



Student Union CONSTITUTION

Effective from 1 August 2021

Welcome to the updated Student Union Constitution.

This Constitution will take effect from 1st August 2021 and will be subject to review by United Colleges Group Board of Governors at least every three years, in accordance with the Education Act 1994.

Part II of the Education Act 1994 requires institutions to 'take steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that any Students' Union for students at the establishment operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances.'

The United Colleges Group Board of Governors recognises and supports the Students' Union (SU) as a democratically run organisation, committed to serving and representing the students and apprentices of the College. The Board of Governors will endeavour to ensure that the activities of the SU do not contravene the College's Equal Opportunities Policy nor bring the College into disrepute.

This Constitution is the basis for the SU to operate as a major vehicle for learner voice within United Colleges Group, providing a number of important learning opportunities for **active citizenship** in a real but safe environment and building a sense of **community awareness**, including:

- **voting and standing in elections;**
- **taking on representative roles;**
- **campaigning;**
- **organising student events;**
- **participation in discussion,**
- **debate and decision making on College and wider issues;**
- **working with a range of College bodies and other organisations.**

The Constitution is a formal document that sets out the activities and procedures of the SU and provides a framework for its operation. It has been developed in consultation with students and relevant staff.

The Assistant Principal, Student Services, has overall responsibility for the Constitution of the SU.

The United Colleges Group SU operates through two distinct sections associated with the Group's constituent Colleges and which are known as:

- i) The College of North West London Students' Union
- ii) City of Westminster College Students' Union

Affiliation

United Colleges Group SU will affiliate to the National Union of Students (NUS).

Any decision to disaffiliate from the NUS will be made either by the Assistant Principal, Student Services, or by a single secret ballot of the whole membership of the Students' Union. A ballot on continued affiliation must be held if at least 15% of those entitled to vote require it through a written petition. No more than one such ballot may be called in any one academic year.

1. Membership and elected bodies

All students at United Colleges Group, who are at least 16 years of age, will be members unless they ask in writing to the Assistant Principal, Student Support to opt out of membership.

2. Purposes of the Students' Union (SU)

The purposes of the SU are to:

- a) Provide a major forum for student voice and active citizenship within the College**
- b) To provide a means of consultation between students and the Senior Leadership Team**
- c) To promote and support student events**
- d) To authorise the spending of a budget to support its activities.**

3. The Student Union

The membership of the Student Union will be:

- a) The members of the SU (partly elected at the end of the Spring term and partly at the start of the following academic year)
- b) Course Representatives (also referred to as Class Reps) will be selected from all tutor groups across the College (elected at the start of the academic year).
- c) The Student Union will be supported by members of the Student Voice Officer and Student Enrichment team.

The role of the Student Union will be to:

- a) Agree the overall policy and direction of the SU
- b) Discuss issues and events of concern to the student body and consider appropriate actions
- c) Respond to requests from senior College managers for particular matters to be discussed and set up working groups as appropriate
- d) Raise the concerns of students with the student governors and senior managers.

The Student Council will comprise of the following posts (see Appendix 1 for Job Descriptions):

- a) President (x 2 post)
- b) Vice President (x 2 post)
- c) Events & Activities Officer (x 2)
- d) Student Governor (x 2 posts) elected by all students, whether Students' Union members or not)
- e) Health and Safety officer (x 2 posts)
- f) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (x 2 posts)
- g) Sports Officer (x 2 post)
- h) Campaigns Officer (x 2 posts)
- i) Promotions & Marketing Officer (x 2 posts)

- j) Student Union Officers (up to 4 posts)
- k) Higher Education Officer (x 2 posts)

5. The Election of the Student Union

- a) For posts a - k above, elections will take place at the start of the academic year, (or whenever a position becomes vacant). The new Student Union members will take up their posts on 1st October or the nearest date after that point.
- b) All students are eligible to stand for the posts and to vote if they so wish (except where specifically indicated otherwise). Candidates must present their nominations which are then proposed and seconded by the students eligible to vote
- c) Candidates will be invited to campaign for a week before the elections and to address the student body at least once
- d) The candidates will be made aware of the duties attached to each position on the Student Union
- e) The Assistant Principal, Student Support, or delegated alternative staff member has the authority to supervise the elections and act as Returning Officer (the person who makes sure the election is run according to the rules)
- f) Members of the Student Union will be elected for one year in the first instance. They may be removed from office if a majority of the Student Union vote in support of such a motion
- g) By decision of the Student Union, members will also serve on College Committees, as appropriate.

6. Meetings

- a) The Student Union will meet every four weeks on a day agreed with members and no less than six times in each academic year (i.e. meet half termly)
- b) The meetings of both bodies will be open to all students and staff who may wish to attend as observers
- c) The agenda and minutes of the previous meeting will be published to all students three College days in advance of Student Union meetings
- d) There will be a quorum (minimum number to make official decisions) of six members for Student Union meetings
- e) If a member of the SU is absent from three consecutive meetings, then he/she will be required to justify the absence at the next meeting. The rest of the SU then has the right to decide, by majority vote, whether to ask that particular member to stand down from the Student Union
- f) A designated staff member will be a member of the Student Union ex-officio (as they are a representative of the College). The Principal and the Assistant Principal, Student Support, may attend any Student Union

7. Student Union Resolutions and Services

- a) Resolutions of the Student Union will be by simple majority vote of the student members present only. The President or Vice President will have the casting vote. (if numbers of votes are tied then they have the final vote)
- b) No student will be disadvantaged in access to services provided by the SU or the College by reason of not having exercised his/her right to vote in the elections.

