the policy and asked for feedback.

Some reps agreed with the proposer that UCL security staff can be condescending or intimidating to students. Some reps also felt that respect is a two-way street and students are also not always respectful to security staff.

The DOCO noted that they have a good relationship with the Head of Security and could speak to them and let them know this issue has been raised.

The International Students' Officer asked if the Union could lobby to improve working conditions for UCL staff and end outsourcing, as this is the root of a lot of the problems and frustrations with security staff. The DOCO explained that the Union already has this stance and is working to improve these conditions.

The Zone decided that this policy was not substantial enough to be voted on but the officers would take the feedback on board.

Action: The DOCO to speak to the Head of Security.

9 **Policy Proposal: Toilet Transformation in the IOE**

The Chair introduced the policy and asked for feedback.

The DOCO explained that all new-built toilets at UCL tend to be self-contained, gender neutral 'Superloos', like the ones in 25 Gordon Street.

Some reps stated that students might not feel comfortable using gender neutral toilets, sometimes for cultural or religious reasons. The DOCO pointed out that gender neutral toilets solve the issue of 'othering', which is created by gendered toilets.

A Hall Rep asked if it would be possible to reach a compromise by making half of the toilets

gender neutral and half gendered. It was suggested to amend the proposal by changing the word “all” to “at least half of”.

There were no objections to the amendment.

The Chair moved to a vote.

| Vote | Number |
|---------|--------|
| For | 14 |
| Against | 2 |
| Abstain | 1 |

Decision: The policy was carried.

10 **Policy Proposal: Use of Personal Data**

The Chair introduced the policy and explained that, as there were no clear outcomes, it might not be able to go to a vote. They asked for any feedback or points of discussion.

Some reps reported that the ID card system used by UCL can feel quite isolating and unfriendly. Other reps reported that this level of security made them feel safe in university buildings.

The DOCO reported that the tightening of security measures on campus over the last year is probably linked to recent terror attacks in London, as well as the recent industrial action on campus. The measures are intended to prevent members of the public damaging UCL property. Departmental-level restrictions are often put in place to protect sensitive or expensive equipment from being stolen or damaged.

A discussion ensued between reps, some of whom felt that access restrictions were excessive and isolating, and some of whom felt those restrictions were necessary for students to feel safe on campus.

The International Students’ Officer raised the issue of data gathering in relation to attendance monitoring, especially for students on Tier 4 visas. The Leadership, Development and Change Manager reported that the data gathered from ID cards is not currently used for attendance monitoring and it should have no effect on the status of international students. They emphasised that the Union is opposed to attendance monitoring and has a policy of non-compliance with it.

11 **Matters for Information/Discussion – Hate Crime Reporting Centre**

The Advice and Advocacy Manager informed members that the Union has a Hate Crime Reporting Centre (HCRC) and asked for any feedback from anyone who had used it or knew about it.

They gave an overview of what a HCRC is and what qualifies as a hate crime. They then explained what the university's Report and Support programme is. They emphasised that the HCRC is run by the Union and is therefore confidential.

12 **Group Discussions**

Members split into groups to mind map ideas relating to pastoral support and safety on campus. The feedback about these issues is recorded below.

Safer Campus:

- Better security for halls to prevent unauthorised people from entering
- Student cards for entering departments
- Raising awareness of theft/pickpocketing on campus

Pastoral Support:

- No personal tutors in Architecture department
- Mandatory meetings with personal tutors at beginning of term
- Tutors being more knowledgeable about student background
- More communication about different wellbeing programmes

13 **Questions to Officers**

The Hall Representative for Goldsmid House raised the issue that an email had been sent out about an event under their name without their approval or permission. Several other Hall Reps noted that they had had the same thing happen.

The Chair and the DOCO stated that this was unacceptable and should not have happened. They reassured reps that they would look into the issue and it would not happen again.

Action: The Chair and the DOCO to investigate this issue.

The Hall Representative for John Dodgson House asked if it would be possible to increase security to prevent unauthorised persons from accessing halls of residence. The DOCO responded that implementing a new security system be quite expensive and so UCL are unlikely to do it. The Chair said they would bring the issue up with UCL Accommodation services.

Other reps raised accommodation issues with private rented accommodations run by Unite Students. The Leadership, Development and Change Manager reminded members that halls-related issues should be raised with UCL Accommodation. They recommended that reps contact Ted Mathews and copy the Chair into those communications.

14 **Any Other Business**

The DOCO reminded all eligible reps to vote in the upcoming general election and all reps to encourage their constituents to vote.

| Minutes approved as a true and accurate record | |
|---|--|
| Chair: | Aatikah Malik, Welfare and International Officer |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | |