STUDENTS' UNION UCL

**Welfare & Community Zone
Minutes**

Date: Wednesday May 2023
Time: 18:00 – 20:00
Venue: LG17 Bentham House

Chair: Umair Mehmood, Welfare & Community Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Amanda Amaeshi, Hall Rep for Astor College		X	
Angel Ma, LGBQ+ 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			X
Yiran Shi, Hall Rep for Prankerd and Schafer House	X		
Zhongxian Wang, Hall Rep for One Pool Street		X	

Quorum: 18

In Attendance:
Jeff Saddington-Wiltshire, Representation and Democracy Manager

| Rhiannon Ellis, Representation and Democracy Coordinator, minutes |
| Student Observers (Mary McHarg, Alfie Hall and the Plant Based University Campaign Team |

1. Preliminary Matters - Welcome and Introductions

Umair Mehmood (Chair) welcomed everyone to the final Welfare and Community Zone.

2. Announcements – Napping Zones

UM updated Zone members on the new napping zone which can be located in the Gardening Room which is adjacent to the Japanese Garden. There are 6 spaces in the napping zone and it be open from 11:00 – 19:00 every day and students can book 1-hour slots. Students can also arrive 15 minutes before their time slot and leave 15 minutes after. UM also shared that students can book up to 3 days before the day they want to use the room. The napping zone has not launched yet due to logistics being finalised, however UM asked zone members use the room once it has officially opened.

3. Matters for Information - Staff Updates

- Jeff Saddington-Wiltshire (JSW) Update:
    o Final policies zones are taking place and it is now time for a
    o Education Awards are taking place Wednesday 6 June
    o Thursday 8 and Friday 9 June are Sabbatical/Student Officer Training
    o From week of 12 June, it moves into a bit of a break before starting on evaluation, reflection, and planning for the next academic year.

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

Seyi Osibamowo (SO) provided an update on conversations they have been having with UCL's EDI department surrounding a paper explaining the necessity of freedom of speech and emphasising the need for students to also feel safe on campus. SO also provided an update on the LGBTQ+ Equality Implementation Group (LEIG) Fund that was created after UCL left Stonewall.

5. Matters for Information – Follow up on action points from previous meeting

UM gave an update on the progress they have made on developing an SU harm reduction policy. UM said that they have created and finalised an action plan which they will be handing over to the next Welfare & Community Officer to implement.

6. Matters for Discussion – Policy Zone Feedback

Practical:

- Mary McHarg (MM) – potentially switch up days of the week for the Zones – particular issue for Activities Zone and for those taking part in sports. This is also an issue for the Liberation Officers.

Impact:

- Carlos Outeda (CO) - No updates on previous policies even though a lot of motions have been passed. Don't know what happens once they have been passed, closing the feedback loop.
- SO - Part in each Zone where questions to officers – would it be useful for officers to come in with a few topics that would be useful to talk about.
    o JSW suggested that the agendas could be shifted around so that officer updates come first.

Social:

- CO fed back that there should be an opportunity where all three Zones can meet with one another as it is hard to have a connection.
- MM suggested that before the first Zone all of them should meet one another – this could either just be each zone meet individually, or everyone from all Zones meet each other.

JSW advised that everything mentioned are areas that we have been thinking about and we will include this in our plans for next year.

7. Policy Proposals – Fossil Free Careers

- MM submitted this policy proposal.
- UM decided that this policy should be deferred to the Zones in the next academic year, to ensure that there are more people present to discuss this policy.
- MM said that they were concerned about timelines and said that it would be easier to implement if it was before September, however they understood that it would be fairer to push it to a Zone where more people are present.
- Ben Browne (BB) also felt that this policy should be deferred to the beginning of the year when more people are in attendance.
- Udaya Goel (UG) also said that when a similar policy was brought forward, there were more people in attendance with a range of views.
- UM also felt that as this policy is going to affect departmental and career-based societies it could be better placed in an Activities Zone as the policy states that societies will not be able to take any funding from the companies that the SU deem as not sustainable.
    o MM responded and said that this is already something that the Activities & Engagement Officer has the power to do, and this policy is trying to formalise this in writing. The reason this policy has been brought to the Welfare & Community Zone is because it is more about an ethical careers policy and how we can talk to the careers service.
- OS asked if this policy did pass today could it sit in Union Executive until next year?
    o JSW responded and said that it could, however it would not be appropriate as there will be a new Union Executive membership in the new academic year.
- UM also said that as a similar policy was voted against last time, there does need to be a more in-depth discussion about this new policy.
- MM said that they understood why this was being deferred and

