



Welfare and Community Zone  
Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 27 January 2020  
Time: 18:00-20:00  
Venue: G07, Chadwick 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	✓		
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	✓		
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:
Beverly Isibor, Leadership Development Coordinator
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 followed up on the action point from WCZ1902 regarding gender neutral toilets in the IOE. The policy has been taken to senior members of UCL. It has been confirmed that the majority of toilets in the IOE will be made gender neutral in the course of the refurbishment.

## 2 **Announcements**

The Chair announced that the NUS Conference Delegates have now been elected and advertised the opportunities for students to submit motions for the NUS conference or run to be an NUS National Officer.

The Chair announced that nominations for the Leadership Race 2020 are now open. All members were encouraged to consider running for an Officer role and to share information about the Leadership Race with their constituents.

**Action: Members to consider running in the Leadership Race:**

<https://studentsunionucl.org/leadership-race>

The Chair announced that the Disabled Students' Network has published a report about discrimination faced by disabled students at UCL. All members were strongly encouraged to read the report and share it with their peers.

**Action: Members to read the Disability Discrimination Report available here:**

<http://studentsunionucl.org/articles/disability-discrimination-faced-by-ucl-students-and-recommended-measures>

The Women's Officer announced that the Union has issued a statement on the upcoming UCL event with Women's Place UK, as there have been concerns about transphobia within the organisation. They announced that the sabbatical officer team has a strong position of solidarity with trans students. They informed members that the sabbatical officers will be conducting a demonstration in protest of the event and invited members to attend.

## 3 **Policy Proposal: Waste-Neutral Events**

The DOCO introduced the proposal. They explained that the Union already has a policy on plastic-free venues but this motion encompasses external events. The proposal should help students to consider the impact of unnecessary waste on club nights and how that affects the environment.

There were no questions or objections.

Vote	Number
For	13
Against	0
Abstain	1

**Decision: The policy was carried.**

#### 4 **Matters for Discussion – Encouraging Blood Donation**

The Chair introduced the matter and asked for feedback on whether the Union should do more to encourage blood donations and, if so, how they should do it.

Reps agreed that it was a worthwhile thing to do and the Union should promote NHS blood donations. A hall rep commented that their home university runs regular blood drives which are very popular with students. It was suggested that student blood drives might foster a sense of community.

**Action: The Chair will take steps to encourage blood donations.**

#### 5 **Matter for Discussion – Display inspirational messages**

The Chair introduced the matter and asked for feedback.

Reps were generally positive about the idea and felt that displaying positive messages, either on posters or digital display boards, would be beneficial for students' mental health and wellbeing.

The Women's Officer agreed that physical messages are very effective, and they have been useful in Union campaigns such as 'I Heart Consent' and 'Report + Support'. They noted that there are a limited number of digital display screens and that UCL does not have many poster-friendly spaces, which might be an issue.

**Action: The Chair will investigate ways to implement the proposal**

It was also suggested that positive messages could be sent via email to support student morale. Some reps pointed out that too many emails might be overwhelming or go unread in inboxes.

The LDC Manager noted that UCL has a '10 Minute Mind' programme which students can sign up for to receive daily guided mindfulness practice.

#### 6 **Matter for Discussion – Trans-Inclusive Training**

The Chair introduced the proposal and asked for feedback.

A Hall Rep asked about the pricing of the sessions and whether the prices listed were for individuals or for groups. The DOCO explained that they were for group sessions.

The Chair and the DOCO noted that the Union cannot use its resources to train UCL staff nor can it afford the costs of the training sessions. However, they and the other sabbatical officers felt it important to make a statement of solidarity with trans students at UCL. The Women's Officer noted that this was especially important in light of transphobic groups on campus.

It was resolved that the Officers will draft a policy proposal affirming the Union's stance of support for trans students, with the full support of the Welfare & Community Zone, to be taken to Union Executive.

**Action: Sabbatical Officers to draft a proposal to take to Union Executive**

**7 Matter for Discussion: Mental Health/Navigating the NHS**

The Chair introduced the matter as a general topic for discussion and asked members if they had any questions or issues they wanted to raise.

A Hall Rep asked if the Union or UCL will be circulating information to students about coronavirus.

The Chair and the Women's Officer explained that UCL has sent out general guidance to students and the Union will be following UCL's guidelines, so as not to cause any panic.

The Officer for Students with Caring Responsibilities asked if it would be possible to utilise the UCL Wellbeing team to run mental health workshops, rather than relying on expensive external providers.

The Advice and Advocacy Manager explained that that would be a good idea for general sessions but that it is important to be careful about the distinction between trained counsellors and academics or advisers. The Chair noted that external providers often have accreditation and expertise on specific issues that UCL's in-house wellbeing service don't have.

**8 Matter for Information: Nap Rooms**

The Chair informed the Zone about the ongoing Nap Rooms/Sleep Strategy project that they and Postgraduate Students' Officer are working on. They announced that they are hoping to pilot the scheme during exam season and expand the project from there. A working group has been put together.

Reps asked what the capacity of the nap rooms will be and if they will be free to use.

The Chair replied that the pilot will determine demand, from which the capacity will be determined, and that the spaces will be free to use.

