



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
STUDENTS' UNION

Trustee Board

Meeting on July 7th, 2025, 17:00
UWLSU Conference Room

Minutes

MEMBERSHIP:

Yash Arora (YA/Chair), Kevin Dickie (KD), Farimah Darbyshire (FD), Poppy Lane (PL),
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: FD, PF

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

1. Introduction

(Yash Arora - SU President)

1.1. The meeting started at 17:05.

- 1.2. YA welcomed everyone.
- 1.3. PL joined the Board for the first time.
- 1.4. Apologies were received from FD and PF.

2. **Declarations of Interests** (Yash Arora - SU President)

- 2.1. None were declared.

3. **Minutes from April 15th, 2025** (Yash Arora - SU President)

- 3.1. All actions arising from the meeting on April 15, 2025, have been completed.
- 3.2. Trustees approved the minutes from the meeting of April 15th, 2025.

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. The Sabb Objectives Update was taken as read.
- 4.2. Sabbatical Officers have between one and three advocacy priorities in areas they would like to impact within UWL.
- 4.3. The Vice-President of Activities' (TS) update is as follows.
 - 4.3.1. **Priority 1 - Promoting Physical Health and Wellbeing**
 - 4.3.1.1. Quiet hours have been introduced at the SU gym to support students with sensory sensitivities. Additionally, free personal training sessions are available for students referred by UWL's Wellbeing Team, aimed at supporting mental health and wellbeing.
 - 4.3.2. **Priority 2 - Supporting Women's Growth/Participation in Sports**
 - 4.3.2.1. Women-only fitness classes, including HIIT and MMA, have been introduced to boost confidence and accessibility, with MMA achieving record attendance.
 - 4.3.2.2. The women's basketball team has relaunched with weekly training and a small committee.
 - 4.3.2.3. The Sport Access Fund is live, used by 60% of participating women, helping reduce financial barriers.
 - 4.3.3. **Priority 3 - Breaking Down Financial Barriers to Extracurricular Participation**
 - 4.3.3.1. The 'sports closet' initiative is now live, providing students with access to essential sports gear.
 - 4.3.3.2. Kit donations have come from local clubs (i.e. Ealing Trailfinders) and also alumni.
- 4.4. The Vice-President of Education' (AS) update is as follows.
 - 4.4.1. **Priority 1 - Integration of Life Skills**

- 4.4.1.1. Planning is underway for a 'Professional Cupboard' initiative to provide students with formal wear for interviews and events. This project is being developed in collaboration with UWL Careers and Volunteering.
- 4.4.1.2. A public speaking workshop, led by a London College of Music (LCM) lecturer, is scheduled for the start of the next academic year.
- 4.4.1.3. AS has also supported UWL's English Social Cafes, which saw a 40% increase in attendance following SU promotional efforts.
- 4.4.2. **Priority 2 - Supporting Students with a Study Life Balance**
 - 4.4.2.1. Community Breakfast events have been introduced across campuses with nutritional input from LGCHT staff. AS is in discussions with LGCHT to offer workshops where students can learn basic food preparation skills.
 - 4.4.2.2. AS is also working with CLBS to expand their student awards into a university wide 'Student Excellence Week' and is collaborating with the UWL Advice Team to raise awareness of financial support options.
- 4.4.3. **Priority 3 - Creating Cross Cultural Learning Opportunities**
 - 4.4.3.1. AS is planning to launch language and cultural clubs to encourage the sharing of diverse perspectives.
 - 4.4.3.2. AS also supported several cultural immersion events, including the Nepalese New Year, Eurasian Night, and the Bollywood Ball, fostering cross cultural engagement among students.
- 4.5. The President's (YA) update is as follows.
 - 4.5.1. **Priority 1 - Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention**
 - 4.5.1.1. YA is continuing the legacy of initiatives started by Stella and Maisie.
 - 4.5.1.2. YA is actively working with the Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Group to ensure continuity beyond his term and is drafting a handover plan.
 - 4.5.1.3. A new student safety awareness campaign is being developed for the upcoming academic year.
 - 4.5.2. **Priority 2 - Enriching Student Experience in London**
 - 4.5.2.1. YA is contributing to the UWL Cost of Living working group and promoting subsidised gown hire.
 - 4.5.2.2. YA is working with the Student Experience team to raise awareness about unsafe delivery work among international students and is developing a financial map for inclusion in the student visa guide.
 - 4.5.2.3. YA also supported student trips to Oxford and Brighton, and the Community Cupboard has seen increased usage, with UWL staff now able to contribute via monthly salary deductions.
 - 4.5.3. **Priority 3 - Building Student Communities**
 - 4.5.3.1. YA is planning a campaign for South Asian Heritage Month (18 July – 17 August) to celebrate South Asian cultures and identities.
 - 4.5.3.2. Plans are underway to develop guidance for cultural events introduced during YA's term, including Holi, Diwali, Garba Night, and Ramadan Mubarak.
 - 4.5.3.3. 'Campus Chats' initiative continues to engage students across campuses.
 - 4.5.4. KD thanked the team for their commitment and praised their work.
- 4.6. Trustees noted the report.

