



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

Trustee Board

Meeting on October 8th, 2024, 17:00, UWLSU Conference Room

MEMBERSHIP:

Yash Arora (YA/Chair), Anthony Coad (AC), Kevin Dickie (KD), Farimah Darbyshire (FD),
Josefine Victorino (JV), Adarsh Sangeetha (AS), Trisul Suman (TS)

SMT:

Tye McMahon (TM), Hamna Azam (HA), Jamal El-Kalawy (JE), Robert Carr (RC)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Patrick Fuller (PF), Monika Sowa (MS)

EXTERNAL GUESTS: Nil

APOLOGIES: PF, AS

Minutes

This is a summarised version of the minutes; the complete version is accessible upon request.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The meeting started at 17:00.
- 1.2. Apologies were received from PF and AS.
- 1.3. YA welcomed everyone.

2. Declarations of Interests

- 2.1. Sabbatical Officers advised they would like to run in the NUS elections in the future, potentially resulting in a conflict of interest. This is to be discussed during the meeting.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

- 3.1. Actions arising from the meeting on July 2nd, 2024, were completed.
- 3.2. Trustees approved the minutes.

4. SABB Objectives Update

*(Jess Smith – Representation and Advocacy Manager;
Presenters: Yash Arora - SU President, Adarsh Sangeetha – VP of Education,
Trisul Suman – VP of Activities and Participation)*

- 4.1. Each Sabbatical Officer (SABB) shared updates on their priorities, which aim to enhance student welfare and engagement:
- 4.2. Yash Arora (SU President):
 - 4.2.1. **Sexual Violence Awareness & Prevention:** Plans to expand awareness campaigns on safety and cultural expectations, continue sexual education initiatives, and support students facing challenges around safety on and off campus.
 - 4.2.2. **Enriching Student Experience:** Focused on easing international students' transition to life in London through financial and social support and helping students with practical aspects of city living.
 - 4.2.3. **Building Student Communities:** Initiatives to combat loneliness and celebrate cultural diversity through food, events, and identity-based campaigns.
- 4.3. Trisul Suman (VP Activities & Participation):
 - 4.3.1. **Physical Health & Wellbeing:** Aims to promote low-cost physical activities, encouraging students to stay active without financial barriers.
 - 4.3.2. **Women in Sports:** Focused on increasing female participation in sports, addressing barriers faced by women, particularly international students, through events and awareness campaigns.
 - 4.3.3. **Financial Barriers to Extracurricular Activities:** Exploring financial support initiatives like equipment borrowing schemes and affordable activities.
- 4.4. Adarsh Sangeetha (VP Education):
 - 4.4.1. **Life-Skills Integration:** Advocating for life-skills workshops to prepare students for life after graduation.
 - 4.4.2. **Study-Life Balance:** Promoting awareness around maintaining a healthy balance between academic and personal lives.
 - 4.4.3. **Cross-Cultural Learning:** Plans to create more globally immersive learning opportunities, including exchange programs and cultural events on campus.
- 4.5. Discussion Highlights:
 - 4.5.1. Trustees and SMT members discussed the cultural differences that impact student engagement and how to support international students better.

- 4.5.2. The university's consent training program was mentioned, and its impact will be assessed throughout the year.
- 4.5.3. Strategies for helping students adapt to the high cost of living and student accommodation challenges were explored.
- 4.6. Trustees noted the report.

5. CEO Update – Strategic Context

(Tye McMahon, Chief Executive Officer)

- 5.1. The paper was taken as read.
- 5.2. Key Issues in the Sector:
 - 5.2.1. Student Recruitment: UWL defied sector trends by welcoming nearly 4,000 new students in September, with an increase in international undergraduate enrolments.
 - 5.2.2. NUS Manifesto: The NUS has been lobbying on key issues such as the cost of living, tuition fees, housing reform, and mental health support for students.
 - 5.2.3. Planned SMR Campus Renovation: UWL is seeking approval to redevelop the SMR campus, aiming to enhance the entrance and other facilities, with work expected to start in January 2025.
 - 5.2.4. University Pay Negotiations: National-level pay negotiations continue, impacting UWL staff, with unions negotiating with management.
 - 5.2.5. AI Opportunities and Challenges: AI's rise presents both opportunities (personalised learning, efficiency) and challenges (academic integrity, data privacy) for the education sector.
- 5.3. Discussion Highlights:
 - 5.3.1. Trustees discussed recruitment strategies, AI policies, and the challenges UWL faces with postgraduate recruitment.
- 5.4. Trustees noted the report.

6. Quarterly Report (Including Risk Register Summary)

*(Bradley Valva - Finance & Performance Analyst,
Presenter: Tye McMahon - Chief Executive Officer)*

- 6.1. The report was taken as read.
- 6.2. Key Achievements for Q4 (May-July 2024):
 - 6.2.1. Overall Engagement: UWLSU surpassed its 70% engagement target, reaching 71% by year-end, with strong contributions from Union awards, exam engagement, and outreach activities.
 - 6.2.2. NSS Performance: UWLSU improved to 2nd in the UK in NSS rankings, up from 3rd, with an 84% satisfaction rate for Question 26 (representing academic interests).
 - 6.2.3. Freshers Program: Over 2,400 students engaged in Freshers' activities, exceeding the target.
 - 6.2.4. Extra-Curricular Engagement: 60% engagement in extracurricular activities was achieved, including student awards ceremonies.
- 6.3. Discussion Highlights:

- 6.3.1. The challenges of engaging new students, especially international students, were identified as a critical risk area for UWLSU moving forward.
- 6.4. Trustees noted the report.

