



UNION ASSEMBLY

Union Assembly Minutes

Agenda for the meeting held: **TUESDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2023, 3PM – 6PM**

Agenda Item 1|Introductions

Minutes of meeting 19/06/23: [Union Assembly Meeting, Minutes 19.06.23.docx](#)

No comments.

Minutes approved by Union Assembly.

Minutes of meeting 11/09/23: [Union Assembly Emergency Meeting, Minutes 11.09.23.pdf](#)

No comments

Minutes approved by Union Assembly.

Agenda Item 2 |For Discussion | Full-Time Officer Reports

President: [Union Assembly Officer Report - President 07.11.23.docx](#)

Cerys Evans presented the report and the focus on explanation of the role of President found in the report.

No questions.

VP Education: [Union Assembly Officer Report - VP Education 07.11.23.docx](#)

Sam Hedges, VP Education 23/24, was not present at the meeting.

Cerys Evans presented the report in Sam's absence.

Thomas Cross – how big is the scope of CTP? Do you believe it is going to be comprehensive?

Cerys Evans – I have just met the Vice-Chancellor to discuss his vision for CTP. We offer more courses than an institutions of our size, we have 16,000 different pathways students' can take. This is something University want to review as this makes standardisation of the student experience difficult. Also want to look at persistent issues in the academic experience rooted in protocols, practices, and pedagogy. I believe there is a genuine attempt to improve the curriculum in this project. It will make a big difference, but may take a couple of years before implementation.

Huseyn Guliyev – does CTP include AI-integration?

Cerys Evans – I don't know if this falls within CTP but I do know Lancaster is a leading institutions on this matter. We were an institution at the cutting edge of digital security, as is LUSU on use of AI in assessment. There is an AI working group in the University that does look at enhancement opportunities.

Huseyn Guliyev – as a student I didn't hear anything about the University's AI work. It would be useful for us to have the opportunity to input into discussions around the use of AI.

Cerys Evans – I can take this to the University and ask how they are involving the voice of students in this topic.

ACTION: CE to ask SH to investigate student involvement in AI.

Harrison Stewart – we met recently with senior figures in the University who showed an appetite to engage more student leaders than the FTO team.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I was taken aback to see who areas of work related to PG experience that I have not been included in as Postgraduate & Mature Officer. In future, I would like to be made aware. For the point on PGR Academic Representation, the use of “term 1” hold no relevance for PGR students.

ACTION: HS to raise inclusion of PG&Mature Officer in PG-related matters with SH.

VP Societies & Media: [Union Assembly Officer Report - VP Societies and Media 07.11.23.docx](#)

Santi Siabato Trujillo, VP Societies & Media 23/24, was not present at the meeting.

Cerys Evans presented the report in Santi's absence.

Hannah Bywood – as someone on a society executive, there has been no communication about which league I am in and who my league champion is.

Cerys Evans – I will follow that up.

ACTION: CE to follow-up with the Societies Team to ensure this message is circulated.

Rebecca Spiers – we raised this with Santi. We are discussing this at the moment as a group.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – on communications about societies, the emails are quite hard to read as they contain a lot of emojis. I would appreciate a conversation about accessibility.

Josh Newsham –

Adam Bucknall – there hasn't been a huge amount of communication about the next leagues forum. Society leaders need more notice of upcoming events.

Cerys Evans – there have been some staffing difficulties in that team. I will follow up with the Societies Team.

ACTION: CE to speak to Societies Team about communications about the upcoming Leagues Forum.

Cerys Evans – communications is something we struggle with as an organisation. We are aware of the problem. Please do keep feeding back.

Annika Budhrani – since we are pushing back re-affiliations, I have a few cultural societies who are finding difficulties as non-official LUSU societies. Could we have a waiting list on the LUSU website to show that those who are waiting for affiliations are legitimate?

Cerys Evans – I would be difficult as we have to differentiate LUSU affiliate societies.

However, this shows the importance of affiliations. We need to look at when we can re-open affiliations. I would like to hear more of your ideas on this, I can pick this up individually and speak to Societies Team.

Josh Newsham – I want to reassure you that emails went out to gauge interest. We made sure to place cultural societies at the top of the list.

VP Sport: [Union Assembly Officer Report - VP Sport 07.11.23.docx](#)

Jack Watson presented the report and need to delineate responsibilities between operational staff and VP Sport as the political lead for sport.

No questions.