- Nick Miao (NM) asked what is the difference between this policy and the one that was rejected?
  - MM responded and said that it is less content and more about experience. MM has worked with the careers service before and knows what their priorities are. They know that careers will not drop their partnerships with oil, gas and mining companies, so their priority is around getting an ethical careers policy where positive conversations are started surrounding promoting more green alternative companies.
  - MM also shared that they understand that some students will always want to work for oil, gas and mining companies, but there should be some additional green opportunities available.
- UG asked whether MM has asked the careers team to just increase more green companies, rather than removing companies. UG shared that in engineering job market the salaries are relatively low, however companies such as BP and Shell, they are the higher paying companies.
- BB said that the wording of the policy should be changed, from saying banning companies to adding more green opportunities.
- MM agreed that they will reword the policy and amend for the next Policy Zones.
  - Action: MM to amend the policy and re-submit.
- JSW said that it would be good in the next academic year when bringing all of the Zones together to have this policy as a discussion.
  - Action: JSW to speak to MM about this further.

8. Policy Proposals – Supporting Students in Sex Work

- MM submitted this policy proposal.
- MM shared that this is a lapsed policy, and they would like to continue this policy for another two years. MM said that the policy consists of the SU supporting students in sex work as 1 in 20 students engage in sex work often to support the high costs of living in London, and this group is high risk.
- MM said that the policy also includes points around pushing against legislation and the criminalisation of sex work and pushing against ideas such as the Nordic Model.
- Manaal Tariq (MT) asked whether the policy could include something around providing additional career opportunities for students.
  - MM responded and said that some students engage in sex work because they want to
  - MT said that for those that do not want to engage in sex work and have no other choice and would like alternative career opportunities then could this be included in the policy.
  - MM replied and said that the policy is more around acknowledging the students will engage in sex work and acknowledging the legal repercussions in this country and actively providing resources to support students.
  - MT said that it would be good to still add a point around career opportunities

- o MM said that they could include something, however they need to be careful to make sure it does not come across as shaming students that are involved in sex work. MM felt that it would be better to promote career opportunities separately.
  - o MT said that as part of the support resources, career services could also be included.
- Tope Oyelade (TO) asked whether there have been any issues of students be disciplined by the University for taking part in sex work.
  - o MM responded and said that they were not aware of anything this year, however it was not an impossibility. MM said that as an example if a student had been reported, and some of the witnesses engaged in sex work, the members of the disciplinary panel may have varying views on sex work and therefore can colour their judgement when deciding on action against the student. As Sabbatical Officers sit on the disciplinary panels, by having this policy it will ensure that Sabbatical Officers are aware of what the laws are and how students should be supported.
- Policy passed with 64% voting Yes.

9. **Policy Proposals – Use of Amazon vouchers and products**

- MM submitted this policy proposal.
- MM explained that this is a lapsed policy, and the policy does not ban the use of amazon, however it asks that amazon is used as a last resort as they are an unethical company.
- UM asked that when he was a society committee member, he was not told about this and they did not think that societies have been told about this either.
  - o MM responded and said that when this was first passed two years ago, the previous Activities & Engagement Sabbatical Officer did not promote this out to societies, and this policy has mainly been used within the Union leadership and staff teams.
  - o MM said that they would like this policy to be promoted out to societies if it is passed.
- UG said that as a society they give out Deliveroo vouchers, and asked whether this policy will include other companies that should be discouraged or whether it is just Amazon.
  - o MM responded and said that it is just Amazon, but they could look to create an ethical companies list in the future.
- Zone member suggested that UCL should make their own vouchers
- MM said that they would talk to the SUs commercial team about whether this could be possible. They suggested that students could get a £10 voucher for the cafes or shops as an example.
  - o Zone member suggested linking it to the yoyo app and introducing Hanger vouchers.
- Peter Kanyike (PK) said "How exactly would you know what to get from where, when it comes to local businesses?"
  - o MM said that they would talk to Joanna Socha (member of SU staff that works on sustainability) and ideally, they would like to create an ethical suppliers list to support students and societies etc. However as this is a big project it will take some time, and they would like to start developing this next year.

- PK said "Would it not require a lot of work to source the list of (commonly used) products and match it to local businesses? With this policy, does this not put the Students' Union in a direct stance opposing a global company".
    - o MM responded and said it was less about a direct stance against a company as the policy is not an out right ban, but it is more about using this as a last resort because there are other options.
- Policy passed with 60% voting Yes.

