



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

Trustee Board

Meeting on July 7th, 2026, 17:00
UWLSU Conference Room

Minutes

MEMBERSHIP:

Namira Shrestha (NS/Chair), Kevin Dickie (KD), Farimah Darbyshire (FD), Poppy Lane (PL), Adarsh Sangeetha (AS), Sanaa Kazi (SK), Natasha Mathema (NM)

SMT: Jamal El-Kalawy (JE), Hamna Azam (HA), Rob Carr (RC), Jess Smith (JS)

IN ATTENDANCE: Patrick Fuller (PF), Monika Sowa (MS)

EXTERNAL GUESTS: Nil

APOLOGIES: KD, PF

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

Introduction:

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest (Namira Shrestha - SU President)

- 1.1. The meeting commenced at 17:05.
- 1.2. NS welcomed everyone.

- 1.3. Apologies were received from KD and PF.
- 1.4. KD approved the papers via email.
- 1.5. No declarations of interest were made.

2. Minutes from the Previous Meeting, April 14th, 2026
(*Namira Shrestha - SU President*)

- 2.1. No actions were arising from the previous minutes.
- 2.2. Trustees approved the minutes from April 14th, 2026.

Standing items:

3. SABB Objectives Update

(*Jess Smith – Head of Membership;*

Presenters: Namira Shrestha – SU President, Adarsh Sangeetha – VP of Education, Sanaa Kazi – VP of Activities and Participation)

- 3.1. The Sabbatical Officers' Update was noted as read.
- 3.2. Sabbatical Officers each lead one to three advocacy priorities aligned to areas they would like to impact across the University.
- 3.3. **President's (NS) Priority 1: Sustainable University**
- 3.4. Key activities included:
 - 3.4.1. Participation in the Sustainable Steering Committee and UWL Food Forum.
 - 3.4.2. Planning a further low-waste cooking workshop following the success of the Semester 2 event.
 - 3.4.3. Development of a series of sustainable living videos for release over the summer.
 - 3.4.4. Collaboration with a hospitality student to produce low-cost recipe cards to support the Community Cupboard initiative.
- 3.5. **The President's Priority 2: Women's Advocacy and Empowerment**
- 3.6. Key activities included:
 - 3.6.1. Continued rollout and evaluation of the "Pads on a Roll" project to improve access to period products.
 - 3.6.2. Creation of a social media campaign promoting respect for women, which received over 6,300 views.
 - 3.6.3. Delivery of a leadership workshop attended by 30 students.
- 3.7. **The President's Priority 3: Student Life in London**
- 3.8. Activities included:
 - 3.8.1. Supporting the Advice on Tour initiative, which engaged approximately 300 students.
 - 3.8.2. Delivering a Diversity Quiz and supporting Kindness Day activities.
 - 3.8.3. Continuing distribution of personal safety alarms to students at the Reading campus.
- 3.9. **Vice-President of Education (AS) Priority 1: Career Readiness**
- 3.10. Key activities included:
 - 3.10.1. Promoting an IBM Design AI Workshop, which provided students with practical experience of AI and design tools, with participants receiving certificates.
 - 3.10.2. Supporting the development of a Social Coding Club in partnership with the ATAL Society, focusing on coding, cybersecurity and related career opportunities.

