



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

Trustee Board

Meeting on October 7th, 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: FD

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 17:07.

1.2. NS welcomed everyone and introduced the new Sabb team.

1.2.1.1. The sabbatical officers are:

1.2.1.1.1. Namira Shrestha – SU President

1.2.1.1.2. Adarsh Sangeetha – VP Education

- 1.2.1.1.3. Sanaa Kazi – VP Activities and Participation.
- 1.3. Apologies were received from FD.
- 1.4. Note that Aranza Victorino resigned from the role of student trustee.

2. Declarations of Interest

(Namira Shrestha - SU President)

- 2.1. None were declared.

3. Minutes from July 7th, 2025

(Namira Shrestha - SU President)

- 3.1. All actions arising from the meeting on July 7, 2025, have been completed.
- 3.2. Trustees approved the minutes.

4. Welcome to the New Sabb Team

(Jamal El-kalawy - Chief Executive Officer)

- 4.1. JE, along with the Trustee Board, officially welcomed the newly formed Sabb team for the academic year 2025-2026.

5. 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)

- 5.1. The Sabb Objectives Update was noted as read.
- 5.2. The current report does not include updates yet, but highlights the areas the officers would like to work on and the key goals for the year ahead.
- 5.3. The President's (NS) update is as follows.

5.3.1. Priority 1 – Sustainable University

- 5.3.1.1. The President's Priority 1 focuses on building a Sustainable University by reducing UWL's environmental impact and embedding sustainability into students' daily campus life.

- 5.3.1.2. The goal is to align with and enhance UWL's broader sustainability objectives. Key targets include delivering a minimum of three sustainability initiatives by year-end to promote eco-friendly living; engaging at least 250 students through sustainability focused activities, workshops, and campaigns; and ensuring that 80% of students feel that both UWL and UWLSU are sustainable organisations. This priority reflects a proactive commitment to environmental responsibility and student-led change.

5.3.2. Priority 2 – Women's Advocacy and Empowerment

- 5.3.2.1. This priority focuses on Women's Advocacy and Empowerment, aiming to help women feel confident, visible, and supported throughout their university experience.
- 5.3.2.2. It includes running three skill-building sessions focused on areas such as negotiation and networking to boost confidence and visibility. It also ensures access to essential wellbeing resources, including period products and health information, available on campus. The goal is for 80% of women to report feeling more confident and empowered as a result of these initiatives, reflecting a commitment to equity, wellbeing, and leadership development.
- 5.3.3. **Priority 3 – Student Life in London**
 - 5.3.3.1. Priority 3 aims to enhance Student Life in London by helping students feel confident, safe, and prepared for city living. This priority focuses on improving access to essential services, supporting cost-of-living challenges, promoting healthy lifestyle habits, and creating opportunities for social connection.
 - 5.3.3.2. Key goals include delivering 2-3 projects focused on student safety, such as travel related initiatives, and providing at least one activity per semester to help students build networks and friendships. This priority reflects a holistic approach to supporting students beyond academics, ensuring they thrive in London both personally and socially.
- 5.4. The Vice-President of Activities (SK) update is as follows.
 - 5.4.1. **Priority 1 – Developing Student Leaders**
 - 5.4.1.1. This priority focuses on Developing Student Leaders by creating opportunities for students to grow through extra-curricular engagement. This initiative aims to build leadership skills through workshops, competitions, and recognition programmes.
 - 5.4.1.2. Key goals include delivering three leadership or skills development sessions, such as alumni-led workshops; running a student competition designed to foster leadership capabilities; and launching a recognition initiative that celebrates student leadership and extra-curricular achievements. This priority supports students in building confidence, transferable skills, and a sense of accomplishment beyond the classroom.
 - 5.4.2. **Priority 2 – Student-led Promotion and Engagement**
 - 5.4.2.1. SK's Priority 2 focuses on increasing awareness and participation in SU activities through student-led promotion and engagement. The aim is to place students at the heart of campaigns and outreach efforts, empowering them to lead and promote initiatives that resonate with their peers.
 - 5.4.2.2. Key goals include enabling student-led promotion that results in 500 student engagements across events throughout the year and delivering at least three impactful campaigns that raise awareness of the value of extra-curricular activities, such as societies. This priority supports a more inclusive and participatory SU culture.
 - 5.4.3. **Priority 3 – Cultural Awareness and Community**

