STUDENTS' UNION UCL

Education Zone
Minutes

Date: 31/10/2019
Time: 18:00 – 20:00
Venue: South Wing G12 Council Room

Chair: Ashley Slanina-Davies, Education Officer

Members:	P	AP	AB
Adrita Kabir, Population Health Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep	✔		
Ahina Ip, Brain Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep (Job share)	✔		
Alexia Koch, Built Environment Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✔		
Ashley Slanina-Davies, Education Officer, Chair	✔		
Dory Ghanem, Medical Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✔		
Emer O'Driscoll-Paton, Arts & Humanities Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep	✔		
Faisal Ali, Institute of Education Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep	✔		
Frank Gatheru, Engineering Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep	✔		
Georgia Constantinou, Medical Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep	✔		
Graham van Goffrier, Mathematical & Physical Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep	✔		
Habiba Diab, Brain Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep		✔	
Honghao Zhang, Built Environment Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep	✔		
Jameela Nagri, Population Health Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✔		
Jiaqi Guo, Institute of Education Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✔		
Jim Onyemenam, Postgraduate Students' Officer	✔		
Julian Laufs, Engineering Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep	✔		
Katherine Forster, Arts & Humanities Undergraduate Rep	✔		
Khush Thakur, Mathematical & Physical Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep		✔	
Lina Algurashi, Laws Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep	✔		
Lorenzo Faggiano, Social & Historical Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep (Job share)	✔		
Maria Silva Abreu Lopes Feio, Brain Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep (Job share)	✔		
Max Tscheltzoff, Trans Officer			
Nikita Joji, Medical Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep	✔		
Nilisha Vashist, Women's Officer		✔	
Philippa Harding, Brain Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep	✔		
Samuel Barnes, Social & Historical Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✔		
Sandra Ogundele, Black & Minority Ethnic Students' Officer			
Sepehr Sharafi, Social & Historical Sciences Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep (Job share)	✔		
Shail Bhatt, Life Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✔		
Umang Pandey, Laws Undergraduate Faculty Rep		✔	
Valentina Spiteri, Life Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep	✔		
Xuyi Wang, LBGQ+ Officer	✔		
Zohar Mendzelenski-Steinberg, Disabled Students' Officer			
Zvezdin Besarabov, Engineering Sciences Undergraduate Faculty Rep	✔		

In Attendance:
Aimee Connolly, Research and Evaluation Assistant, minutes
Carol Paige, Democracy, Operations and Community Officer
Danielle Swanson, Advice and Advocacy Manager

Simon To, Leadership, Development and Change Manager

1. **Introductions**

    The Chair opened the meeting and welcome everyone to the first Education Zone. Everyone introduced themselves.

2. **Announcement – PGTA Code of Practice**

    The Postgraduate Students' Officer introduced the new PGTA Code of Practice. They remarked that it had been brought in to provide security against longstanding past issues with PGTA working conditions. The new Code of Practice covers issues including: providing recruitment rules, providing job descriptions for grade 5 and 6 roles, and ensuring PGTAs are paid for mandatory training, lecture preparation, and script marking.

    The Code of Practice aligns closely with the Doctoral Education Strategy and provides greater support mechanisms. The next step is to ensure that all PGTAs are aware of the Code of Practice and ensure that all faculties know they are bound by it.

    A rep asked whether it was already in force and the Postgraduate Students' Officer confirmed that it was. A rep suggested that it should be included in PGTA Handbooks.

    Action: Postgraduate Students' Officer and PGR Faculty Reps to work on ensuring all PGTAs are aware of the Code of Practice and ensure faculties are aware that they are bound by it.

3. **UCL Committees and Board vacancies**

    The Chair explained that there are vacant positions on a number of UCL committees (Academic Board, Education Committee, Research Degrees Committee and Student Experience Committee) and Board of Trustees subcommittees (Finance Committee, Governance Committee, Risk and Audit Committee), as well as the Student Engagement Steering Group. They briefly outlined the remit of each committee.

