



Date: Monday 5 December 2022
Time: 18:00 – 20:00
Venue: Medawar Building Go2 Watson Lecture Theatre

Welfare & Community Zone

Minutes

Chair: Umair Mehmood, Welfare & Community Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Amanda Amaeshi, Hall Rep for Astor College	X		
Angel Ma, LGBTQ+ Officer			X
Ben Bowne, Hall Rep for Campbell House East and West	X		
Callie Yoo, BME Students' Officer		X	
Carlos Eduardo Rangel Outeda, Hall Rep for Frances Gardner and Langton Close	X		
Dania Hernandez and Peter Kanyike, UCL East Student Officer (Job Share)			X
Divya Basan, Hall Rep for New Hall – Caledonian Road			X
Fiona Verisqa, Hall Rep for Bernard Johnson House	X		
Golsana Haghdoosti, Hall Rep for Stapleton House	X		
Hamna Malik, Welfare Rep (Societies)	X		
Harper Taylor-Hanson, Trans Officer		X	
Hind Alhajy, Hall Rep for St Pancras Way	X		
Udaya Goel, International Students' Officer (Job Share)	X		
Lorena Lopez, Social Class & Mobility Officer			X
Louisa Saukila, Officer for Students with Caring Responsibilities			X
Lucas Dastros-Pitei, Hall Rep for Endsleigh Gardens and John Adams Hall	X		
Imogen Spilby and Teren Lee, Women's Officer (Job Share)	X		
Manven Gungah, Welfare Rep (Societies)	X		
Nick Miao, Accommodation & Housing Officer	X		
Oluseyi (Seyi) A Osibamowo, Equity & Inclusion Officer		X	
Sailesh Geddam, Hall Rep for 109 Camden Road	X		
TaeKyung Kim, Welfare Rep (Sports)			X
Tope Oyelade, Mature & Part-time Students' Officer		X	
Umair Mehmood, Welfare & Community Officer (Chair)	X		
Vaania Kapoor Achuthan, Sustainability Officer	X		
William Moore, Hall Rep for Ian Baker House and Ramsay Hall	X		
Yiran Shi, Hall Rep for Prankerd and Schafer House	X		
Zhongxian Wang, Hall Rep for One Pool Street	X		
Manaal Tariq, Hall Rep for Goldsmid House	X		
Jiayi Zhang, Hall Rep for James Lighthill House	X		
Rawleka Wislon, Hall Rep for Beaumont Court		X	

Quorum: 17

In Attendance:
Jeff Saddington-Wiltshire, Representation and Democracy Manager
Julia Rooke, Representation and Democracy Coordinator
Samira Lily Chowdhury, Democracy Assistant, minutes

Danielle Bradford, Policy and Research Manager
Carol Paige, Policy and Research Coordinator
Student Observers (Lily Rimmer, Deniz Akinci, Teren Lee, Erin Smith, Calum Griffins, Abigail Hunt, Masih Motamedvaziri)

1. Preliminary Matters - Welcome and Introductions

UM welcomes attendees to the zone

2. Preliminary Matters - Follow up on action points from previous meeting

NM asks a question about the progress of the policy proposal concerning emergency helpline posters in toilet cubicles. JR responds, stating that this proposal will be discussed at the next Union Executive meeting.

3. Preliminary Matters - Approval of minutes from the last meeting

Minutes from last meeting are approved.

4. Matters for Information - Results of Referendum

UM announces the results of the recent UCU referendum which can be found here - <https://studentsunionucl.org/referendum-ucu-industrial-action>

5. Matters for Information - Staff Updates

Updates from JSW on training of reps and prep for leadership race. DB gave update on response to UCL Draft Strategy and current research focus of marginalised communities

6. Matters for Information - Outcomes from and inputs to UCL committees

UM feedbacks on outcomes from and inputs to UCL committees. They are closing student experience committee and creating new groups.

7. Matters for Discussion - End of Term 1 Check In

Members split into groups to discuss their experiences of Term 1.

