



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

Trustee Board

Meeting on December 9th, 2025, 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)

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: Nil

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

1. Introduction

(Namira Shrestha - SU President)

- 1.1. The meeting started at 17:06.
- 1.2. NS welcomed everyone.
- 1.3. No apologies were received.
- 1.4. SK joined the meeting via Teams.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

(Namira Shrestha - SU President)

2.1. None were declared.

3. **Minutes from October 7th, 2025**

(Namira Shrestha - SU President)

3.1. Actions from the meeting of 7 October 2025 were discussed.

3.2. Trustees approved the minutes.

Standing items:

4. **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)

4.1. The Sabb Objectives Update was noted as read.

4.2. Sabbatical Officers each hold one to three advocacy priorities based on the areas they would like to impact across UWL.

4.3. **The President's (NS) Priority 1: Sustainable University**

4.3.1. NS is part of the Environmental Sustainability Engagement working group and attended the first meeting on 28th October to contribute ideas.

4.3.2. NS supported the 'market stall' initiative as part of Student Welcome, promoting affordable and sustainable produce. The stall was the first of its kind and very successful, with 95% of produce sold.

4.3.3. NS is planning a 'sustainable fashion waste' workshop for Semester two, using scrap fabrics to teach upcycling and creative reuse, and a DIY plastic reuse activity for February Welcome.

4.3.4. The initial Tree Planting event was completed in collaboration with Letting it Grow company, which donated the trees. NS is exploring a similar initiative at the Ruskin campus and also planning a plant giveaway.

4.4. **The President's (NS) Priority 2: Women's Advocacy and Empowerment**

4.4.1. A Women in Finance networking event was held on 27 November in partnership with the Finance Society, featuring a senior guest speaker who shared her career journey to support students' confidence and professional development.

4.4.2. NS is working to introduce free period products on campus (in all toilets) to ensure essential wellbeing resources are accessible to women. Research was undertaken on the 'pads on a roll' dispensers, with initial discussions held with UWL.

4.5. **The President's (NS) Priority 3: Student Life in London**

4.5.1. NS created a student budgeting video that reached over 7,800 students and received 233 likes.

4.5.2. NS planned and delivered an 'Advice on Tour' campaign focusing on ensuring new students were registered with a GP and raising awareness of meningitis. Over 470 students were supported, and over 45 first-aid kits were distributed.

4.5.3. NS is exploring options for a late-night bus service and the provision of personal safety alarms during late-night events.