VP Union Development: [Union Assembly Officer Report - VP Union Development 07.11.23.docx](#)

Harrison Stewart presented the report, thanked attendees for engaging in the revitalised Union Assembly, and thanked the Students' Union commercial services staff for their support.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I am very glad that PG Board is getting started. Please can I be given me information about PG Board as people are asking about this. For future reference, I would love to be involved in the conversation. This is a cross-Union problem.

Harrison Stewart – I didn't want to overload you, given your existing workload.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I just need information so I am informed.

Harrison Stewart – Thank you, I will do that in future.

Nathan Mooney – how confident do you feel that we will be carbon neutral by 2030?

Harrison Stewart – predecessor did not initiate audit as planned. I know that it will happen in next couple of months. We set carbon neutrality goals in 2019. I am confident that goal can be met and we can improve with plan that comes from the audit.

Thomas Cross – the commercial aspect of Sugarhouse has been diversified, which is great, however the DJs should also be diversified.

Harrison Stewart – myself and Hana Dodsworth have shared our concern about this. I have been told there are going to be more female DJs. It is important that people feel represented in the people running the nights out.

Matthew Lamb – how much will in cost to rebrand Central?

Harrison Stewart – We appointed a new Head of Commercial Services. We are expecting to generate more income based off the rebrand.

Hannah Bywood – Society Saturdays are great. For non-drinkers and non-drinking societies, what can we get out from the initiative?

Harrison Stewart – I think we should be looking for alternatives for sober societies and non-drinkers. If you have ideas, please do share them. We will talk to our Events Team and Sugarhouse Team to discussion options.

Adam Bucknall – this is something we are due to discuss at the next Societies Forum.

VP Welfare: [Union Assembly Officer Report - VP Welfare 07.11.23.docx](#)

Josh Newsham presented the report and highlighted the Mental Health Charter.

Thomas Cross – what form will your Harm Reduction campaign take?

Josh Newsham – focus will be on peer-support for those with friends, housemates, or others dealing with addiction. Undertaking some insight work soon and have been lobbying the University. The University has changed provider for mental health and wellbeing support, part of this package in specialist drugs and alcohol support. Now moving more in to educational and empowerment activity.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I want to raise to Union Assembly that the Renter Reform Bill has been delayed again. We need to pay attention to no-fault evictions as the Bill is amended.

Josh Newsham – We are aware of this and work with externals for support on policy matters, including WonkHE. This impacts a lot of students' lives. I am working with Cerys on housing advocacy to help students understand what their rights are currently before the Bill coming into effect.

Cerys Evans – Harrison Stewart and I are also directors of SU Living. This is something we are aware of and working on as an organisation.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – no-fault evictions have always been an issue for students. We should be putting more of a spotlight on the need to change tenancy every 12 months. That is the model that SU Living uses.

Josh Newsham – this is something that hasn't been brought into the political spotlight for students. I know NUS are doing work on this and there is a lot of debate in the student movement. I think it would also be useful for this assembly to have that debate and discussion on what the Students' Union's campaigning stance should be.

Hannah Bywood – I have seen that you have done the Mental Health Charter. Lots of academic staff are not empathetic or understanding of students' mental health issues. In my department, the Academic Advisors often feel tone-deaf.

Josh Newsham – the University is very weak on academic support. I think this is the experience of a lot of students. The Well-being Service has re-structured to provide support in academic departments and a lot of processes is being centralise to ensure consistency.

Nathan Mooney – are there plans in-place in response to increases to on-campus rent. In Lonsdale, our rent has increased dramatically over the last few years.

Josh Newsham – this will be focus for the Housing campaign, the political part of the campaign.

Cerys Evans – University rent increased by 14% this year, the year before it was 5%, year before that 1%. When I saw this, I was floored. I don't know how we can expect students to foot this bill, with lack of growth in the maintenance the loan. This is something we care deeply about. We want the University to be haven for students. We can do work to tell the University to do better. We are currently working out how best to frame it as a campaign as a "critical friend" to the University.

Aisha Nassor – Cartmell rent has gone up from £147 to £178 a week. You expect the quality to go up with prices, but this is not the case.

Josh Newsham – students are footing the bill for the University's increased cost. We are seeing a lot of students who are restricted by the College system in where they can live on-campus. How much appetite in the student body is there to campaign on this? It is great to hear from you and other College Presidents on this matter. We could put this as a discussion point on the agenda for the next meeting. We are trying to build data as a basis for future campaign activity.

Sowmya Chandupatla – I am really concerned how the University has increased the price without informing students first. I would like to know why they have increased so much. On a separate point, LUSU gave us separate budgets for Lent Term for wellbeing activity; is this happening again?