Member states there's an overload of information in the first couple of weeks and that a lot of students aren't aware of support that UCL gives, such as SRAs in UCL accommodations. Another member adds to this point, arguing that it's not the first week of university that's the hardest, rather the first couple of months and thus support should be given then.

Another member states that students receive too many emails, and so students will not check them and so will not be aware of support available to them.

Student observer LR states that sometimes the tips given by UCL to help with the cost-of-living crisis are unhelpful: for example, avoiding peak time travel fares on the tube is unavoidable if you have a lecture at 9am.

Member states that the Students' Union Student Activities Participation Fund has been very useful.

Member states that there is a large disparity in levels of support between departments.

Member states that most emails are targeted at undergraduates, rather than postgraduates and that more focus should be given to them.

Member brings up the issue of bullying and abuse directed at students and asks whether the active bystander training programme could be made compulsory as a part of enrolment, to help tackle low participation levels. DB responds to member's query, stating that other universities have made completing their active bystander training necessary for enrolment, however she has logistical concerns with this approach. DB states the Union is attempting to increase participation in the active bystander programme by targeting departments that typically have lower levels of engagement. DB stresses that the Union's goal is it to get as many students completing the training as possible and they want more commitment from departments. For example, they are targeting the Institute of Education, as none of the IOE's departments push for their students to complete the active bystander training.

Member states that she does not feel like she has her department's (the Mathematics department) assistance in stopping incidences of bullying. She said she heard of a racist incident occurring in the Maths department, but she was not made aware of the repercussions that the perpetrators faced. Thus, she wants more transparency from departments, arguing they should make their process of dealing with abuse clearer. She argues that knowing the consequences that perpetrators face could help to deter abuse. CP responds to the member, stating that cases are typically confidential between the student and the university in order to protect the student.

VKA states whether the number of students completing the active bystander training for each department could be put on the Union's website. VKA states that making this information public could act as an incentive for departments to encourage their students to complete the training. DB said she would take a look at VKA's suggestion and that she will update on departmental progress of the active bystander training at the next Welfare and Community meeting.

DB also states that the Union offers active bystander training specifically for societies and that the Union's Advice centre is also an official Hate Crime Reporting Centre, where students can confidentially report incidences of abuse. She states that students can prefer going to the Union rather than UCL, as it is an external body dedicated to supporting students.

8. Matters for Discussion - Teaching Excellence Framework

CP (Policy and Research Coordinator) explains what the Teaching Excellence Framework to attendees: it is a measure used to assess teaching quality in universities. UCL is currently at the Silver level, but they are aiming for Gold. There are a number of indicators used to judge a university's overall TEF score. Existing Data Review shows that UCL is weakest at Assessment and feedback and Academic Support. CP states another issue is that only 65% of disabled students feel like they are getting the support they need from UCL.

However, CP states that UCL is doing well in some indicators, particularly the ones measuring student progression.

Members split into groups to discuss their current academic experiences.

9. Matters for Discussion - Briefing on New to UCL Survey

JSW makes members aware of the New to UCL Survey, which looks at transition into UCL. He states that first year students that complete the survey have a chance to win prizes.

10. Matters for Discussion - Napping zones

UM states how creating napping zones is one of his priorities. He has discussed implementing this with UCL, who have agreed to put in place bookable reclining chairs in Term 3.

Member asks about hygiene of these napping chairs. UM states that he is still working on logistics of his plan, using the implementation of reclining chairs in Term 3 as a pilot project.

Member asks whether UM is promoting staying on campus for long periods of time and not having a work-life balance. Member states that UM's priority should be not creating napping zones, but rather addressing the large workload that results in students having to nap at UCL in the first place. UM responds to member's point on prioritising on student wellbeing, by stating that research done by UCL shows that creating napping zones positively influence students' mental health.