4.6. **The Vice-President of Education (AS) Priority 1: Career Readiness**

- 4.6.1. AS is delivering a career workshop in collaboration with the Business Society on 19 November, covering CV writing, effective cover letters and job-search strategies. Promotion has been underway throughout November, with additional sessions planned.
- 4.6.2. AS is planning a skills-based workshop on emotional intelligence and communication, working with an external alumnus to deliver the session.
- 4.7. **The Vice-President of Education (AS) Priority 2: Marking and Feedback**
 - 4.7.1. AS presented a paper to the Academic Regulations Review Committee recommending the reinstatement of transcript recognition for course reps. This has led to a working group with the Student Experience Team to explore completion certificates. Discussions are ongoing.
 - 4.7.2. AS is gathering data on marking and feedback practices to inform a staff guidance document. Evidence is being collected through course rep feedback, social media Q&As and the 'Sabbs on Tour' engagement sessions.
- 4.8. **The Vice-President of Education (AS) Priority 3: Tackling Loneliness**
 - 4.8.1. AS worked with the Student Experience Team to deliver international student responsibilities talks to over 1,700 students, helping them adjust and connect early.
 - 4.8.2. AS plans to launch a Weekly Run Club from December to promote social wellbeing and reduce isolation.
 - 4.8.3. AS is collaborating with the men's Rugby team on a men's mental health initiative, creating space for open conversations and supporting charity fundraising.
- 4.9. **The Vice-President of Activities (SK) Priority 1 – Developing Student Leaders**
 - 4.9.1. SK supported the creation and relaunch of the Afghani Society, Cricket Club and Midwifery Society (Reading), helping committees develop leadership skills and grow membership.
 - 4.9.2. A British Sign Language workshop for student groups is planned for November to support communication skills development.
 - 4.9.3. SK is planning the second Claude's Business Challenge, expanding it to all schools to increase engagement and employability. Initial planning with Claude Littner has begun, with delivery expected in Semester 2.
- 4.10. **The Vice-President of Activities (SK) Priority 2: Student-led Promotion and Engagement**
 - 4.10.1. SK introduced new student-led promotional approaches, including the use of the mascot to increase event visibility. Engagement tracking shows high interaction levels, with one post reaching 11k views.
 - 4.10.2. There is strong interest from student groups and a real excitement around 'Freddie'. The most popular mascot video achieved 11.9k views and 268 engagements. A mascot giveaway increased followers by 98. SK introduced a 'mascot borrow scheme', enabling them to use Freddie for event promotion.
- 4.11. **The Vice-President of Activities (SK) Priority 3: Cultural Awareness and Community**
 - 4.11.1. SK is planning a Cultural Fair for February Welcome, offering opportunities for students to celebrate and explore diverse cultures and small businesses. Planning is underway.
 - 4.11.2. SK supported the planning and delivery of International Men's Week activities, including wellness giveaways and self-care promotion. Approximately 70% of participants were international students.
 - 4.11.3. SK supported the completion of 'Consent Matters' training by promoting it through UWL meetings and social media, encouraging open dialogue around respect, boundaries and community wellbeing.
- 4.12. Trustees noted the Sabbatical Officer Objectives Report.

5. CEO Update

(Jamal El-kalawy - Chief Executive Officer)

- 5.1. The CEO Update was noted as read.
- 5.2. This paper provides Trustees with an overview of the evolving strategic environment from July to early October 2025, including sector trends, UWL developments, and internal updates to contextualise SU operational and strategic decisions.
- 5.3. JE presented the report findings.
- 5.4. The following key areas were highlighted as having potential organisational impact.
- 5.5. **UWL Finance and Recruitment**
 - 5.5.1. All CAS licences were issued, enabling international students to enrol. Home-student recruitment decreased by approximately 10%, in line with predictions.
 - 5.5.2. 228 Oxford Business College (OBC) students transferred to UWL following OfS investigations. These students sit within the Business School and will receive predominantly remote support with occasional on-site activity.
- 5.6. **Policy Environment**
 - 5.6.1. The Government continues to progress the Restoring Control over the Immigration System white paper, including proposals for:
 - 5.6.1.1. Reduction of the Graduate Route Visa from 2 years to 18 months.
 - 5.6.1.2. A 6% international student levy, intended for reinvestment in skills and education.
 - 5.6.1.3. Increased university compliance requirements around retention and completion.
 - 5.6.1.4. Higher English-language entry requirements.
 - 5.6.2. Due to inflation, tuition fees increased by 3.1% to £9,535, alongside an uplift in maintenance loans of up to £414 for lower-income students.
- 5.7. **Student Housing and Renting**
 - 5.7.1. Following Royal Assent of the Renters Rights Bill on 27 October, new protections include:
 - 5.7.1.1. Abolition of Section 21 ('no-fault') evictions.
 - 5.7.1.2. End of fixed-term tenancies.
 - 5.7.1.3. Stronger rent increase controls.
 - 5.7.1.4. Awaab's Law regarding hazards and mould.
 - 5.7.1.5. Bans on rental discrimination (particularly around benefits and children).
 - 5.7.2. Plans to reopen Paragon accommodation continue, with site visits conducted by UWL staff.
- 5.8. **Graduate Opportunities**
 - 5.8.1. Graduate full-time employment fell from 61% to 59%, with unemployment rising to 6% (11% for non-UK graduates).
 - 5.8.2. Graduates still earn significantly more than non-graduates, with CIPD estimating a one-third pay differential by age 31.
- 5.9. **Internal Updates**
- 5.10. **UWL Senior Staff Update**
 - 5.10.1. Professor Anthony Hilton has joined UWL as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, overseeing the academic mission, curriculum, Research Excellence Framework (REF), and the Schools of Computing & Engineering (SCE), Nursing, Midwifery and Health (CNMH) and Medicine & Biosciences (SMB).
- 5.11. **Building and facility updates**
 - 5.11.1. In response to NSS and module evaluation feedback, recent developments include:

- 5.11.1.1. Upgraded specialist Radio Station equipment and software for relevant academic courses and Blast Radio.
- 5.11.1.2. A new prayer room in SMR with additional wash facilities, managed by UWL with SU support.
- 5.11.1.3. The Digital Futures Lab is now bookable by staff for students and student groups through timetabling, widening access beyond teaching hours.
- 5.12. **Oxford Business College**
 - 5.12.1. All Oxford Business College (OBC) transfers have now been completed. 228 students are registered across UWL's London, Slough, Nottingham and Oxford locations.
- 5.13. **The SU Gym**
 - 5.13.1. The SU Gym hosted two high-profile filming bookings: part of a Tinie Tempah music video and scenes from the TV show *Mobland*.
- 5.14. **UWL's Graduate Futures**
 - 5.14.1. UWL has launched the Graduate Futures department, consolidating Careers, Placements and Volunteering to deliver more targeted employability support.
- 5.15. **A Respect Campaign**
 - 5.15.1. The SU has launched a Respect Campaign following isolated instances of poor student behaviour on campus. Although unusual for UWL, the SU is exploring underlying causes and reinforcing expectations.
- 5.16. Staffing Changes were noted.
- 5.17. JE reported additional updates since the CEO update was written, including progression on Government white papers and new NUS campaigning on the Renters Bill.
- 5.18. Trustees noted the CEO Update.

6. Quarterly Report (Including the Risk Register Summary)

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

- 6.1. The Quarterly report was noted as read.
- 6.2. The report updated Trustees on programme delivery, KPI performance, key achievements, challenges, opportunities and financial trends.
- 6.3. Q1 KPIs were assessed as follows.
- 6.4. **Overall Engagement (to date)**
 - 6.4.1. The engagement target increased from 77.5% to 81% as part of the incremental plan toward 85% by 2028.
- 6.5. **Overall Satisfaction/NSS**
 - 6.5.1. The SU is delivering its NSS strategy with a focus on low-scoring courses and Schools from the 2025 survey.
- 6.6. **Student Voice**
 - 6.6.1. Course Rep elections opened in Q1, encouraging representation and communication between students and faculty.
 - 6.6.2. By Q1 end, 384 courses appointed a rep, giving 75% course-level coverage.
 - 6.6.3. Elections continue in Q2, aiming for a further 20% coverage.
- 6.7. **Community and Belonging**
 - 6.7.1. The KPI now increases each year incrementally toward a 20% target in 2027/28.
 - 6.7.2. 673 students joined Societies (+259 YoY).
 - 6.7.3. 578 students engaged in sports; 355 are now confirmed team members.
 - 6.7.4. Over 2,800 students expressed interest in SU Networks during the Big Conversation.

6.8. Advice and Outreach

- 6.8.1. 240 cases were opened in Q1, with no students turned away; 56 remain open.
- 6.8.2. Advice on Tour began the academic year by promoting our advice service and GP registration guidance. A total of 470 students took advantage of this initiative.

6.9. Communications

- 6.9.1. The Instagram Big Giveaway engaged 645 students (+95 YoY).
- 6.9.2. UWLSU's Social channels grew 35.18% since the 2024 strategy launch; Instagram surpassed 10,000 followers.

6.10. Central Services and HR

- 6.10.1. The Staff Engagement Survey will be issued in Q2. Results expected Q3-Q4.
- 6.10.2. People & Culture are developing actions on role clarity, Learning and Development, diversity and belonging.