    The Terms of Reference for the UCL Committees were passed around and a nomination form was circulated for reps who wished to put themselves forward for any positions.

    Action: Members to consider joining a UCL or SU committee.

4. **Elect one person to Union Executive**

    The Chair explained the role of Union Executive and that one rep per Policy Zone is required to represent their respective Zone. The Democracy, Operations and Community Officer (DOCO) emphasised that it is an opportunity to follow policies through their entire life cycle.

    The Undergraduate Faculty Rep for the Institute of Education put themselves forward for the role. As it was uncontested, they were deemed elected via consensus.

    Decision: The Undergraduate Faculty Rep for the Institute of Education was elected to Union Executive.

5.   **Policy Proposal – Providing Subtitles for Students with a Hearing Impairment**
     The policy proposal and the policy briefing were displayed for members to read during the discussion.

     The Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep for the Institute of Education introduced the policy. They explained that they represent a student who has a hearing impairment and, while they are provided with a sign-language interpreter for live lectures/seminars, there is no support for audiovisual materials, e.g. Lecturecast and both internally and externally produced videos. This leads to the student not being able to access this teaching.

     A number of members noted that subtitling would also help international students and students with mental health illness, learning disabilities, and intellectual disabilities.

     The Chair explained that UCL has committed to complying with the 2018 legislation which makes sure public bodies should be digitally accessible by midway through 2020. However, as UCL is not technically a public body, they are not bound by these timelines and can extend them. The Chair added that the Information Services Division (ISD) has been working with Echo360 and are piloting subtitles on videos in some departments.

     The discussion moved to the difficulties of including subtitles in videos, with the Advice and Advocacy Manager noting that there are often issues with automatic speech recognition and subtitles may often be inaccurate.

     The Leadership, Development and Change Manager explained that there is a Digital Accessibility Group that are working to make resources more accessible for students. They noted that the Disabled Students' Officer is working within this remit is keen to hear from students who are impacted in any way.

     Members discussed that if UCL are running a pilot, they should do so in departments where they know there are students with hearing impairments. The Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep for Mathematical & Physical Sciences mentioned that subtitling can sometimes be low-cost and reiterated the fact that those with hearing impairments will appreciate the support and that even if it is imperfect in places.

     The Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep for Arts & Humanities suggested a collaboration with the Centre for Translation Studies, which runs modules on subtitling for people who are deaf or hard of hearing led by professional subtitlers.

     The Chair suggested that, as the Union does not have the power to impose policy on UCL, the proposal should be amended as follows: *The Union will lobby UCL to provide subtitling on all audiovisual material, in order to make teaching accessible to all students.*

     The Chair called for a vote and members voted on the amended policy.

Vote	Number
For	20
Against	0
Abstain	1

Decision: The policy was carried.

Actions: The Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep for the Institute of Education is to get in touch with the Disabled Students' Officer and the Digital Accessibility Group regarding the above issue.

The Chair to put the Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep for the Institute of Education in touch with ISD to discuss the pilot being done at the moment.

6. **Policy Proposal – Improvement of Mental Health Services**
The Undergraduate Faculty Rep for Medical Sciences introduced the proposal. This issue was raised to them through an online post where a student commented on being overwhelmed with their work content. The discussion turned to the fear of students in professional courses that they may undergo a Fitness to Practice if they raise any issues regarding their mental health.

Some reps suggested using an app, similar to Unitu (an app for collecting student feedback), to allow students to anonymously raise mental health issues. The Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep for Engineering Sciences noted that their faculty has an online board where issues can be posted anonymously. While this is not a place for treatment or support, this could be a forum for students to say that they and their peers are struggling with a particular aspect of the course.

The Postgraduate Taught Faculty Rep for the Institute of Education said that the proposal was relevant to all students, regardless of what they are studying.