- 5.4.3.1. SK's Priority 3 focuses on fostering Cultural Awareness and Community by creating inclusive spaces for students to celebrate and learn from diverse cultures and experiences.
- 5.4.3.2. This includes hosting one cultural engagement opportunity per semester, relaunching the cultural fair or a similar event to encourage broad participation across UWL, and supporting cross-cultural health and wellbeing through activities offered at least once per semester. The priority aims to strengthen international student involvement, promote cultural exchange, and build a more connected and respectful campus community.
- 5.5. The Vice-President of Education (AS) update is as follows.
 - 5.5.1. **Priority 1 – Career Readiness**
 - 5.5.1.1. AS's Priority 1 focuses on Career Readiness, aiming to ensure students leave university feeling confident and prepared for their professional futures.
 - 5.5.1.2. This priority includes delivering 2-3 career-focused workshops or campaigns throughout the year to help students build essential skills and access professional networks. A key outcome is to see an increase in students reporting via the NSS that they have developed skills during their time in higher education that will be useful for their future careers. This initiative supports a smoother transition from university to the workplace.
 - 5.5.2. **Priority 2 – Marking and Feedback**
 - 5.5.2.1. Priority 2 focuses on improving Marking and Feedback to help students feel more confident and supported in their academic journey. This priority aims to ensure that feedback is timely, effective, and easy to understand.
 - 5.5.2.2. Key actions include creating a guidance document for staff outlining what students value in marking and feedback, launching a campaign such as *Advice on Tour* to educate students on academic processes, and working to improve NSS scores related to marking and feedback. This initiative supports transparency, academic confidence, and stronger communication between students and staff.
 - 5.5.3. **Priority 3 – Tackling Loneliness**
 - 5.5.3.1. Priority 3 focuses on tackling student loneliness by creating more opportunities for meaningful connection and engagement across the university. The aim is to support student wellbeing by encouraging inclusive social interaction and fostering a stronger sense of belonging.
 - 5.5.3.2. Key actions include conducting research to understand when and how students feel most lonely and sharing these insights with UWL, producing a report with analysis and recommendations for both UWL and the SU, and launching one new community initiative per semester specifically designed to reduce loneliness and promote student connection.
- 5.6. Trustees noted the SABB Objectives update.

6. CEO Update

(Jamal El-kalawy - Chief Executive Officer)

- 6.1. CEO Update was noted as read.

6.2. This paper provides Trustees with a strategic overview of the evolving HE landscape from July to early October 2025, highlighting sector wide trends, UWL developments, and internal updates to support informed decision making by the Students' Union.

6.3. The following key areas were covered that might impact the organisation.

6.3.1. UWL Finance and Recruitment

6.3.1.1. UWL continues to face financial pressures, including a reduced OfS grant and a 10% drop in home student recruitment, though international numbers remain steady. Sector wide cost cutting measures are ongoing. Government proposals affecting international students include a 6% recruitment levy and visa changes, yet demand remains strong due to the UK's reputation and opportunities.

6.3.2. Graduate Market

6.3.2.1. The UK graduate market is facing economic caution, with a rise in temporary roles and increased use of AI in recruitment, leading to more generic applications and longer hiring processes. Despite a modest downturn, graduate employment remains stable: 59% in full-time work, 11% part-time, 9% self-employed, 7% in further study, and 6% unemployed.

6.3.3. London Living

6.3.3.1. Students in London continue to face rising costs in rent, food, bills, and travel, with average rent at £812 per month - well above the UK average - and 7% classified as homeless. However, positive developments include the upcoming Renters Rights Bill to protect against evictions and a campaign for free bus fares for under 22s. UWL remains committed to supporting students through hardship initiatives, with cost-of-living working groups resuming and expanded staffing in the Student Money and Immigration team.

6.3.4. Internal Updates

6.3.4.1. A new Community and Engagement team has been formed within the Students' Union, merging previous teams and creating three new manager roles. UWL has appointed Professor Anthony Hilton as Deputy Vice Chancellor, responsible for academic strategy and the development of new Medical and Dental Schools. Recruitment for a Head of Research remains ongoing after an unsuccessful first round.

6.3.4.2. UWL has opened its new front entrance on St Mary's Road, though accessibility ramp issues remain due to underground electrical complications; signage and communication have been provided.