10. Policy Proposals – Plant-based Food Policy

- Alfie Hall (AH) and the Plant Based University Campaign Team attended the meeting to explain their policy proposal, that was submitted via Vaania Kapoor (VK).
- AH introduced the policy proposal by explaining that this policy is asking for the SU outlets to begin transitioning to plant-based catering. They are asking for all SU outlets to become 60% plant-based by the 24/25 academic year and then conditionally based on a positive financial and social review, each year it will increase by 10% until the SU outlets are fully plant-based. AH explained that animal agriculture is a leading cause of climate change, and after conversations with the head of commercial operations in the SU, the campus food outlets are already 50% meat-free. AH also said that there is a lot of precedent for this as there are other Universities also bringing forward similar policies, including Stirling, Cambridge, London Met and Queen Mary's.
- UM asked that they saw a 75% cap in the policy
    - o AH responded and said that it was no in this proposal as there is no cap. However, if it got to 80% plant-based for example and then there was a bad financial or social review, then there is no reason that it could be stopped there.
- UM asked how is this consensus?
    - o AH said that it will be reviewed yearly and assigned to a Sabbatical Officer and the commercial services. In terms of getting student feedback, this will be done through the SU.
- TO asked where has the 60% come from as it appears to be quite high?
    - o AH said that they are not asking for individual change, this is coming from an institutional level. It is clear that the SU takes climate policy seriously, and what that 60% represents is, out of the main meals and sandwiches 60% will become plant-based meals.
- UG said that this year the SU opened the new campus shop, and the main purpose is for students to come and grab a quick meal. UG then said that if students were surveyed at the beginning of the year asking what their dietary preferences are, they do not think 60% would say they are vegan. UG continued by saying that rather than focusing on plant-based, UCL has currently been unable to provide all students with their own individual dietary requirements for example Halal or Kosher. UG felt that the priority should be to increase these options before plant-based.

- o AH said that they are asking for a sustainable transition and by moving to plant-based it provides an opportunity to diversify menus and the majority of plant-based food is Halal and Kosher by default.
  - o UG responded and said that students want meat options, and we should be catering towards what everyone wants.
  - o AH replied and said that this is introducing a menu that is sustainable and has more options, and as the plan is to start on 60%, if the student body is not happy then it will not move up. AH also added that this policy would also provide an opportunity to change up the menus and cater towards a wider range of cultures but in a more sustainable way.
- CO raised that point surrounding Halal and Kosher options was not relevant to this proposal because this proposal is focusing on plant-based food, and there should be another proposal brought to the Zone that asks for more Halal and Kosher food to be introduced as that is a separate issue. CO then said that review is the most important part of this policy, and it needs to ensure that the review is properly done.
- MM whether James (Head of SU commercial services) said that this was financially viable?
  - o AH said that they met with James, and they agreed that this proposal was fine to come to the Zone and that it was financially viable.
- Hind Alhajy (HA) asked whether there was any information about the percentages of how much plant-based food compared to meat is being purchased by students at the moment?
  - o MM responded and said that the commercial team doesn't track it to the exact number.
  - o UM also said that when there are no Halal meat options as a Muslim they would go for the vegetarian options, and therefore the percentages may not actually reflect what students' preferences are. UM said that the social review could however find out this information.
    - ▪ AH said that this is why they want it to be a just transition and the education around this plant-based food is being provided for students. AH said that they would be working with the SU to try and incentivise the food further in addition to working with third-party organisations that can come and help facilitate menu changes to ensure that all of the food does taste nice.
- NM asked in regard to the financial review where would this go?
  - o JSW responded and said that it would start in the Commercial Team and Union Affairs Officer.
- BB asked what kind of student review would be done and how would it work? BB also asked whether they would consider amending the policy so that at first it is only up to 60% and not up to 100% after annual reviews. Could there be another policy submitted in a years' time asking to move up to 70%?
  - o AH responded that with the review the details have not been completely ironed out as it needs to be collaborated on with the SU to engage as many students as possible. In terms of only going to 60% by setting this target we are following along the research that has been done by UCL and in line with other policies that have been submitted elsewhere.