5. CEO Update

(Tye McMahon - Chief Executive Officer)

- 5.1. The CEO Update was taken as read.
- 5.2. This paper provides Trustees with a detailed overview of the evolving strategic environment in which the Students' Union operates. It reflects developments from April to early June 2025, highlighting sector-wide trends, local developments at UWL, and internal matters that shape our work.
- 5.3. The following key areas were covered that might impact the organisation.
 - 5.3.1. Financial Pressures on UK Universities
 - 5.3.2. International Student Dynamics
 - 5.3.3. Post Election Policy Environment
 - 5.3.4. Cost of Living Pressures on Students
 - 5.3.5. Student Democracy and Participation
 - 5.3.6. Local Opportunities and Internal Updates
 - 5.3.7. Staffing Changes
- 5.4. The Group noted the report.

6. Quarterly Report (Including the Risk Register Summary)

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

- 6.1. The Quarterly Report was noted as read.
- 6.2. KD congratulated the SU on the strong engagement outcomes.
- 6.3. JE remarked that the figures presented are the highest recorded for many years.
- 6.4. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the delivery of the UWLSU programmes, including progress against key performance indicators (KPIs), notable achievements, challenges and opportunities, and financial forecasts and trends.
- 6.5. Quarter 3 was marked by strong student engagement, driven by initiatives such as the welcoming Big Conversation, a diverse Freshers programme, CEA's, outreach activities, the annual Varsity event and Sabbatical Officer election.
- 6.6. Each strategic objective is supported by a set of KPIs. The Q3 KPIs were assessed as follows.
 - 6.6.1. Overall Engagement (to date)
 - 6.6.2. Overall Satisfaction and NSS
 - 6.6.3. Student Voice
 - 6.6.4. Community and Belonging
 - 6.6.5. Advise and Outreach
 - 6.6.6. Communications
 - 6.6.7. Central Services and HR
 - 6.6.8. Student Staff
 - 6.6.9. Commercial Services KPIs
 - 6.6.10. Quality Assurance
 - 6.6.11. Finance KPIs
- 6.7. Key Deliverables for Next Quarter

- 6.7.1. Key Q4 deliverables include the Union and Star Awards ceremonies, summer exam engagement, presentation of 2025/26 project plans, and induction of the new sabbatical team.

6.8. Trustees noted the report.

7. Management Accounts

(Hamna Azam - Head of Finance & HR)

- 7.1. The Management Accounts report was noted as read.
- 7.2. May marked the successful rollout of exam engagement and course and career based activities, which are set to extend into the summer term. Sustained financial oversight and adaptive planning remain key to delivering the forecasted surplus.
- 7.3. The grant income remains on target, and there are no expected variations to the full-year forecast.
- 7.4. Lower campus traffic and reduced student spending have led to a revised commercial forecast. Catering demand has increased, and other income streams remain on track. The team is focused on refining offerings and improving service efficiency based on sector trends.
- 7.5. A year-end operating surplus remains achievable, supported by adaptive commercial strategies, improved process efficiencies, and student-led initiatives responsive to current engagement trends.
- 7.6. KD praised the Finance team for its remarkable and consistent performance.
- 7.7. Trustees noted the report.

8. Dates for the Following Year

(Monika Sowa – Governance Officer)

- 8.1. 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 cycles.
- 8.2. 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 needed.
- 8.3. The Board approved the Trustee Board Dates and Items of Business 2025-2025.

9. Election Report

(Jamal El-kalawy – Head of Membership)

- 9.1. The Election report was taken as read.
- 9.2. This report reviews the election process and recommends future improvements. It has been formally signed off by Peter Robertson, NUS Charity Director and independent Returning Officer, confirming the election and count process conducted as fair and accurate.
- 9.3. The following elections were declared by the Returning Officer:
 - 9.3.1. **President:** Namira Shrestha

- 9.3.2. **Vice-President Education:** Adarsh Sangeetha
- 9.3.3. **Vice President Student Activities and Participation:** Sanaa Kazi
- 9.4. Candidates received in person training from JE and Jess Smith (Advocacy and Representation Manager), covering election rules, logistics, and campaign strategies.
- 9.5. UWLSU used the MSL online voting system, accessible 24/7 during the voting period. Physical voting booths with iPads were staffed at SMR, Paragon, and Reading campuses during set hours.
- 9.6. A total of 2,804 students voted. The MSL system was securely linked to the University's database, ensuring only current student members could vote.
- 9.7. All 28 election complaints were handled by the Deputy Returning Officer and Jess Smith via the elections email. Issues ranged from phone use and campaign team sizes to proximity rules, resulting in varying sanctions. One candidate was disqualified before voting closed, with confirmation from the Returning Officer.
- 9.8. Trustees noted the Election Report.