6.4. JE noted the new update since the paper was written.

6.4.1. The University of Greenwich and the University of Kent have announced a formal collaboration to create the UK's first 'super-university', named the *London and South East University Group*.

6.5. Trustees noted the CEO update.

7. Quarterly Report (Including the Risk Register Summary)

(Bradley Valva - Finance & Business Data Manager;

Presenter: Jamal El-kalawy – Chief Executive Officer)

- 7.1. The Quarterly Report was noted as read.
- 7.2. The report updates Trustees on UWLSU programme delivery, performance against KPIs, key achievements, challenges, opportunities, and financial trends.
- 7.3. Q4 highlights included major end-of-year events such as the Union Awards and Star Awards, personalised outreach efforts, enhanced course and career activities, and sustained student engagement during the exam period.
- 7.4. Each strategic objective is supported by a set of KPIs. The Q4 KPIs were assessed as follows.
- 7.5. **Overall Engagement (to date)**
- 7.6. The SU achieved 83.2% student engagement by year-end, exceeding the 2024/25 KPI and marking a 12% year-on-year increase.
- 7.7. **Overall Satisfaction/NSS**
 - 7.7.1. UWLSU maintained its 2nd place nationally and 1st in London for NSS results, continuing a 10-year streak.
- 7.8. **Student Voice**
 - 7.8.1. 96% of courses had elected student reps this year, ensuring broad representation.
- 7.9. **Community and Belonging**
 - 7.9.1. 144 students engaged in networks such as ACE, Women's, LGBTQ+, and more. Sports and societies saw a 10% YoY increase, with new additions like Table Tennis, Badminton, and societies including Business, Law, and Sikh.
- 7.10. **Advice and Outreach**
 - 7.10.1. In Q4, the Advice Service opened 217 new cases, mainly related to mitigation and appeals, with 94% of students reporting satisfaction.
- 7.11. **Communications**
 - 7.11.1. The Summer Giveaway engaged 437 students, helping maintain social media presence during quieter periods. UWLSU's social media followers rose 18% across platforms, keeping pace with the 2028 KPI target.
- 7.12. **Central Services and HR**
 - 7.12.1. The SU achieved a 98% response rate in the annual staff survey, reflecting strong staff engagement.
- 7.13. **Student Staff**
 - 7.13.1. The 2025 student staff survey saw a fivefold increase in responses, with 93% recommending UWLSU as a great place to work.
- 7.14. **Commercial Services KPIs**
 - 7.14.1. Commercial outlets served over 108,000 customers this year, with Freddies hosting new community building events.
- 7.15. **Quality Assurance**
 - 7.15.1. The Union's outlets maintained high standards, earning a 5-star food hygiene rating after implementing inspection recommendations.
- 7.16. **Finance KPIs**
 - 7.16.1. The annual audit was completed in Q2 with a clean result and no major recommendations.
- 7.17. **Key Deliverables for Next Quarter**
 - 7.17.1. Key deliverables for Q1 2025/26 include the Welcome Programme (Big Conversation and social events), launch of community, career, and course enhancing activities, NSS planning focused on the least satisfied schools,

autumn Course Rep elections, and the resumption of societies and sports groups.

7.18. Trustees noted the Quarterly report.

8. Management Accounts

(Hamna Azam – Deputy CEO)

8.1. The Management Accounts report was noted as read.

8.2. Grant income met expectations. Commercial income surpassed revised targets, driven by successful graduation events, catering, and the Festival of Wellbeing. Graduation merchandise performed particularly well, doubling projected income. A new product range is in development, focusing on affordability and sustainable margins.

8.3. All planned activities were delivered on schedule.

8.4. The audit began in the third week of September. The SU is working closely with UWL Finance to provide documentation and respond to queries.

8.5. Trustees noted the Management Accounts report.

9. Annual Compliance Management Review

(Jess Smith – Head of Membership)

9.1. Annual Compliance Management Review was noted as read.

9.2. By adhering to the plan and the Risk Register, the Union aims to prevent unlawful incidents and maintain smooth operations. The report includes the most recent version of the Compliance Management Plan along with recommended actions to support ongoing legal compliance.