- 3.10.3. Co-planning and delivering an alumni-led CV and careers workshop with SK to provide practical employability advice and graduate insights.
- 3.11. **Vice-President of Education Priority 2: Marking and Feedback**
- 3.12. Activities included:
 - 3.12.1. Active participation in UWL's Assessment Working Group, contributing to discussions on grading policies, transparency and assessment communications.
 - 3.12.2. Ongoing delivery of "Sabbs on Tour", providing regular opportunities for students to share academic concerns and feedback directly with the SU.
 - 3.12.3. Regular engagement with students to gather views on assessments, marking and feedback processes.
- 3.13. **Vice-President of Education Priority 3: Tackling Loneliness**
- 3.14. Key activities included:
 - 3.14.1. Delivering welcome talks to students and promoting SU services and support.
 - 3.14.2. Continuing the Run Club initiative to encourage social interaction through physical activity.
 - 3.14.3. Supporting wellbeing activities with the Student Experience Team, including opportunities for students to share positive messages and feedback.
 - 3.14.4. Joint engagement sessions with NS, including workshops and interactive feedback activities designed to encourage student participation and gather suggestions for improvement.
- 3.15. **The Vice-President of Activities (SK) Priority 1: Developing Student Leaders**
- 3.16. Key activities included:
 - 3.16.1. Supporting the delivery of the Claude Littner Business Challenge 2026, which attracted around 60 participants and included a £15,000 prize fund.
 - 3.16.2. Launching a monthly Digital Recognition Scheme to celebrate the contributions of student leaders and volunteers.
 - 3.16.3. Supporting the establishment of three new student groups, including the successful launch of the Afghan Society.
 - 3.16.4. Delivering British Sign Language workshops to promote inclusive leadership skills.
 - 3.16.5. Co-delivering an alumni-led CV and Careers Workshop with AS.
- 3.17. **Vice-President of Activities Priority 2: Student-led Promotion and Engagement**
- 3.18. Key activities included:
 - 3.18.1. Launching the SU mascot and implementing engagement tracking measures, which have increased student engagement and social media interaction.
 - 3.18.2. Running a student events campaign to gather feedback on future activities, receiving over 100 responses to date.
 - 3.18.3. Supporting trips and activities, including visits to Brighton and Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 3.19. **Vice-President of Activities Priority 3: Cultural Awareness and Community**
- 3.20. Activities included:
 - 3.20.1. Developing a commuter locker scheme to improve accessibility for commuting students.
 - 3.20.2. Supporting cultural and community events, including the Fake Indian Wedding and Pre-Eid Celebration.
 - 3.20.3. Supporting an international trip to Stratford-upon-Avon.
 - 3.20.4. Assisting with planning for the annual Varsity event.
- 3.21. The trustees thanked AS for his contributions and wished him well for the future.
- 3.22. The Trustee Board noted the Sabbatical Officer Objectives Report.

4. CEO Update

(Jamal El-kalawy - Chief Executive Officer)

- 4.1. The CEO Update was noted as read.
- 4.2. The paper provides Trustees with an overview of the evolving strategic environment in which the Students' Union is operating.
- 4.3. JE presented the following updates.
- 4.4. **UWL Finance and Recruitment**
 - 4.4.1. Ongoing financial pressures across the HE sector continue to be driven by challenges in home and international student recruitment.
 - 4.4.2. UWL continues to implement cost-saving measures and review partnerships and services to ensure compliance and sustainability.
- 4.5. **Policy Environment**
 - 4.5.1. A joint University-SU protocol has been agreed to support compliance with free speech requirements.
 - 4.5.2. The Government continues to tighten UKVI compliance requirements affecting universities and international student recruitment.
 - 4.5.3. Sector concerns remain regarding proposed reductions to Disabled Students' Allowance and funding for specialist technology.
- 4.6. **Student Loans and Maintenance Loans for Saturday Students**
 - 4.6.1. The Government has paused plans relating to maintenance loan recovery for Saturday students pending further review.
 - 4.6.2. UWL has successfully supported all affected students to transfer onto eligible study patterns.
- 4.7. **Commercial Updates**
 - 4.7.1. UWL has appointed Gather & Gather as its new catering provider.
- 4.8. **The SU Gym**
 - 4.8.1. The SU Gym continues to perform strongly, reaching approximately 960 members, with plans to further develop member engagement activities.
- 4.9. **Elections**
 - 4.9.1. Student Officer elections have concluded, with NS re-elected as President, SK re-elected as Vice President Activities, and NM elected as Vice President Education.
- 4.10. **Award Season**
 - 4.10.1. The successful delivery of Awards Season was noted, including record engagement across the Star Awards, Union Awards and newly introduced Impact Awards.
- 4.11. Trustees noted the CEO Update.