Cerys Evans – the reason the rent is always increasing. Most of the accommodation on campus is not owned by the University, this contract means that prices change. The question we would like to pose to the University is if it is fair that students bear the cost of inflation. Is your accommodation worth 25% more than before the pandemic? Your Students' Union cares and it is something we are keen to bring back to Union Assembly.

Josh Newsham – as far as I know, the way budgets work has changed for JCRs. This meant that budgets were given in a lump-sum to give JCRs more control rather than ring-fenced pots of money. Can we take this conversation away with all Colleges and look at standardising the budget and best way of procuring sexual health products.

Josh Newsham – on sober socials, our JCRs and student groups did a lot of work to deliver the most sober Welcome Week events in our history. I see this as a venue problem, more social spaces on-campus are commercial and licenced venues. There is more to do, but we would give ourselves credit for our work so far.

Agenda Item 3 |For Discussion | Arrangements for the Recruitment of Union Assembly Chair

Coversheet: [Union Assembly Paper - Appointment Process of Union Assembly Chair.docx](#)

Terms of Reference: [Recruitment of UA Chair and Deputy Chair, Terms of Reference.docx](#)

Job Description: [UA Chair Job Description.docx](#)

Selection Criteria: [UA Chair Selection Criteria.docx](#)

Harrison Stewart presented the paper.

No questions or comments.

Agenda Item 4 |For Information | LUSU Report to University Council

Report: [Union Assembly Paper - LUSU Report to University Council 07.11.23.docx](#)

Cerys Evans presented the paper and explained University Council and the nature of the report. Cerys explained her desire to provide some transparency by sharing this report with Union Assembly, though the meeting of University Council it was submitted to has now passed.

Harrison Stewart – thanked Cerys Evans for the paper.

Cerys Evans – I get to submit a report to every Council meeting. I would like Union Assembly to have the opportunity to input into my future reports. If there is something you would like included, please let me know. If deadline aligns, I will bring future reports to Union Assembly meetings.

Harrison Stewart – University always ask where evidence or argument come from.

Agenda Item 4 |For Information | LUSU Report to University on Cost of Living

This is *restricted* business. The contents of this report should not be shared beyond the voting members of Union Assembly.

Report: [Union Assembly Paper - LUSU Report to University on Cost of Living 07.11.23.docx](#)

Cerys Evans presented paper and emphasised the restricted and confidential nature of its contents. Cerys explained that paper has already been sent to the University but that they would like comment or criticism from Union Assembly.

Josh Newsham – we still wanted to continue protecting our most vulnerable students through hot meals, the food bank, and sanitary products. I don't think all these proposals will be approved by the University. It is a shame that it was not re-approved by the University. Activity this year has been funded by the Students' Union, including everything through Welcome Week. We wrote a letter to the government in collaboration with the University to ask for more financial support for students, but we also need to call on the University to do more. We all need to come together to campaign for this. This is an on-going crisis and the situation is becoming more desperate. Cerys and I will continue to be transparent about the political process as we lobby the University. We will need to bring back for a more political conversation.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – a lot of things in here about free food. People's houses are very cold. Could I suggest that we also ask for an energy fund? For energy bills, for small changes to insulation, and other changes to conserve energy in student housing.

Cerys Evans – when we submitted this it was on the basis that this was for Michaelmas Term support. We had planned to submit a following proposal beyond that. We can look at lobbying and fits into the upcoming Housing campaign. It is a good point that we have not included anything around heating.

ACTION: CE to work with Students' Union staff to investigate further submissions to the University around heating support.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I don't want to let landlords off the hook but the crisis is acute.

Thomas Cross – are we providing JCRs with support to deliver this activity? Not all SCRs are able to provide support. What if the University says no?

Cerys Evans – approach with the hot food proposals gives the University lots of different options to fund, so they can fund it where they want it. Discussions will be had about the practicalities of delivery when approved, we are so not making concrete plans. We don't know if it will be approved or not. If not approved, we would have to look at next steps. My hope is that we will get a reasonable amount of funding for some parts of the proposal. There would be space for us to critical. If they say no to everything we will have a much stronger response.

Nathan Mooney – I know there is already funding through the University, via SCRs, to provide some free food. We are already being asked to support SCRs in this activity. We should ask the University to be more transparent in the funding arrangements for these activities.

Cerys Evans – we share this frustration.

Nathan Mooney – the Students' Union are better able to make free food events a success than SCRs.

Cerys Evans – if you are offered free food, please let the FTOs know. If everything funded, and working, we could offer 4 free hot meals a week on-campus. This helps inform us of what is going on and so we can make sure all free food events are as successful and accessible as possible. I don't care if LUSU gets credit, I care if students eat.