10. Final Budget and KPIs for Approval for 2025/26

(Tye McMahon - Chief Executive Officer)

- 10.1. The Final Budget and KPIs for 2025/26 were noted as read.
- 10.2. Detailed business planning for the upcoming academic year has been completed in consultation with UWL, aligning budgets and KPIs with shared strategic goals.
- 10.3. Despite sector-wide volatility, the SU continues to outperform through collaboration, agility, and strategic focus. Highlights include a Top 3 national NSS ranking and 1st in London, record student engagement, and strong responses to growing international student numbers.
- 10.4. The new 5-year strategy and completed planning across all core activities position the SU well for continued impact and adaptability.
- 10.5. Budget planning includes a cautious forecast of a 10-15% drop in new student intake, helping align SU spending with projected demand and mitigate risk. Internal cost pressures are being managed, with flexibility to adjust plans if recruitment falls short.
- 10.6. The SU will adopt high level KPIs aligned with its 5-year strategy, with quarterly reporting to Trustees and UWL. Proposed KPIs, strategic alignment, and year on year comparisons have been outlined separately.
- 10.7. Quarterly budget reviews with UWL will support collaborative risk management, with flexibility to scale plans down if needed. The SU remains ready to expand activities in response to rising student needs or emerging opportunities, in alignment with UWL priorities.
- 10.8. Trustees approved the Budget and KPIs for 2025/26.

11. Student Staff Engagement Survey Report

(Tye McMahon - Chief Executive Officer;

Presenter: Hamna Azam – Head of Finance & HR)

- 11.1. The Student Staff Engagement Survey Report was taken as read.
- 11.2. This annual survey captures the views and experiences of student staff working across key business areas at the Students' Union.
- 11.3. The 2025 annual student staff survey saw a fivefold increase in participation, with 57 responses, driven by a targeted engagement campaign. The survey included 19 quantitative and 2 open-text questions, covering team culture, management, support, training, pay, and wellbeing.
- 11.4. The 2025 staff survey received 57 responses out of 83 student staff, achieving a strong response rate of 68.67%. Respondents represented key operational teams: Commercial, Gym, SU Crew, School Reps, and Front of House. This feedback is vital for shaping staff support, management practices, and the overall working culture at the Students' Union.
- 11.5. The Headline Findings from the 2025 Student Staff Survey are as follows:
 - 11.5.1. **Team Culture:** 89.5% of student staff agreed that colleagues trust and respect each other.
 - 11.5.2. **Management:** 94.7% trust and respect their manager; 87.7% said their manager fosters good team spirit.
 - 11.5.3. **Skill Development:** 100% felt their role helped develop career relevant skills.
 - 11.5.4. **Wellbeing Support:** 91.2% feel supported in their wellbeing at work.
 - 11.5.5. **Overall Satisfaction:** 93% would recommend the organisation as a good place to work.
- 11.6. The survey highlights strong team spirit, effective management, and valuable staff development across the SU. It also identifies practical areas for improvement in training, progression, and resources. These insights reinforce the importance of student staff and provide a solid foundation for the continued enhancement of the SU's working culture.
- 11.7. Trustees noted the report.

12. NUS Staff Engagement Survey 2025

(Author: Katherine Hyde – HR Manager;

Presenter: Hamna Azam – Head of Finance & HR)

- 12.1. The NUS Staff Engagement Survey 2025 was noted as read.
- 12.2. UWLSU has conducted annual staff engagement surveys for over a decade to understand staff experience and support a responsive and evolving organisational culture.
- 12.3. The survey is externally administered by Agenda Consulting, in partnership with NUS and Atkinson HR, and benchmarked against peer students' unions and the wider charity sector.
- 12.4. The 2025 staff engagement survey achieved a 98% response rate (40 out of 41 staff members), reflecting strong participation. Results show progress in learning, development, and organisational benefits, with challenges in workload, feedback, culture, and leadership visibility. UWLSU performs strongly in values, team cohesion and development opportunities compared to sector benchmarks.
- 12.5. UWLSU reflects many national workforce trends but is well positioned to respond. Despite the focus required in leadership visibility, role clarity, and staff

retention, UWLSU's strong values, a positive development culture, and strong EDI performance provide a solid foundation.

12.6. Trustees noted the report.

13. Opportunity to Collaborate: Richmond American University

(Rob Carr – Head of Commercial Operations)

13.1. The Opportunity to Collaborate with Richmond American University report was noted as read.

13.2. RC presented a proposal outlining a potential collaboration between UWLSU and Richmond American University London. The initiative would offer associate level membership to Richmond students, enabling their participation in UWLSU student groups.

13.3. The proposed partnership offers UWLSU modest revenue diversification through associate membership fees, supports the sustainability of clubs and societies by boosting participation, and aligns strategically with UWLSU's goals to collaborate locally and extend influence beyond UWL.

13.4. Trustees approved the report.

14. Any Other Business:

14.1. TM confirmed this is the last meeting he will attend in the capacity of CEO.

14.2. YA reflected that serving as SU President has positively impacted his personal and professional development. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity and enjoyment in working with the team.

14.3. TS noted that his involvement in project planning and budgeting, alongside the senior management team, has equipped him with valuable skills for future responsibilities.

15. Conclusion:

15.1. The meeting concluded at 18:35.

15.2. An action plan is to be prepared for the next meeting, detailing steps taken to improve leadership scores.

15.3. The next meeting is scheduled for 7th October 2025, in line with the approved Trustee Board Dates for 2025-2026.