9.3. A new risk has been identified relating to changes in government immigration policy.

9.3.1. Changes to student visa policies and post-study work routes pose a new risk to international student recruitment. Proposed changes include reducing the post-study work visa from two years to 18 months, introducing stricter language requirements, and raising salary thresholds. These may lead to lower university income, reduced SU funding, decreased student engagement, and compliance challenges. There is also a risk that international students may feel unsupported or unfairly treated, potentially resulting in lower satisfaction, disengagement, or formal complaints.

9.4. UWL is closely monitoring developments in AI legislation and has robust systems in place to ensure compliance. As a result, AI is no longer considered a strategic risk. AI tools are being integrated into teaching across modules. UWLSU also ensures that, where AI may be used in recruitment processes, fairness is maintained and all appointments are based on merit.

9.5. Trustees approved the report.

10. Annual Risk Register Review

(Monika Sowa – Governance Officer)

- 10.1. Annual Risk Register Review was noted as read.
- 10.2. This report outlines the policies and procedures UWLSU has in place to manage and reduce organisational risk in accordance with legal requirements, sector guidance, and University policy. It provides Trustees with assurance that risks are being actively monitored and mitigated.
- 10.3. Two new risks have been identified: International Crisis & the Government's approach to immigration.
 - 10.3.1. Ongoing global conflicts continue to impact students emotionally and financially. These challenges may affect student wellbeing, engagement, and their ability to fully participate in university life.
 - 10.3.2. Recent changes to student visa policies and post-study work routes may lead to a decline in international student recruitment. This poses risks such as reduced university income, a smaller SU budget, lower student engagement, and increased compliance challenges. Additionally, international students may feel unsupported or unfairly treated, potentially resulting in lower satisfaction, disengagement, or formal complaints. A drop in international student numbers could further impact funding and institutional sustainability.
- 10.4. Trustees approved the report.

11. NSS Analysis Report [Presentation]

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

- 11.1. JE presented the National Student Survey (NSS) analysis findings.
- 11.2. **NSS Results and Rankings YoY Comparison**
 - 11.2.1. In 2025, UWL held its 6th place ranking in England and continued to lead as 1st in London. Notably, the student satisfaction score rose to 86%, marking a 2% increase from the previous year.
- 11.3. **NSS SU Results and Rankings**
 - 11.3.1. Notably, UWLSU has maintained its position as the top-ranked Student Union in London for ten consecutive years, underscoring its consistent excellence in student representation and experience.
- 11.4. **NSS SU School Results YoY Comparison (2024 vs. 2025)**
 - 11.4.1. Notably, the London College of Music (LCM) saw the most significant improvement, rising by 20.5% from 59.2% to 79.7%, indicating substantial progress in student engagement and support. College of Nursing, Midwifery and Healthcare (CNMH) also showed a strong increase of 5.7%, while School of Law (SOL) improved by 8.3%, reaching a 97.2% satisfaction rate. Conversely, some schools experienced slight declines, such as the London School of Film, Media and Design (LSFMD) with a 6.3% drop and London Geller College of Hospitality and Tourism (LGCHT) with a 2.5% decrease. Despite these fluctuations, the overall satisfaction across all schools rose from 83.7% in 2024 to 86.2% in 2025, reflecting a 2.5% improvement and reinforcing the Student Union's continued commitment to enhancing the student experience.
- 11.5. **Registered Provider Data Rank by Theme**
 - 11.5.1. The comparative analysis of registered provider data across key NSS themes places the UWL in a strong position nationally. UWL ranks competitively across

categories such as Assessment and Feedback, Academic Support, Learning Opportunities, and Student Voice, with particularly high performance in Students' Union and Student Voice.

11.6. Registered Provider Data Rank by Theme London

11.6.1. UWL ranks 1st in London for Assessment and Feedback, Learning Opportunities, Students' Union, Free Speech, and Teaching on My Course, reflecting its strong academic delivery and student support. It also ranks 2nd in Organisation and Management and Mental Wellbeing Support, and 3rd in Academic Support, with a 4th place in Learning Resources.

11.7. Top Five Subjects Positive Impact (>30 Respondents)

11.7.1. Education leads with an outstanding 96.7%, followed by Mental Health Nursing at 91.1%, and Psychology at 90.7%. Biomedical Sciences ranks fourth with 90.4%, and Law completes the top five at 89%.

11.8. Top Five Subjects Negative Impact (>30 Respondents)

11.8.1. Design Studies ranked lowest at 66.3%, followed by Drama at 67.7%, and Civil Engineering at 76.9%. Sociology and Music also appeared in the bottom five, with scores of 82.7% and 83.5% respectively.

