

LU Students' Union: President's Report: January 2026

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This paper outlines the recent activities of Lancaster University Students' Union (LUSU) and its four sabbatical officers since the last meeting of Council.

2. Union Update

- 2.1. Since the last meeting of Council, the President, Rory, has been supporting College JCRs to deliver their annual Winter Ball events. This year, due to rising costs of chartering coaches, alongside tightening student finances, most colleges decided to book venues within the city centre to host their events to keep ticket prices low; this came with the caveat of increasing the workload on our student volunteers who had to source catering, entertainment, and decorations themselves where previously, at further away venues, this had been presented as a package offering. LUSU played its part in keeping costs down as we were able to provide technical equipment (sound and lighting) for these events.
- 2.2. This year the Winter Balls were host to nearly 1,500 students, with every event a sellout within a matter of minutes. These kinds of activities, which are planned and delivered by student volunteers, and which make up a huge part of the character of Lancaster University, are the most at risk of suffering as students are be pushed further into time poverty. A massive part of the work we do at the Students' Union when we are pushing for initiatives to reduce cost of living burdens on students is to see these aspects of university life continue, and to keep university fun for everyone.
- 2.3. In the interest of reducing cost of living burdens, the President is set to have meetings with the campus laundry facility provider, Circuit Laundry, and the campus accommodation provider, UPP Ltd, later this term to see what can be done by these external companies to ease pressures off students in a way that won't hit the University's or Union's pockets. Continued support from the University in this pursuit is greatly valued.
- 2.4. After the University committed £15,000 to the sports access fund earlier in the year, the Activities Officer, Emily, has continued talks to try and secure sustainability of this fund for future years. We are incredibly grateful to the external donor who has kindly given £146,000 to the University, and which has been subsequently allocated to ensuring the access fund can continue securely for the next few years under the University's Opportunities and Access Fund offering. Work is still ongoing to further secure sustainability of the fund.

- 2.5. The Education Officer, Liz, has been supporting PGR students in FHASS, alongside the FHASS PGR Faculty Representative, to have their voices heard after they were moved without effective consultation to the new PGR Hub in Bowland Annex. Council will be aware of this matter, and we are pleased to see work being done by the University to understand what led to this unpopular move, and rectify issues being identified by those affected. We are still working towards a solution borne from meaningful consultation with PGR students and which allows them to thrive as students at Lancaster.
- 2.6. The Education Officer is also working with the Library to investigate the potential to develop a new sensory decompression space on campus, aligning with work being done by the Wellbeing Officer, Leah, and the Accessibility Community, one of our student Liberation groups, to identify areas for designated quiet spaces across campus. These spaces are intended to serve as places of respite for neurodivergent and disabled students who may need somewhere to duck into in between lectures if they live off campus or around the perimeter. We are grateful to the Library staff, and to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for their support in this work.
- 2.7. Since the submission of the last paper to Council, the Wellbeing Officer has been working on improving the inclusivity of campus here at Lancaster, tackling night-time safety, and participating in consultations on the redesign of student-facing services.
- 2.8. On inclusivity, the Wellbeing Officer has been working closely with our LGBTQ+ community Liberation and Campaigns Officer (LCO) on navigating the Supreme Court ruling on the definitions of sex and gender and looking into ways to mitigate the impact on our trans community here at Lancaster. Together they have begun to have conversations with the university's EDI Team and members of the Wellbeing Service on the prospect of LGBTQ+ accommodation on campus. The proposal was put forward in these initial conversations as a means of avoiding exclusionary policy regarding single-sex accommodation and as a way of safeguarding against any future hostile legislation towards the trans community. The proposal will be brought more formally to Student Experience Committee. Alongside this, our LGBTQ+ LCO has been working on protecting trans+ inclusion in sport alongside the Activities Officer. They are advocating for a greater number of accessible, gender-neutral changing facilities in the sports centre.
- 2.9. In the realm of nighttime safety, the Wellbeing Officer has been gathering information on where in town students feel unsafe as a result of poor lighting. By collecting qualitative data on the experiences that students have had in the city alongside a map onto which students have been placing stickers on areas that are problematic, they have created a visual representation of feelings of unsafety in Lancaster. With plans to send the information to the city council, the Wellbeing Officer hopes to focus on improving lighting in student residential areas in a way that is sustainable.

- 2.10. Finally, the Wellbeing Officer has been part of the focus groups with students regarding the redesign of student-facing services. The consultations were productive spaces for students to share both positive and negative feedback on the current services in the hopes that the redesign will centre the student experience. We hope to see these consultations continue throughout the process of LU Future and for any further impactful decision-making.
- 2.11. The 2nd of December was the second sitting of Union Assembly of the academic year. Union Assembly is the political governing body of the Students' Union with student representation from Colleges, sports clubs, societies, academic faculties, and Liberation groups. Among the items discussed was a motion in support of the strikes from Lancaster student campaign group *Students Support the Strikes*. **This motion passed**, giving LUSU, for the next three years, mandate from the student body to:
- Stand in solidarity with recognised trade unions in any future disputes regarding employment, workload, and department closures related to LU Future.
 - Publicly support any industrial action that is taken by recognised trade unions in response to any future disputes regarding employment, workload, and department closures related to LU Future.
- 2.12. The 3rd and 4th December saw the LUSU Christmas Markets in Alexandra Square. Over the two days, we had over 30 local vendors serving festive food, crafts, and clothes to students, staff, and beyond, as well as screenings of Christmas films on the Alexandra Square digital display board, adding some festive cheer to what can be a very dark and damp time in the North West.



The LUSU Christmas Markets 2025 brightening the LU campus

- 2.13. On 11th December 2025, LUSU hosted the North West Regional Students' Union Officer and Senior Manager Meeting, gathering representatives from across our region to discuss sector trends, campaigns, and to network. We were also joined on campus by Amira Campbell, the President of NUS UK (the National Union of Students), to hear about and influence national work being done for students.



Representatives from Students' Unions around the North West region outside the LUSU offices

3. Recommendations

3.1 Council is invited to:

- **note** the updates on the Students' Union activity.

Rory O'Ceallaigh

LU Students' Union President

06 January 2026