7. Management Accounts

(Hamna Azam - Head of Finance)

- 7.1. The paper was taken as read.
- 7.2. The closure of July's accounts saw the end of the financial year for the Union, and we are now able to present our end of year financial results (subject to audit amendments).
- 7.3. Commercial and Merchandise targets were met as per the reforecast.
- 7.4. All recruitment for permanent roles is now complete, and student staff were being trained to be well equipped to deliver the Freshers' activities as planned.
- 7.5. All planned activities were delivered on schedule, with a clear plan approved for welcoming students in September.
- 7.6. Trustees noted the report.

8. Annual Compliance Management Review

*(Jamal El-Kalawy - Head of Membership;
Presenter: Tye McMahon - Chief Executive Officer)*

- 8.1. The paper was taken as read.
- 8.2. The Compliance Management Plan and Risk Register are used together to ensure that UWLSU is following compliant practices.
- 8.3. The Compliance Management Plan is reviewed each academic year and presented to the Compliance Group and Trustee Board, last being presented to the Board in November 2023.
- 8.4. Whilst there are no immediate risks, the following highlight the strategic priority risks that may affect the organisation in the coming 12 months.
 - 8.4.1. Inflation and Recession
 - 8.4.2. Disaffiliation to NUS
 - 8.4.3. Legislation to the use of AI
 - 8.4.4. Student Recruitment Numbers
- 8.5. Trustees approved the report.

9. Annual Risk Register Review

(Monika Sowa – Governance Officer)

- 9.1. The paper was taken as read.
- 9.2. Key Points:
 - 9.2.1. The Risk Register was updated to include four new risks: AI legislation, NUS disaffiliation, inflation/recession, and student recruitment numbers.
 - 9.2.2. Compliance with health and safety policies remains a priority, with regular risk assessment training for staff and adherence to the risk register.
- 9.3. Trustees approved the report.

10. NSS Analysis Report [Presentation]

(Bradley Valva - Finance & Performance Analyst;

Presenter: Tye McMahon - Chief Executive Officer)

- 10.1. The National Student Survey (NSS) gathers students' opinions on the quality of their courses which helps to inform prospective students' choices and provides data that supports universities and colleges to improve the student experience as well as supports public accountability.
- 10.2. Key areas
 - 10.2.1. NSS Results and Rankings YoY Comparison (2023 vs. 2024)
 - 10.2.2. NSS SU Results and Rankings YoY Comparison for London (2023 vs. 2024)
 - 10.2.3. NSS UWL Results and Rankings YoY Comparison for London (2023 vs. 2024)
 - 10.2.4. NSS 2024 Results by Theme/Question – Student' Union
 - 10.2.5. NSS 2024 Results by School/Course – Students' Union
 - 10.2.6. NSS 2024 Sector Rankings Table
 - 10.2.7. Top 5 Subjects – Positive Impact (>30 Respondents)
 - 10.2.8. Top 5 Subjects – Negative Impact/Lowest Scoring (>30 Respondents)
- 10.3. Trustees noted the report.

11. Review of the Affiliation with NUS

(Tye McMahon - Chief Executive Officer)

- 11.1. The paper was taken as read and opened for discussion.
- 11.2. Options for Affiliation:
 - 11.2.1. Remaining Affiliated:
 - 11.2.1.1. Benefits: Continued access to NUS resources, networking opportunities, and student support. The NUS remains influential on national student policy, including lobbying on tuition fees, housing reform, and mental health.
 - 11.2.1.2. Costs: The 2.5% Block Grant fee, which the Board questioned in terms of value for money and the effectiveness of NUS advocacy.
 - 11.2.2. Disaffiliating:
 - 11.2.2.1. Benefits: UWLSU would save the affiliation fee and could redirect resources to other student services. Autonomy in determining UWLSU's policy priorities and potential partnerships.
 - 11.2.2.2. Risks: Loss of national lobbying power and collective student voice, lack of access to NUS services, potential isolation from wider national student conversations.
 - 11.2.2.3. Process: Disaffiliation could take 6-18 months, and the Board would need to develop alternative lobbying strategies.
 - 11.2.3. Affiliating with One Branch:
 - 11.2.3.1. Benefits: Remain affiliated with NUS Charity while disaffiliating from NUS UK. UWLSU would still have access to NUS's charitable resources

and services, particularly around training and student wellbeing, without committing to the broader political structure.

11.2.3.2. Risks: Partial affiliation may limit access to some of the NUS's national-level lobbying benefits.

11.2.4. Exploring Other Partnerships:

11.2.4.1. UWLSU could explore forming alliances with other advocacy groups or universities. This would ensure UWLSU remains involved in national student movements while avoiding the NUS Block Grant fees.

11.3. Trustee Decision:

Trustees decided to invite NUS representatives to the December 2024 Board meeting to address concerns before making a final decision. KPIs will be set ahead of this meeting to measure the effectiveness of NUS's advocacy work, its impact on UWLSU, and the value of the affiliation.

12. Any Other Business

12.1. Nil.

13. The Date of the Next Meeting

13.1. Meeting adjourned at 19:00.

13.2. Next Meeting: December 3rd, 2024