11.9. Trustees noted the report.

12. Wellbeing Strategy Review

(Jamal El-kalawy – Chief Executive Officer)

12.1. Wellbeing Strategy Review was noted as read.

12.2. As part of the 2024-2028 strategic plan, wellbeing has been identified as a core pillar of student support at the UWL and UWLSU, alongside Attainment, Employability, Engagement, and Community. Recognising the importance of being a truly student focused organisation, UWLSU is committed to championing wellbeing through a structured and measurable approach.

12.3. Recognising the interchangeable use of terms like health, wellness, and wellbeing, UWLSU chose to adopt the broader term *Wellbeing* for consistency and clarity. Drawing on the World Health Organisation's definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, the team critically examined various health and wellbeing models.

12.4. To guide its wellbeing strategy, UWLSU selected Peggy Swarbrick's Eight Dimensions of Wellness (2006) as the foundational model. This framework was chosen for its relevance to student life and its use of accessible, relatable language. The eight dimensions: Emotional, Financial, Social, Spiritual, Occupational, Physical, Intellectual, and Environmental offer a holistic view of wellbeing, emphasising interconnectedness and balance.

12.5. UWLSU identified three key priority areas for further development: Physical, Social, and Environmental Wellness. While areas like Intellectual, Financial, Emotional, and Spiritual Wellness are already well-supported through university services, the priority areas represent opportunities for innovation and growth.

12.6. The wellbeing strategy is guided by a Theory of Change model, which ensures that all actions remain aligned with UWLSU's broader strategic direction and objectives. This approach enables flexibility and responsiveness, allowing the

strategy to evolve based on student feedback, emerging wellbeing themes, and new insights.

12.7. Trustees approved the Wellbeing Strategy.

13. Pay Policy

(Katherine Hyde – HR Manager;

Presenter: Hamna Azam – Deputy CEO)

13.1. Pay Policy was taken as read.

13.2. Employing staff is a key area of risk for the Students' Union, both in terms of legal compliance and operational effectiveness.

13.3. UWLSU is committed to fair, transparent, and equitable pay practices that recognise staff contributions and align with organisational priorities. The new pay policy outlines principles and procedures for pay progression, including criteria for reviewing pay and compensating additional duties. It applies to all permanent staff who meet the eligibility criteria or take on extra responsibilities. The policy introduces a structured review schedule in February and August and requires Senior Management Team approval for all pay changes. It also details the steps for employees and managers to follow and should be read alongside the UWLSU Competency Framework and Staff Handbook.

13.4. Trustees approved the Pay Policy.

14. Leadership Actions [Update] – Approve

(Jamal El-kalawy – Chief Executive Officer)

14.1. Leadership Actions Update was taken as read.

14.2. Following a review of the NSS Staff Satisfaction Survey, a decline in leadership perception was noted, with 'leads by example' down 13% and 'in touch with staff views' down 6%, now falling below benchmark medians. In response, the Trustee Board tasked the Leadership Group with developing tangible actions. SMT team conducted research across various leadership models, held internal discussions, and created action plans with defined timeframes and approaches to address the concerns.

14.3. As part of the leadership improvement actions, SMT developed and distributed a Leadership Survey to gather staff views on what they value in leaders. JE confirmed the survey has been completed and noted that the results will provide a valuable overview to inform future leadership development.

14.4. A formal review of the action plan will take place at the summer Trustee Board meeting, following the outcomes of the NUS Staff Satisfaction Survey. In the meantime, SMT will monitor progress and timescales throughout the year to ensure the timely implementation of all actions.

14.5. Trustees approved the Leadership Actions.

15. Any Other Business

- 15.1. HA informed the group that Trustee verification via Companies House is now a mandatory annual process. Trustees will receive an email notification, and although the official deadline is in July, the aim is to complete the process as early as possible.
- 15.2. The Board collectively expressed their thanks to Aranza Victorino for her valuable contributions and engagement during her time as a Student Trustee, following her resignation from the role.

16. Conclusion

- 16.1. The meeting concluded at 18:21.
- 16.2. *Summary of actions arising:*
 - 16.2.1. Publication of pay statistics as an annual item.
- 16.3. The next Trustee Board meeting is scheduled for December 9th, 2025.