- o BB said that it is really important to work with students and what would the review look like and how would students be listened to.
  - o AH said it could be done through surveys and meeting with students, however this is something they would need the SU to help with this.
  - o MM said that the SU has a Research and Policy Team that focus on collecting and analysing data, and they would be able to support with the student review.
- MT asked what meat options would be removed if this policy came in? MT raised that they were concerned about the already limited options such as Halal and Kosher being removed.
  - o AH responded and said that they would not want this to happen, and this would not be a just or sustainable option. AH said that the plant-based options would be Halal and Kosher.
  - o MT asked whether this proposal could be amended to also include the increase of Halal and Kosher options.
  - o AH replied and said that this policy is already a large amount of work and if we are transitioning to plant-based we want to make sure that the options are nutritious and tasty and to make it inclusive.
- UM raised that at the moment it is 50% meat-free, and therefore this policy is asking for 60% of food to be plant-based which means that there will be no eggs, cheese, dairy etc. UM said that potentially at the moment there could be only 25% plant-based options and it will then go to 60%.
  - o Member of campaign team said that whilst this is a big jump it is manageable. They gave an example that if there is currently a vegetarian spaghetti Bolognese and the only element that was not plant-based was butter then that could easily be changed to a dairy free alternative.
- TO asked are we actually helping the environment by switching to plant-based? They asked whether some data could be included in the proposal to help clarify this.
  - o AH said that the most comprehensive study ever done on food was in 2018 by Oxford where they looked at 38k farms and over 40 different agricultural products they found that even the most environmentally animal products were still worse than the highest impact plant.
  - o Member of campaign team – They said that as part of the policy it would be to work with the third-party company to look at the current menu options and determine which are the most environmentally friendly.
  - o AH then said that it would be good to have a visual representation of the carbon footprint on the food packaging. AH also raised that carbon is not the entire picture when it comes to sustainability. Land use and biodiversity loss, deforestation, water usage and overfishing are all complications that arise from animal agriculture from the fossil fuel industry. If we were to transition to plant-base 76% global farmland could be freed up.
- UG asked whether it has been considered the UKs agricultural landscape does not actually grow much. UG asked whether in the analysis of the shipping carbon footprint had been taken into account.

- o AH responded and said that this is a common misconception because people think that local foods are more sustainable, but air miles and travel of a certain product only accounts for less than 10% or less of an individual's product emissions. When it comes to animal products the emissions are in the rearing of the cow compared to the travel.
  - o UG replied by saying that in regard to a kg of fruit compared to a kg of meat the calories a human extract from that is lower.
  - o AH said that as an example in the UK local dairy milk will have 3.14kg of CO_2 per kg compared to imported soya milk of 1k of CO_2 per kg.
- Member of campaign team shared that from a study beef is at the highest of 50kg of CO_2 for 100g protein compared to grain which is 2.7kg for 100g of protein.
- Callie Yoo (CY) said "also 60% doesn't mean the union is completely going plant-based - students will still have choices over which food they are buying, but we are widening the choices for more plant-based options."
- PK said, "This is a sustainability issue, not a dietary requirement issue."
- MM said that this policy is not about making everyone vegan, but it is about making 60% of the food plant-based in two years and then doing a review. After the two years another policy will need to come through as policies are only valid for two years. This will not stop students from buying non-plant-based options, this is about a system change and about how many meat-based products the SU is buying. MM also said that one of their priorities as Union Affairs Officer will be to increase the amount of Halal and Kosher food and improving the unclear labels on the current available options.
  - o AH responded and said that there may be differences in terms of nutrients of different foods, the NHS states that the with a well-planned plant-based diet you can get all of the nutrients you need, and all of the menu changes will be nutritious.
- CO said that the Refectory is not owned by the SU and therefor there will be meat options, this policy is about what the SU is doing and there are lots of food options outside of the SU outlets. There will also be multiple reviews.
- CY said "I know this policy in particular is considered as sustainability issue, but i personally am providing this in multiple perspective because I personally chose vegetarian diet (part time) for dietary and ethical issues. I am saying making the catering 60% would allow students to have more choices over what stance they want to take over this issue, whether it is sustainability or ethical reasons."
- AH summarised by thanking Zone members for listening and asking questions, they know that students care about climate change and from the research conducted by UCL and other institutions, animal agriculture is one of the leading causes of this. As an SU that wans to safeguard the future of students, we should be taking it seriously and students do believer that we need institutional change. This is not a go vegan campaign, this is about getting the catering to transition their food outlets, to just and sustainable which means tasty, healthy, and tailoring to the students.
- Policy passed with 75% voting yes.

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

Minutes were approved.

12. Officer Updates and Questions - Equity & Inclusion Officer

No questions

13. Officer Updates and Questions - Welfare & Community Officer

No questions

14. Any Other Business

UM thanked all of the Zone members for their contributions this year and wished them the best of luck.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Umair Mehmood, Welfare & Community Officer
Signature:	Umair Mehmood
Date:	2 July 2023