



**Date:** Thursday 3 February 2023  
**Time:** 18:00 – 20:00  
**Venue:** Chadwick Building B05 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 Haghdousti, 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		
Jiayi Zhang, Hall Rep for James Lighthill House	X		
Kartik Singh Rathore and 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		
Manaal Tariq, Hall Rep for Goldsmid House	X		
Manon Simmons and Sasha Green, 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	
Rawleka Wislon, Hall Rep for Beaumont Court	X		
Sailesh Geddam, Hall Rep for 109 Camden Road	X		
TaeKyung Kim, Welfare Rep (Sports)			X
Tasha Bhojwani, Welfare Reps - Sports 2, Societies 3			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	
Yasmin Farooqui Caliz, Welfare Reps - Societies 4			
Yiran Shi, Hall Rep for Prankerd and Schafer House		X	
Zhongxian Wang, Hall Rep for One Pool Street	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 Swanson, Head of Advice and Wellbeing
Jake Simms, Policy and Research Coordinator
Student Observers (Mary McHarg, Deniz Akinci, Julie Molenaar, Yasmine Abdu, George Pondodath, Kerem Isik, Ludwile Zdort, Jakob Kiesslig, Lara Gattutas)

### **1. Preliminary Matters - Welcome and Introductions**

UM (Chair) warmly welcomes members and attendees to zone.

### **2. Announcements - Leadership Race Nominations**

UM states that leadership race nominations are now open and encourages members and attendees to put themselves forward, emphasising that this is an amazing opportunity.

### **3. Matters for Information - Staff Updates**

JSW (Representation and Democracy Manager) reiterates UM's reminder that leadership race nominations are open.

DS (Advice and Advocacy Manager) updates the zone, stating that the SU has continued prioritising providing financial support to students; for example, they have given out more than £47,000 through their Sarah Douglas Fund. She also states that there are exciting new developments in the works so that the Union can offer even more support to students.

### **4. Matters for Information - Outcomes from and inputs to UCL Committees**

UM updates the zone, stating that no major changes have occurred. He states that some new committees have been made.

### **5. Matters for Information - Follow up on action points from previous meeting**

No action points to follow up on.

### **6. Matters for Discussion - Cultural Awareness/Sensitivities**

UM emphasises that UCL is a very multicultural university, stating that international students make up 30% of the student body. He emphasises the importance of respecting and learning about other peoples' cultures.

Other members agree, stressing the importance of being open-minded and respectful.

### **7. Matters for Discussion - Pastoral Support (Student Advisors, SRAs and Personal Tutoring)**

UM informs the zone about the various options available to students if they need support; for example, they can reach out to SRAs if they live in UCL accommodation. He also states that every student is allocated a personal tutor, who can help students by suggesting ways to manage their workload.

Francis and Gardner Rep raises a concern, stating that SRAs in his accommodation are not sharing their phone numbers with residents. He states that this adds additional pressure onto him, as he now must act as a go-between between students and SRAs. VKA (Sustainability Officer) responds to member's concern, stating that SRAs are provided with a work phone and that it is in their contract to share their contact details.

NM (Accommodation & Housing Officer) states that he has never met with his personal tutor, and this support route can be substantially improved. Another member agrees with NM, stating that the personal tutor's role is unclear. She states that her department (Political Science) is not providing sufficient support for dissertations. UM recommends that she takes this up with Education Zone.

DS explains some of the different points of contact for students; for example, students can book appointments with the SU Advice service. She also states that there are student advisors in each faculty, who are there predominately to support 1<sup>st</sup> year students. Students can also refer themselves to counselling and psychological services through UCL's student wellbeing service.

## **8. Policy Proposals - Supporting the campaign for a London-wide rent freeze**

MH presents her policy, where she argues that the SU should support the London Mayor's campaign for a London-wide rent freeze. She states that rent-freezes have already occurred in Berlin, Paris and Scotland. She argues that a rent freeze is imperative due to the current cost of living crisis and surging rent prices.