6.11. Student Staff

- 6.11.1. Wellbeing and employability measures exceeded targets; results will be reported in Q3–Q4.
- 6.11.2. A more practical induction model was introduced following previous feedback.

6.12. Commercial Services KPIs

- 6.12.1. New student staff were recruited and trained throughout Q1.
- 6.12.2. Commercial outlets served 26,138 customers in Q1, mostly students.
- 6.12.3. All Q1 commercial audits were completed.

6.13. Quality Assurance

- 6.13.1. No QA results are published in Q1.

6.14. Finance KPIs

- 6.14.1. The annual audit began in Q1 and outcomes are expected in Q2.

6.15. Key Achievements

- 6.15.1. A strong Welcome Period established high early engagement.
- 6.15.2. Significant growth across societies, sports, gym and online communities.
- 6.15.3. New Initiatives have been launched in Q1, such as the wellbeing programme, engaging 452 students.

6.16. Key Deliverables for Next Quarter

- 6.16.1. NSS operational strategy delivery.
- 6.16.2. Satisfaction-focused communications campaign.
- 6.16.3. Course, Community and Career Enhancing Activities (CEA's) focused on activities tailored to NSS-eligible and priority courses.
- 6.16.4. Low-commitment sports sessions to boost participation and wellbeing.

- 6.17. Trustees noted the Quarterly report.

7. Management Accounts

(Hamna Azam – Deputy CEO)

- 7.1. The Management Accounts report was noted as read.
- 7.2. Strong Freshers' and October induction activity has supported early engagement and commercial performance, setting a solid foundation for the year.

7.3. Income-generating activity

- 7.3.1. Grant income remains on target. Teams have been encouraged to deliver activity more economically to achieve agreed in-year savings.

7.4. Commercial and Merchandise Income

- 7.4.1. Freddie's and Coffee Union launched refreshed menus, generating strong footfall and income, particularly from new students, though this has increased staffing demands.

7.5. Non-staff Costs

- 7.5.1. Induction activities successfully extended into October, building on the momentum generated during Freshers'.
- 7.6. Trustees noted the Management Accounts report.

Annual items:

8. Audited Accounts [Subject to availability] – Circulated separately *(Hamna Azam – Deputy CEO)*

- 8.1. The Audited Accounts report was noted as read.
- 8.2. UWLSU, as a company limited by guarantee, is required to prepare and submit annual financial statements to Companies House. Due to its income level, these accounts must undergo an external audit.
- 8.3. As a registered charity, UWLSU must also submit these accounts to the Charity Commission along with an annual Trustees' Report outlining performance, governance, and use of funds.
- 8.4. The financial statements for the year ending 31 July 2025 were prepared and audited by Goodman Jones in September 2025. A draft Trustees' Report, produced by senior SU managers, was presented for Trustee approval.
- 8.5. Trustees' Report:
 - 8.5.1. UWLSU achieved an NSS score of 86%, placing 2nd nationally among comparable institutions.
 - 8.5.2. Overall engagement reached 83.2%, exceeding targets and showing a 12% YoY increase.
 - 8.5.3. UWLSU exceeded 5 targets, achieved 10 further targets in 2024/25, and met all financial KPIs.
- 8.6. Audit findings:
- 8.7. The audit identified no significant issues requiring Trustee attention. One high-risk and one low-risk item were reported.
- 8.8. Trustees approved the Audited Accounts.

9. Fresher's Report [Presentation] *(Rob Carr – Head of Commercial Operations)*

- 9.1. The presentation included highlights from Freshers and a Halloween video.
- 9.2. The presentation headlines:
 - 9.2.1. Total engagement reached 6,232 (+1,011 YoY), with 4,044 unique participants (+1,244 YoY).
 - 9.2.2. Activities ran across two weeks, featuring more than 45 events.
 - 9.2.3. Freshers' Fair attendance was 1,629 (+66 YoY).
 - 9.2.4. Wellbeing-focused events were delivered by the Wellbeing Project Coordinator.
 - 9.2.5. Society membership increased to 696 (previously 433). Changes to the payment structure were also made.
 - 9.2.6. Sports Club membership reached 562 (previously 481, including guest memberships).
- 9.3. Trustees noted the Fresher's Report.