**9 Matter for Information: Briefings on Reports**

The LDC Manager informed members about the following briefings:

- Briefing on Changing the Culture Report 2019
- Briefing on Tackling Racial Harassment by the Equality and Human Rights Commission

**10 Questions to Officers**

The Officer for Students with Caring Responsibilities asked the Women's Officer whether the Women's Network was doing any work to support student parents, specifically student mothers.

The Women's Officer responded that they would like to do more in that area but not much was being done at the moment. They also noted that it was difficult to restrict funding on a gendered basis, i.e. just for women with caring responsibilities.

The Leadership Development and Change Manager noted that the Union is undertaking a work on sessional childcare and crèches, which should help in this area.

The Women's Officer affirmed that it is important that the Union continue to speak up for student parents and carers to make sure that their concerns are heard at a higher level.

The International Students' Officer asked the Chair if there had been any updates with regards to attendance monitoring of students on Tier 4 visas.

The Chair stated that discussions about what attendance monitoring will look like at UCL are still ongoing and that there is always at least one sabbatical officer in those meetings advocating for international students.

The International Students' Officer asked if international students will be in a different category to home/EU students in the attendance monitoring system.

The Chair confirmed that they will not.

The DOCO announced that the Postgraduate Students' Officer is doing research on the experience of international students in higher education. They asked any international students to get involved and share the survey among their peers.

**Action: International students to fill out Postgraduate Students' Officer's survey:**

**[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctknEjoPl1KxKulGVsZlrBhPYe8uhdtXGGPoW\\_RPEKcBoQJQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSctknEjoPl1KxKulGVsZlrBhPYe8uhdtXGGPoW_RPEKcBoQJQ/viewform)**

The Officers noted that this is a national issue and that it needs change at a higher level than just UCL.

The Advice and Advocacy Manager explained that UCL is protective of its status as a visa sponsor. The Women's Officer agreed and noted that a problem in the current system is the vagueness of national policy on immigration, which leads to institutions taking the strictest possible interpretation in order to avoid sanction. It was also noted that many notions of engagement for attendance monitoring purposes are outdated and rely on physically being in the classroom.

The Officer for Students with Caring Responsibilities asked the Chair if the Union should publicise information about immigration status for PhD students on Tier 4 visas when they finish their studies.

The Advice and Advocacy Manager noted that immigration advice is specialist and heavily regulated so the Union's Advice Service can't deal with immigration matters. They recommended that students speak to UCL's immigration advice team.

#### 14 **Any Other Business**

Student Accommodation:

The DOCO and the Chair updated Hall Reps on the email that had been sent out in their names without permission. They had spoken to Ken Mathew, Head of Marketing, Communication & Student Experience, who had not been aware of the issue. Several Hall Reps then commented that even more emails had subsequently been sent out under their names without their permission. The DOCO stated that they would follow this up as a matter of urgency.

**Action: Hall Reps to forward any such emails to [su.committees@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:su.committees@ucl.ac.uk)**

**Action: Chair and DOCO to follow up on this issue**

Several Hall Reps reported that their halls often had no hot water and these issues were not fixed in a timely manner. It was asked who they should contact about these problems.

The LDC Manager explained that the first port of call should be the site manager/hall manager. If that is unsuccessful, Reps can contact the LDC Manager, the Chair or the DOCO. They can also escalate the situation to Ken Mathew.

A Hall Rep asked whether it would be possible to lobby UCL for more grants for those who cannot afford accommodation costs.

The LDC Manager noted that this has been tried in the past and that it was decided to use those funds to keep the rent down, rather than increasing the rent but offering some bursaries. They noted that UCL has the AccessUCL scheme which has an accommodation element, and that hardship funds are available in situations where a student's circumstances have changed. They also explained that the Union has a strong stance on freezing the costs of the cheapest rooms, while other room prices increase with inflation.

**Action: The Chair to bring up the issue with UCL staff.**

A Hall Rep asked about how to gain compensation for major construction works that are being undertaken in their hall for the whole year and are hugely inconveniencing residents.

The LDC Manager advised that they gather photographic evidence of where the works were causing inconvenience and speak to their site manager.

A Rep reported that security guards in their hall are often unfriendly or rude and asked if anything could be done.

The DOCO reported that they will meet with the Head of Security to discuss the issue and that UCL is bringing in an Accreditation System for security staff which should alleviate the problem.

**Action: DOCO to discuss with Head of Security**

A Hall Rep asked if there was anything that could be done regarding security in halls. They have been having problems with unauthorised persons tailgating residents and accessing the halls. They have asked their site manager for a more effective security system but have been told there is a two year waiting list.

The LDC Manager stated that if residents notice people tailgating they should contact their SRA or the mobile security team.

**Action: Chair to bring the problem up with Ken Mathew.**

The Advice and Advocacy Manager suggested getting members of the local community, for instance PCSOs, involved to assist with security.

The LDC Manager informed Reps that the Social Fund contribution for halls will increase from £5 per year to £25 per year for 2020/21. This will mean more events, not just in the Welcome period, and it is hoped that it will foster more of a sense of community within halls. It should also decrease pressure on Hall Reps to run large-scale events.

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