The Advice and Advocacy Manager confirmed that all services offered by Student Support and Wellbeing and the SU Advice Service are confidential, excepting where there is an immediate safeguarding issue. They also mentioned that Carefirst provide anonymous support over the phone to support UCL students and staff.

The discussion continued to focus on the difficulty of promoting awareness of the services available in UCL. Many members agreed that there are a lot of support structures in place, but students do not know that they exist or how to find them.
It was suggested that UCL implement a buddy system. The Chair clarified that first year undergraduate students are assigned a Transition Mentor for the first term, but it is noted that the course gets more difficult as time goes on and mentors are not provided for postgraduate students.

Reps suggested making students aware of the support services during induction or during their first week of classes. The Advice and Advocacy Manager says that it can sometimes be difficult to engage with students on this topic during induction, as they are more focused on settling in at that time. A student recommended that it could be done in class a number of weeks into term. It was suggested that support services should be advertised through Union emails.

The DOCO noted that the Welfare and International Officer is running the Heads Up campaign which is focusing on destigmatising mental health in order to get the help that students need.

The Chair decided that the remit of this issue was much broader than just education and referred the proposal to the Welfare & Community Zone. The Leadership, Development and Change Manager reminded reps that any student can attend the Zone meetings.

Actions: The proposal to be discussed at the next Welfare & Community Zone meeting.

The Chair to send link to members to the Student, Support and Wellbeing website where there is info on Carefirst.

The Chair to circulate a list of all services available to students in UCL, so that Faculty Reps can be aware of these and pass them onto their constituents.

The Chair to report back to the Reps team in the Union to discuss putting resources on the Reps page on Moodle.

7. **Agree Priorities for the Year**
   The Chair asked everyone in the room to list their top priority and what they hope to get done this year. The priorities shared included:
   - Supporting interrupting students
   - Student engagement
   - Sustainability
   - Social med and communications
   - Student wellbeing
   - Satellite sites
   - Faculty wide student led events
   - Ensuring students are aware of who to talk to
   - Working conditions for PGTAs
   - PhD wellbeing
   - Improving intra-faculty communication
   - Hidden course costs
   - Incorporating student feedback into programme structure
   - Social integration of PGs
   - Improving PG study spaces
   - Mapping the course for students

- Improving information about resources

Members then voted on Zeetings, ranking these issues in terms of importance. The top five that were agreed as the Zone's priorities for the year were as follows:
- Student engagement
- Student wellbeing
- Sustainability
- Faculty wide student led events
- Supporting interrupting students

8. **Discussion**

Due to time constraints, the Chair deferred items 8-13 of the agenda to the November meeting (EZ1902). The Chair suggested dealing with items 14-19 of the agenda via email. Reps were told to contact the Education Officer and Postgraduate Students' Officer with any questions or concerns regarding these items.

The Engineering Sciences Postgraduate Research Faculty Rep made a note regarding agenda item 9 that it would make sense to re-take the PGR Working Conditions Survey that was completed in 2016 to note if anything has changed. The Postgraduate Students' Officer agreed this is a good idea and that this could be done in January to capture the effect of the PGTA Code of Practice.

Other PGR Reps noted that there are often problems with PhD student workloads. PhD students are often required to supervise several Masters students' dissertations and this practise is not regulated. They are also often required to give up lab space for PGT students.

Student reps briefly discussed the library access issue (item 13). It was agreed that a day-pass system would be the most feasible option. The Postgraduate Students' Officer will attending the upcoming Library Committee and can speak to assess this possibility.

Action: The Chair to follow up with the PGR Reps regarding PGR working conditions (including the Wet Lab Supervision Framework).

Postgraduate Students' Officer to follow up on accessing the library when you forget your ID at Library Committee.

22. **Any Other Business**

There was no other business. The Chair thanked everyone for coming and reminded them that the next meeting is on November 28th.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record

Chair:	**Ashley Slanina-Davies, Education Officer**
Signature:	
Date:	