Policy passes with 100% of the vote.

## **9. Policy Proposals - UCLSU Sustainability Training**

VKA (Sustainability Officer) presents her policy where she argues that the SU should implement Sustainability Training, replicating the Active Bystander training that already exists. She states that this training should be completed by students in leadership roles, such as society committee members. She argues that sustainability should be a part of SU's awards criteria for societies, as it will motivate students to adopt more sustainable practices.

DA lends his support to VKA's proposal.

Member lends his support to proposal, but argues that sustainability training should also be extended to academic reps.

Member raises concern, stating that extra training may be an additional barrier that would prevent students from applying due to the additional time commitment. JSW states that the current active bystander training is not compulsory and that making sustainability training compulsory may dissuade some students from applying.

Another member states that she is a society president and questions how this policy would be enforced, as the active bystander training is not enforced.

UM responds to her query, clarifying that a recent policy has passed, making active bystander training mandatory.

Member raises concern with proposal, stating that he is worried it would cause environment awareness to become a 'tick-box' exercise for students. He does, however, support the policy but states that VKA must be mindful of this possibility when designing the training.

Another member supports the policy, stating that making sustainability a category of the student awards could incentivise students to be more environmentally aware.

Member agrees with proposal, arguing that this kind of training is something students need more of due to the current climate crisis and recommends embedding it into freshers induction.

Member asks what will the training entail. DA states that they will decide on the exact details of the training later, but he currently needs to know whether the zone agrees this project needs to be further developed and scoped out. VKA agrees, stating that she is asking the zone whether they believe the SU's resources should be used to further develop this project.

Policy passes with 76% of the vote.

## **10. Policy Proposals - Fossil Free Careers**

Proposer JM states that the Union should lobby UCL's careers department to no longer retain its relationship with oil, gas and mining companies. She believes that it is imperative UCL Careers no longer advertises jobs in the fossil fuel industry, as fossil fuels companies are major contributors to climate change. She states that UCL's ties to the fossil fuel industry makes them morally complicit, as these companies' actions have led to the displacement of indigenous people and the destruction of people's livelihoods and communities. She believes that it is undeniable that society as a whole must move away from these industries in order to save the planet.

She states that UCL continues to act as a recruiter for the fossil fuels industry, as they regularly post job listings for these companies on the myUCLCareers website.

(<https://uclcareers.targetconnect.net/student/home.html>)

She also states that UCL would not be the 1<sup>st</sup> to break ties with these companies, as other universities, such as Birbeck and the University of the Arts, have already passed similar initiatives. UCL careers service has already responded to her concerns, explaining that they would be breaking regulation if they told students where they can and cannot work, as they must remain objective and impartial. JM states that she does not believe this to be true, as she states that there is already an accepted industry-wide ban on university career services promoting jobs in the tobacco, pornography and gambling industries. She does not understand why the fossil fuel industry should be treated any differently, as it also causes mass harm. She also states that UCL has already decided to no longer invest in fossil fuel companies, so she does not understand why they are still promoting careers with these same companies.

Member states that he is an engineering student and UCL's Engineering society. He vehemently disagrees with the policy, arguing it would disproportionately harm engineering students, who often go on to work for fossil fuel companies. He states that these companies are no longer 'greenwashing' as JM says they are, as the fossil fuel industry is transitioning to implementing alternatives for fossil fuels, such as wind farms. He states that engineers are needed by fossil fuel companies so that they can make this transition into more environmentally-conscious work. He also states that UCL has a responsibility to its students to provide them with every opportunity available and that it is not their place to restrict access to certain industries. He also is concerned that UCL careers service breaking ties with fossil fuel companies could lead to UCL students' applications being automatically backlisted from the company.

Member states that discussion on UCL having a fossil-free careers service has already occurred in the Education Zone. He states that the Education Zone reached the conclusion it would not be feasible, leading the policy to be rejected.