Member raises concern that napping zones could create a vulnerable position for people presenting as women. UM states that they still working out logistics behind the plan, but the security and safety of students is his priority. Student observer LR states that a lot of students already nap at the Student Centre and so a designated napping zone would be safer.

UM states that Kings College University has already invested a lot of money into creating sleeping pods. However, unfortunately, UCL is not prepared to finance sleeping pods they are rather expensive. He believes napping zones are a good compromise.

11. Policy Proposals - The Union should bring all outsourced support staff at UCL in-house.

NM presents on his policy proposal. He has 3 recommendations: (i) the Union should act on the Board of Trustees' recommendation to bring cleaning staff in-house, (ii) revisit the decision to continue the outsourcing of security staff at the Union, (iii) lobby UCL to follow suit by supporting industrial action by trade unions seeking to end outsourcing at UCL.

Member asks whether this policy would lead to current support staff losing their jobs. DB responds, stating that some universities who have already implemented this policy offered the same job to their current employees, so they did not lose their jobs. However, she explains that in some cases it is not possible for current staff to retain their same job, as they are contractually obliged to remain with the company that hired them. DB states that it depends on the specific contract between the Union and the companies that hire the support staff.

Policy passes with 74% of the vote.

12. Policy Proposals - Bring back security to all student halls on a permanent basis and install CCTV

Student observer MM presents on his policy proposal. He would like the Union to lobby UCL to situate permanent security guards at every student hall and have CCTV installed.

MM states that currently students in halls are told to use the Safezone app, which he argues is inadequate to protect students from harm. MM states that outside his accommodation there are people on drugs who exhibit aggressive behaviours towards UCL students. MM states that the lack of 24-hour security presents difficulties for students who have forgot their keys during the night-time, as they cannot ask security to let them back in and so get stuck outside. He stresses that the lack of permanent security is a security risk, endangering students.

VKA asks whether additional security would be outsourced or in house staff. MM states that he is not entirely sure.

NM states that he has already raised concerns with UCL's lack of permanent security at UCL halls. UCL responded to NM, stating that UCL halls previously had extra security at all sites due to the pandemic and that accommodations further away from Bloomsbury still have 24-hour security. NM states that UCL set rent prices before the current inflation crisis, thus they may not have enough funding for permanent security. NM raises concern that bringing in 24-hour security would lead to an increase in rent prices for students.

Member states that her hall was very close to campus and in a very safe area and thus she feels like they do not need extra security presence, and that students would not prefer this if it would lead to an increase in rent.

Member argues against the proposal, stating that students already find security to be overbearing and that university is a time for students to take responsibility for themselves, rather than relying

on security. He argues that this takes away from students’ independence and that there are other sources that students can call in an emergency, such as the police or their SRAs. MM responds to member, stating that SRAs are only there to support with mental health, rather than security issues. MM also states that SRAs cannot let students who have left their keys back into their accommodation during the night-time, so they are still stuck outside and have to wait for security to let them back in.

Members states she finds this policy very unfair and concerning. She was mugged outside her accommodation in her 1st year and her accommodation’s security guard helped her and was a great source of reassurance.

Member stresses that security is important for women’s safety- she was chased by someone on her way back to her accommodation but luckily security was present to scare them off.

Policy passes with 89% of the vote.

13. Policy Proposals - Commitment to Harm Reduction

LR presents her policy proposal, arguing that the Union should promote harm reduction to students who take illegal (and legal) drugs. She raises the point that this may be first-year students first exposure to drugs and drinking, and so they may feel peer pressured to be part of Britain’s drinking culture. She spoke to Volunteering previously, who stated that previous campaigns were just a ‘Say No to Drugs’ campaign.

Policy passes with 80% of the vote.

14. Officer Updates and Questions- Welfare & Community Officer

UM states that he may email members updates for the sake of ending the meeting on time. There were no questions.

15. Officer Updates and Questions- Equity & Inclusion Officer

OAO was not present.

16. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Umair Mehmood, Welfare & Community Officer
Signature:	Umair Mehmood
Date:	08/12/2022