Other Items:

10. Big Conversation Report

(Jess Smith – Head of Membership)

- 10.1. The Big Conversation report was noted as read.
- 10.2. JS reported that the project runs at the start of September and February.
- 10.3. The Big Conversation is a face-to-face induction activity where each new student meets an SU staff member or student staff member to discuss their feelings as new students, their interest in support services, and provide demographic insights.
- 10.4. In September 2025, 2,746 students completed the Big Conversation, with 2,710 valid responses (up from 2,428 in 2024), demonstrating strong induction engagement. Excluding apprentices and OBC students, this sample represents the full undergraduate and postgraduate cohort.
- 10.5. The intake comprised 54% Home and 46% International students; 66% were undergraduates. Age distribution: 48% aged 18–21, 26% aged 22–25, and 25% aged 26+.
- 10.6. Reasons for choosing UWL remained consistent: “Because of the Course” remained highest (55%, +5% YoY) and “Student Satisfaction Results” second (39%, +5% YoY). “Location” decreased to 29% (from 33%). Other reasons included strong outcomes and a supportive environment.
- 10.7. Interest in clubs and societies remained high at 80% (slightly down from 83%). Interest in SU networks remained strong, especially Cultural & Diversity (32%) and Women’s Network (22%).
- 10.8. Academic motivations and student satisfaction remain the strongest drivers of university choice. Location has decreased as a deciding factor, suggesting students prioritise course quality over convenience. This reinforces the continued importance of student voice work.
- 10.9. Trustees noted the Big Conversation Report.

11. Elections Timeline

(Jess Smith – Head of Membership)

- 11.1. The Election Timeline was noted as read.
- 11.2. JS presented the proposed timeline for Spring Elections (Sabbatical Officer Elections).
- 11.3. Proposed timelines for Spring Elections:
 - 11.3.1. Nominations open: 12 pm, Wednesday 4th February 2026
 - 11.3.2. Nominations close: 12 pm, Wednesday 4th March 2026
 - 11.3.3. Candidate training: Tuesday 17th March - Friday 27th March
 - 11.3.4. Draft manifesto deadline: 12 pm, Monday 6th April 2026
 - 11.3.5. Final manifesto deadline: 5 pm, Friday 10th April 2026
 - 11.3.5.1. Voting opens: 10 am, Tuesday 21st April 2026
 - 11.3.5.2. Voting closes: 12 pm, Friday 24th April 2026
 - 11.3.6. Complaints and expenses deadline: 12 pm, Friday 24th April 2026
 - 11.3.7. Results announcements event: 5 pm, Friday 24th April 2026
 - 11.3.8. Back-up results announcement: 12 pm, Monday 28th April 2026
- 11.4. Trustees approved the Elections Timeline.

12. Trustee Board: Strategic Planning Day [Discussion]

(Jamal El-kalawy – Chief Executive Officer)

- 12.1. JE noted that the Trustee Board Strategy Day will take place in March and invited suggestions for the agenda.
- 12.2. JE proposed inviting UWL representatives Sara Raybould (Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Peter John (Vice-Chancellor) and Patrick Fuller (Group Chief Financial Officer) to present on the University's future outlook. By this point, two new student trustees should be in post, and financial planning could be included on the agenda.
- 12.3. Trustees noted the Trustee Board Strategic Planning Day.

13. AOB:

- 13.1. HA requested Trustee approval to reassign the designated fund as an unrestricted fund.
- 13.2. Trustees agreed to the reclassification.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1. The meeting concluded at 18:38.
- 14.2. The next Trustee Board meeting is scheduled for March 03rd 2026 (Strategy Day), followed by 14th April 2026.
- 14.3. All staff left the meeting.
- 14.4. Following the meeting, Board members met for dinner.

15. Closed Business:

- 15.1. CEO Midpoint Appraisal
(Chair of the Remuneration Committee)