



Welfare and Community Zone
Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 2 June 2020
Time: 11:00-13:00
Venue: Zoom

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:
Danielle Swanson, Advice and Advocacy Manager
Emer O'Driscoll, Policy Zone Assistant, Minutes
Simon To, Leadership, Development and Change Manager
Student Observers

1 Preliminary Matters

The Chair was unable to join the first 40 minutes of the meeting due to unforeseen circumstances, so the Postgraduate Students' Officer (PSO) took over chairing duties until they were able to join.

The PSO 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.

2 **Announcements**

COVID-19:

The PSO noted that UCL has made an announcement regarding plans for re-opening in September 2020. The plans aren't completely clear at the moment, but it looks like there will be 'blended learning', i.e. some face-to-face teaching for some students, supplemented with significant remote teaching. The PSO asked if there were any questions regarding this. There were none.

Outcomes from the Student Experience Committee (StEC):

The PSO reported that StEC received an update from the Students with Disabilities Working Group, an update on the Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW) strategy, and an update from the Careers team.

A Hall Rep asked if there had been any progress on requests for tuition fee refunds and/or financial compensation for the effects of COVID-19 on teaching and learning.

The PSO reported that, while they and the Education Officer have raised this issue with UCL Senior Management many times, UCL still have no plans to offer tuition fee refunds or reductions. However, the sabbatical officers will continue to bring the matter up.

A Hall Rep asked if there will be any changes to visa regulations for international students given the changes to learning provisions, and the possibility that international students may choose to spend more time in their home countries.

The PSO responded that they are aware of this issue and are working on it but the Home Office are being very slow in their responses, and so there has not been much progress so far.

Non-Sabbatical Officer Handover:

Hall Reps and Part-time Officers were reminded to complete their handover documents by Monday, 15 June 2020.

3 **Policy Proposal: Non-engagement with UCL Prevent Agenda and its Leads**

The PSO introduced the policy proposal and referred members to the briefing paper that was circulated.

The Policy Zone Assistant noted that the policy was broadly a renewal of an existing Union Policy. The Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer (BMESO) explained the UK government's Prevent policy and how it affects students. The PSO explained the details of the Union's current non-engagement with Prevent.

It was noted that the meeting was inquorate and so the results of any vote would not be valid. It was suggested that an advisory vote be held, and the policy be taken to Union Executive directly based on the results of the advisory vote. The vote was delayed to take place at the end of the meeting, in case any other members were to join.

5 **Matter for Discussion: Student Accommodation**

Members were asked for feedback on priorities for student accommodation in 2020/21, bearing in mind the likelihood of continued social distancing measures.

A Hall Rep asked approximately what percentage of UCL accommodation is en-suite. The Advice and Advocacy Manager responded that around 30% of accommodation is en-suite. The PSO noted that UCL also has the option to contract other suppliers who have more en-suite facilities.

A Hall Rep raised the issue of reduced services in their hall as a result of COVID-19, while students are still being charged full prices for accommodation. They added that the students they represent are very unhappy about the situation but there has been seemingly no progress. They asked that this be taken on board in planning for next year. The PSO thanked them for their feedback and noted they would take it on board and lobby UCL to rethink their service provisions.

A Hall Rep asked how UCL will deal with twin/shared rooms with multiple occupants in the case of social distancing. The Advice and Advocacy Manager responded that this will depend on the guidelines from Public Health England and no decision has been made yet. It was also noted that there may be a significant reduction in the number of first year students in 2020/21, especially those residing in London on campus.

A student observer asked whether UCL was offering any guidance to students in private rented accommodation for next year. The Advice and Advocacy Manager responded that there hasn't been any specific guidance on this, but that the University of London Housing Services are usually a useful place to look for advice. They also noted that students are welcome to come to the SU Advice Service with specific problems.

6 **Matter for Discussion: Facilities**

The Welfare & International Officer joined the meeting and took over chairing duties. Members were asked for feedback on priorities for university facilities in 2020/21, bearing in mind the likelihood of continued social distancing measures.

A Hall Rep asked what university facilities will be like next year, and whether everything will be online. The PSO explained that there have been no certain decisions yet, and discussions are ongoing. The majority of spaces will likely be open in person but all usage will have to comply with social distancing rules, meaning fewer people will be able to access physical spaces at a

time.

The Advice and Advocacy Manager asked whether there have been any positive outcomes from social distancing. A Hall Rep noted that the IOE online programmes have been very well organised, but that some online programmes need work.

A student observer asked how the Welcome Fair will work in 2020/21. The PSO explained that the Union is committed to all students having an equitable experience of Welcome. The main priority is to move the Welcome Fair online, although in some spaces are physically open there may be a possibility of holding some in-person events.

A Hall Rep asked what will happen with regards to graduation ceremonies. The PSO responded that there are no firm plans yet, but the likelihood is that there will be online ceremonies for this year's graduates. Members were encouraged to attend the next day's Education Zone meeting, at which graduation ceremonies would be discussed in more detail.

9 **Questions to Officers**

The Chair asked for any questions to the sabbatical officers.

A Hall Rep asked what they should do regarding the ongoing construction work in their hall, which was causing distress to residence. They noted that they had raised this issue multiple times with UCL and the Students' Union and nothing had been done. The Chair, PSO and the Leadership Development and Change (LDC) Manager noted that they were aware of the issue and would take it back to UCL Accommodation staff.

A Hall Rep asked what would happen to the policy that international students shouldn't exit the country for more than three months given COVID-19 related restrictions. The PSO responded that this policy stems from a Home Office ruling, but that it has been temporarily suspended. The Advice and Advocacy Manager recommended looking to UKCISA for advice, as well as the UCL International and Immigration Advice team.

A Hall Rep asked whether UCL would accept COVID-19 as a reason for interruption of studies. The Advice and Advocacy Manager explained that there hasn't been much guidance from UCL on this so far, but that they would bring it up with the Student Support and Wellbeing team.

A Hall Rep asked whether there was the possibility of financial compensation for the reduction of services in halls during COVID-19. The Chair noted that this issue has been raised with UCL Accommodation, but they were told it was not possible. The LDC Manager added that they were told students should go through the formal complaints process.

10 **Any Other Business**

The Chair asked if there were any more questions or comments on the 'Non-engagement with UCL Prevent agenda and its leads' policy. There were none and the vote was taken. The results

were as follows:

For – 4

Against – 2

Abstain – 2

Decision – The policy will be taken to Union Executive with the recommendation of the Zone.

11 **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record

Chair:	Aatikah Malik, Welfare and International Officer
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Signature:	
Date:	