JM responds to member, stating at the Education Zone, fossil-fuel careers was an Item for discussion, not a policy proposal, so it could not have been rejected as it was not voted on. JM also states that UCL presents itself as a highly sustainable institution. She states that UCL came 7<sup>th</sup> nationally for their sustainable practices; however, they did poorly in the category of ethical careers education.

Member asks JM to clarify precisely what companies UCL's careers service has ties with. She states they have ties with BP, Shell and Exxon. She also states that this policy would not prevent students from working for fossil fuel companies, especially as her policy would not bar students from seeking impartial, 1-1 advice from UCL's careers service. She also states that Oxford, Durham and Cambridge's Student Unions have already passed similar proposals.

Members enter an intense debate about the merits and flaws on the policy.

Member gives his support to the policy, stating that this policy is personally important to him as he is from the Niger Delta in Nigeria: an area highly affected by the climate crisis. He also states

that he feels some members of the zone are attacking the proposers and reminds the zone it is very brave of the proposers to come forward on this issue. He also states that although this is a highly sensitive topic, members must remain courteous and respectful to each other to have a constructive discussion.

UM agrees with members, reminding members that they should not speak over each other and should remain professional.

Proposer JM states that she believes this policy provides UCL with a real opportunity to prove that they are a leader in promoting sustainability.

Attendee states that he believes that this proposal is not an attack on an individual's right to a career they choose as it is not banning anyone from going into the fossil fuel industry; rather, the policy is about UCL as an institution taking a stand against climate change as a global and influential body.

VKA gives her support for this policy, stating that Exeter university has already banned fossil fuel companies from their career events after being lobbied by their student union. She also states that students would not be blacklisted from these companies if the policy passed, especially as this goes against employment law. She also asks the zone whether they solely use the UCL Careers Service website to search for job listings. She argues that this policy would not prevent individual students from working in the fossil fuel industry, as there are avenues other than the UCL careers website that students use to look for jobs. She stresses that this policy does not dictate individual action, rather, it concerns the SU putting pressure on UCL to hold them accountable. She also states that it makes sense for the SU to adopt this policy, as they are a charity.

DA disagrees with the proposal. He says he supports the sustainability training policy, as it concerns providing students with information on the climate crisis. He suggests that a compromise should occur, with perhaps UCL's careers service providing a sustainability ranking for companies on their website, rather than banning fossil fuel companies altogether. He said that UCL should prioritise listing other alternative careers to students and encourage them to choose sustainable careers. He argues that this policy is dystopian, through blocking information reaching students.

JM reiterates that she believes there is a double standard present, arguing that it is widely accepted without debate that university careers services should not promote jobs in gambling, tobacco and sex industries.

NM (Accommodation & Housing Officer) agrees with the policy, stating that as an Ethics student, he believes that sometimes the moral thing to do requires personal sacrifices. He also argues that university students should be disruptive thinkers and not just go along with the status quo.

Member disagrees with the policy, agreeing with DA that it is dystopian. He views the policy as overly paternalistic and argues that UCL should focus on changing mindsets and educating students on the climate crisis, rather than implementing a blanket ban.

Proposer states she appreciates the zone's comments but believes some members misunderstand her policy. She states that she does not have a personal vendetta against engineering students and does not want them to be disadvantaged by her policy. She stresses that her goal is simply to hold UCL accountable, as they pride themselves on being a leader in sustainability practices. She reiterates that UCL cannot call itself truly sustainable if they continue to recruit for the fossil fuel industry.

Policy fails, with 7% abstain, 40% for and 53% against

#### **11. Matters for Approval - Approval of minutes from the last meeting**

Minutes are approved.

#### **12. Officer Updates and Questions - Equity & Inclusion Officer**

Equity & Inclusion Officer was not present.

#### **13. Officer Updates and Questions - Welfare & Community Officer**

UM states that he will email the zone with his updates, in the interest of ending the meeting on time.

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

There was no other business.

<b>Minutes approved as a true and accurate record</b>	
Chair:	Umair Mehmood, Welfare & Community Officer
Signature:	Umair Mehmood
Date:	17/02/2023