5. Quarterly Report Q3 (Including Risk Register Summary)

*(Bradley Valva - Finance & Business Data Manager;
Presenter: Jamal El-kalawy – Chief Executive Officer)*

- 5.1. The Quarterly Report was noted as read.
- 5.2. The report updates Trustees on programme delivery, KPI performance, key achievements, challenges, opportunities and financial trends.
- 5.3. **Overall Engagement**
 - 5.3.1. Overall student engagement increased to 74%, representing a significant improvement on the previous quarter and remaining on track against the year-end target.
 - 5.3.2. Strong growth was recorded through initiatives including Advice on Tour, leadership events, societies and low-commitment sports activities.
- 5.4. **Overall Satisfaction and NSS**

- 5.4.1. NSS response rates reached 86%, remaining above national thresholds and providing a robust dataset for future analysis.
- 5.5. **Student Voice**
 - 5.5.1. Course Representative elections continued throughout the quarter, with over 92% of courses represented by at least one elected Course Representative.
- 5.6. **Community and Belonging**
 - 5.6.1. Participation in sports clubs, societies and student groups continued to grow, with over 1,500 students engaged during the academic year.
 - 5.6.2. Network participation increased, and the Sports Centre continued to perform strongly, with growth in both membership and income.
- 5.7. **Advice and Wellbeing**
 - 5.7.1. The Advice Service continued to perform strongly, supporting 683 cases year-to-date, with 91% student satisfaction recorded.
- 5.8. **Communications**
 - 5.8.1. Social media performance remained strong, exceeding original targets and prompting the introduction of a stretch KPI.
- 5.9. **Central Services and HR**
- 5.10. Staff engagement remained strong, with a 91% survey response rate and positive results relating to wellbeing, inclusivity and organisational purpose.
- 5.11. **Student Staff**
 - 5.11.1. The Student Staff Survey reported strong levels of engagement, inclusion, trust and wellbeing, with 91% of respondents agreeing that the SU supports their wellbeing at work.
- 5.12. **Commercial Services KPIs**
 - 5.12.1. Commercial Services remain on track to achieve a year-end profit.
- 5.13. **Quality Assurance**
 - 5.13.1. The annual food safety inspection is scheduled to take place in Quarter Four.
- 5.14. **Finance KPIs**
 - 5.14.1. Staff costs and reserves remained within target, and the annual audit was completed with no significant findings.
- 5.15. **Risk and Opportunities**
 - 5.15.1. The election of a new Sabbatical Officer provides opportunities for fresh ideas, with effective handovers needed to maintain continuity.
 - 5.15.2. Quarter Four presents opportunities to trial new engagement approaches and focus on planning for the 2026/27 academic year.
- 5.16. Trustees noted the Quarterly Report.

6. Management Accounts

(Hamna Azam – Deputy CEO)

- 6.1. The Management Accounts report was noted as read.
- 6.2. Key financial updates included:
 - 6.2.1. Grant income remains on target.
 - 6.2.2. Teams continue to operate within budget and maintain a cost-conscious approach.
 - 6.2.3. Commercial performance remains stable, although reduced campus footfall has been reflected in the latest forecast.
 - 6.2.4. Little Coffee Union will relocate to Paragon during July and August while refurbishment works are undertaken within Gather & Gather.
 - 6.2.5. Staff costs remain below the target ratio, reflecting effective workforce management.
 - 6.2.6. Recruitment remains paused, with HR activity focused on recruiting student staff to support Welcome and Freshers' delivery.

- 6.2.7. Non-staff expenditure continues to be closely monitored and aligned with operational priorities.
- 6.2.8. Planning for Welcome, Freshers' and key engagement activity for 2026/27 is underway.
- 6.2.9. The forecast surplus remains achievable due to continued financial oversight and controlled expenditure.
- 6.3. Trustees noted the Management Accounts report.