Josh Newsham – some comments on Thomas' questions. For the final two points on the proposal, there are other spaces I can take these proposals. If not approved, we don't give up. We will continue to lobby.

Agenda Item 5 |Any Other Business

Harrison Stewart apologised to Union Assembly as three items pre-submitted so there may be no time for additional business.

Cerys Evans, Full-Time Officer Review

Cerys Evans talked Union Assembly through the *Full Time Executive Officer Bye-Law* and highlighted it as a tool to hold them to account. Cerys explained the nature of the team, and team-projects, and asked attendees for views on these activities. Cerys is looking to review the bye-law to ensure we are representing students to the best of our abilities.

Huseyn Guliyev – question related to University Council report, I think point 5.4 is very valid. I do, however, think the language is a little strong for people not accustomed to the content or topic. It is a very emotional message.

Cerys Evans – this was an intentional choice. It is a jarring section and I wanted to make Council uncomfortable to convey the reality of students' situation. Lots of Council members feel very disconnected from the students' experience. I believe this is the most effective way to make them feel something. Especially in a context where there is a lot of conversation around the positive outcomes of Welcome Week.

Thomas Cross – on-behalf of LCO's I think this is appropriate. You have my total support.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – I think language needs to be stronger.

Hannah Bywood – I think the language is appropriate.

Josh Newsham – as a member of University Council, this language is different to how we normally communicate with the University. We have to be careful not to burn bridges. In Council, the other things on the agenda often show the University and students' experience in a positive light. Council does appreciate this in the context of the agenda. This type of language is expected from a Students' Union in the context we are in.

Huseyn Guliyev, generative-AI

Huseyn Guliyev noted that their concerns about the lack of student involvement in conversation about AI in the University had already been discussed.

Nathan Mooney, ability to hold Trustee and Union Assembly positions

Nathan Mooney introduced themselves and their additional role as a Student Trustee. In the newly amended *Democracy and Elections Bye-Law* that states that student may not be able to hold a position on the Trustee Board and a position on Union Assembly. Nathan explained their personal circumstances and that they have to choose between their College and Student Trustee role. Nathan explained that they will bring a proposed change to the Bye-Law to the next meeting.

Josh Newsham – I was involved in the discussions in the changes to the Articles of Association. There was a lot of discussion around governance best practice. It was an intentional decision to separate the political decision-making body from the more operationally focused Trustee Board. We do need to explore this in more detail. I believe it is more of a question to Trustee Board than Union Assembly.

Nathan Mooney – this goes along with the inability for Union Assembly members to send people in their place, should they not be able to attend. In that context, where we can send another member of the JCR, that students are blocked from the whole role of President of a College based on their involvement in one part (Union Assembly).

Harrison Stewart – I agree and want to look into this.

ACTION: HS to draft a proposal to change the bye-laws to allow members to send proxies.

Cerys Evans – I am chair of the Trustee Board. As a charitable organisation, the Trustee Board has responsibility for the financial and legal sustainability of LUSU. I think this should be taken in the first instance to Trustee Board, happy to discuss outside of the meeting.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – asks for clarity on original point and Nathan Mooney's circumstances.

Nathan Mooney – explained circumstances.

Cerys Evans – explained context and precedent of honouring the contract of past post-holders.

Molly O'Reilly-Kime – when the PG Board roles came out, someone jokingly suggested I should run. I am interested in the moral question and the risk that LUSU could become very insular.

Cerys Evans – the most appropriate way to ask is through governance discussion at Trustee Board, then come back to Union Assembly.

Nathan Mooney – I can appreciate Molly's point. The people that run for Student Trustee roles are engaged students. All our Student Trustee are involved elsewhere in the Students' Union. However, it is right that it being the same 5 people in the room all the time doesn't work.

Harrison Stewart – thanked Union Assembly for healthy discussion.

Hannah Bywood, release of post-MAB grades

Hannah Bywood explained the recent release of delayed grades as a result of the marking and assessment boycott. There is some inevitability to future strike actions. There are lots of fallout from this as many students' results have dropped.

Harrison Stewart – Sam Hedges will be very open to discuss this outside of the meeting.

Cerys Evans – results were released on Halloween. Those on PSRB-accredited programmes, where this accreditation requires full marks, the results has been delayed. I would encourage people to reach out to our Advice service for advice and support with appeals and other matters. Yesterday it was announced that the UCU ballot for strike action did not meet quorum and means there will be no strike action in the immediate future.

Close of meeting

Harrison Stewart thanks everyone for their contributions.

Cerys Evans invited attendees to ask questions outside of the meeting.