Annual items:

7. Dates for the Following Year

(Monika Sowa – Governance Officer)

- 7.1. The Trustee Board meets four to five times a year to make key decisions. Meeting dates are set in line with the organisation's business cycle.
- 7.2. Each Board meeting follows a set schedule of business items, reviewed in line with the Compliance Management Plan. These items are planned before the academic year and updated as required throughout the business cycle.
- 7.3. MS presented the suggested dates and items of business for the academic year 2026-2027.
- 7.4. The suggested recommended dates for 2026-2027 are:
 - 7.4.1. October 13th, 2026 (Tuesday)
 - 7.4.2. December 8th, 2026 (Tuesday)
 - 7.4.3. March 2nd, 2027 (Tuesday) – Away Day
 - 7.4.4. April 13th, 2027 (Tuesday)
 - 7.4.5. July 13th, 2027 (Tuesday)
- 7.5. The Board approved the Trustee Board Dates and Items of Business 2026-2027.

8. Election Report

(Jess Smith – Head of Membership)

- 8.1. The Election Report was noted as read.
- 8.2. UWLSU successfully conducted its annual Sabbatical Officer elections in accordance with statutory requirements. The election process was independently reviewed and signed off by the Returning Officer and NUS as a fair and accurate account of the election and count process.
- 8.3. A total of 1,969 students voted, casting 5,594 votes across the three Sabbatical Officer positions.
- 8.4. The following candidates were elected:
 - 8.4.1. President: Namira Shrestha
 - 8.4.2. Vice- President Education: Natasha Mathema
 - 8.4.3. Vice-President Activities and Participation: Sanaa Kazi
- 8.5. There were 49 nominations received, with 13 candidates actively campaigning during the voting period. Twenty candidates attended training sessions prior to the election.
- 8.6. Several positive trends in candidate representation were noted, including an increase in women candidates and greater participation from first-year students. However, home student representation remained lower than expected and was identified as an area for future focus.

8.7. A total of 25 election complaints were received and resolved during the election period.

8.8. Trustees noted the Election Report.

9. Awards Week [Presentation]

(Rob Carr – Head of Operations)

9.1. RC presented an overview of the Awards Week.

9.2. RC reported that the new **Impact Awards** were introduced following changes to the University's Volunteering Awards programme. The awards created additional opportunities to recognise student contributions, including course representatives, apprentices, doctoral students and student staff. A total of 122 nominations were received.

9.3. The **Union Awards** received 466 nominations across a range of categories recognising student groups, committee members, volunteers and outstanding contributions to sport and community activities.

9.4. The **Star Awards** received 1,256 nominations, an increase from 1,196 in the previous year.

9.5. Trustees noted the Awards Week updates.

10. Commercial Expansion – Discussion

(Jamal El-kalawy - Chief Executive Officer)

10.1. JE introduced the item, noting that during discussions at the University's Student Liaison Committee (SLC), UWLSU had been encouraged to explore opportunities to expand its commercial offer. It was noted that some campus commercial opportunities had recently been awarded to external providers rather than the Students' Union.

10.2. JE reported that UWLSU has engaged a consultancy to undertake a commercial review and provide recommendations on income diversification. The review is expected to take place between September and November, enabling any recommendations to be considered and implemented thereafter. It was noted that the review would include consultation with students and stakeholders, alongside an assessment of existing commercial spaces and services.

11. Staff Engagement Survey Results

(Katherine Hyde – HR Manager; Presenter: Hamna Azam – Deputy CEO)

11.1. The Staff Engagement Survey Results report was noted as read.

11.2. HA presented the findings of the 2026 **Staff Engagement Survey**, which achieved a 100% response rate and was conducted externally through Workbuzz in partnership with NUS and Atkinson HR.

11.3. UWLSU achieved an overall engagement score of 91%, placing the organisation among the highest-performing Students' Unions in the sector and significantly above both peer and NUS benchmarks.

11.4. Key strengths identified in the survey included:

11.4.1. Strong employee wellbeing (91%)

11.4.2. Positive team culture and colleague relationships (89%)

11.4.3. A strong sense of purpose and commitment to the organisation, with high levels of pride and confidence in UWLSU's services.

11.5. The survey also highlighted areas for continued improvement, including:

- 11.5.1. Reward and pay.
- 11.5.2. Performance management.
- 11.5.3. Organisational communication.
- 11.5.4. Staff retention. It was noted that only 53% of respondents indicated they would like to still be working at UWLSU in 12 months' time, identifying retention as a key area for further consideration.
- 11.6. The report highlighted that, despite these challenges, UWLSU continues to perform strongly against both Students' Union sector benchmarks and wider UK workplace trends.
- 11.7. The Board also received the results of the 2026 **Student Staff Engagement Survey**, which achieved a 55% response rate, with 45 responses received from 82 student staff members.
- 11.8. Overall, the survey demonstrated a highly positive student staff experience, with strong scores across team culture, management, wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, and employability development.
- 11.9. Key findings included:
 - 11.9.1. High levels of trust and support within teams.
 - 11.9.2. Strong confidence in managers and management relationships.
 - 11.9.3. Positive perceptions of diversity and inclusion.
 - 11.9.4. Strong wellbeing support.
 - 11.9.5. High levels of satisfaction with the skills and experience gained through working at UWLSU.
- 11.10. The survey also identified opportunities for improvement in:
 - 11.10.1. Employee voice and opportunities to contribute feedback.
 - 11.10.2. Training and development, particularly for new starters.
 - 11.10.3. Shift allocation, scheduling and communication regarding working hours.
 - 11.10.4. It was noted that the Commercial Team had the lowest survey participation rate, and it was suggested that further engagement with the team may be beneficial to better understand its experiences.
- 11.11. Trustees noted the Staff Engagement Survey Results.

12. Leadership Actions

(Jamal El-Kalawy - Chief Executive Officer)

- 12.1. The Leadership Actions report was noted as read.
- 12.2. Trustees were reminded that the 2025 Staff Engagement Survey identified a decline in leadership perception scores, particularly in relation to leadership visibility, leading by example, and understanding staff views.
- 12.3. Following a request from the Trustee Board, the Senior Management Team (SMT) reviewed the findings, undertook research into leadership best practice, and developed a series of actions to address the feedback received.
- 12.4. JE advised that a number of improvements have already been implemented during the year, including increased staff engagement sessions, presentations, and opportunities for communication with senior leaders.
- 12.5. SMT reported that progress against the action plan has been monitored throughout the academic year and noted that the organisation's overall staff engagement score of 91% represents a significant achievement given the leadership changes experienced during the year.
- 12.6. Future actions will focus on:
 - 12.6.1. Maintaining transparency around Students' Union and sector-wide challenges, including financial and budgetary matters.
 - 12.6.2. Expanding staff skills development, including both technical and interpersonal skills.

- 12.6.3. Strengthening performance management and management capability through mentoring and development support for managers.
- 12.6.4. Undertaking further analysis of staff retention, career progression and long-term development aspirations.
- 12.7. Trustees noted the Leadership Actions update.

Other Items:

13. Student Trustee Appointment

(Jamal El-kalawy - Chief Executive Officer)

- 13.1. JE advised that a vacancy has arisen for a Student Trustee following NM's election to a Sabbatical Officer position.
- 13.2. It was noted that a recruitment panel will be established, comprising NS and three additional members, to oversee the appointment process.
- 13.3. The process and timetable for the appointment will be progressed, with proposed dates to be circulated in due course.

14. Any Other Business (AOB)

- 14.1. JE noted that this was AS's final Trustee Board meeting before taking up a new role at UWL following the completion of his Sabbatical Officer term.
- 14.2. Trustees thanked AS for his contribution to the Students' Union and congratulated him on his new appointment.

15. Conclusion

- 15.1. The meeting concluded at 18:35.
- 15.2. No actions were identified arising from the meeting.
- 15.3. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, the **13th of October 2026**, in line with the approved Trustee Board Schedule 2026-2027.