8. Complaints

Please refer to United Colleges Group Complaints Policy and Procedures.

9. The Annual Impact Report

An Annual Impact Report will be prepared by the Student Voice Officer at the end of their term of office and presented to the Assistant Principal, Student Support. The Report will include

- a financial statement of accounts,
- a summary of the year's activities,
- a list of SU recognised internal groups and clubs
- details of any fees paid or donations made.

The Report will be made available to students on Teams.

10. Finances

The Union will receive appropriate funds from the College each year to enable it to pursue its agreed aims and objectives. This annual allocation of funding will be decided by the Corporation as part of its process for setting the College's revenue budget for the following year and will take into account any representations received from the Student Union regarding the Union's budget for the forthcoming academic year.

The Union will be responsible for the financial affairs of the Union and will ensure that any monies granted by the Corporation (or otherwise generated) are spent in accordance with the agreed objectives of the SU.

The financial year of the SU will run from 1st August to 31st July.

The organisation of the Student Union's finances and its systems of control are set out in Schedule Four (Finance Regulations) of this Constitution.

The Union will ensure that proper financial accounts are maintained and that these accounts are checked and signed off by the College's Finance Department.

Any expenditure will be approved by the chair of the SU and a designated member of staff through the College's PO system and paid in line with the College's standard financial arrangements and procedures

In addition to the above, the specific role of the Union will be:

- To ensure that the Union's day-to-day finances operate efficiently and effectively and that Student Union funds are not allocated to any improper purpose;
- To prepare the Student Union's annual plans for Income and Expenditure using its allocated funds and to make these available to any member of the Union for scrutiny;
- To make arrangements for its monthly review of the Income & Expenditure Accounts; and,
- To be responsible for the preparation of the Union's Annual Report & Accounts and to make these available to the Student Union to be checked, in preparation for further scrutiny by the Corporation's Finance and General Purpose Committee.(F&GP)

Appendix 1: Student Union – Job Descriptions

1. President

- a) Be the leader of the SU at United College's Group
- b) Be the lead representative of the SU, liaising with the College and other bodies over any matters affecting students.
- c) Seek to actively involve as many students as possible in the SU and publicise its activities, using social media as appropriate.
- d) Regularly report on activities to the Student Union
- e) Give speeches at College events.
- f) Ensure that other officers are aware of their duties and lead them to make sure they carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- g) Meet regularly with the designated College support staff members to plan and review Students' Union activity and prepare for meetings.
- h) Contribute to the production of the Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of SU activities for the year.
- i) Any other duties agreed by the President and designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of President.

2 SU Organiser (Vice President)

- a) Support the President in their duties and deputise for the President as necessary.
- b) Be a member of, and participate fully in, the Student Union and take the lead in publicising SU activities, using social media as appropriate.
- c) Set agendas and take minutes of all Student Union (SU) meetings and to keep centrally a complete set of such minutes.
- d) Keep centrally important SU documents and mail received by the SU.
- e) Give the required amount of notice of all meetings of the Student Union by means of posters and email.
- f) Regularly report on activities to the Student Union.
- g) Meet regularly with College support staff to plan and review SU activity and prepare for meetings.
- h) Undertake any other duties agreed by the SU Organiser, the President and designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of SU Organiser.
- i) Support students in the running of weekly student-led societies and clubs, regularly reporting on the activities and student engagement.

3 Student Governor

- a) Be elected by, and responsible to, all students including any who may have opted out of membership of the SU.
- b) Attend meetings of the Board of Governors and relevant Committees as a Student Governor.
- c) Be a member of, and participate fully in the Student Union.
- d) Raise with Governors any matters arising from Student Union meetings and report back on the Governors' response.
- e) Report to the Student Union on any non-confidential matters considered by the Board of Governors or Committee meetings which have a direct impact on students.
- f) Meet regularly with the designated support staff members to plan and prepare for involvement in Governing Body meetings.
- g) Contribute to the production of the Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of matters raised and Governors' responses.
- h) Undertake any other duties agreed by the Student Governor, the President and designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of Student Governor.

4 Events and Activities Officer

- a) Be a member of, and participate fully in, the Student Union.
- b) Organise SU approved social events, which would usually include at least a Christmas fair and a summer event, per academic year.
- c) Organise SU approved campaigning events.
- d) Organise SU approved fund raising events.
- e) Meet regularly with the designated support staff members to plan and review SU activity and prepare for meetings.
- f) Contribute to the production of an Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of the year's activities relating to events and entertainments .
- g) Undertake any other duties agreed by the President and designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of Events Officer.
- h) Support students in the running of weekly student-led societies and clubs.

5 Health and Safety Officer

- a) Be a member of, and participate fully in, the Student Union

- b) Help raise student awareness of environmental issues through organising events and campaigns, including promotion through the tutorial programme and other activities as appropriate
- c) Liaise with appropriate College staff to develop strategies to realise the objectives of the College's Health and Safety Policy and contribute to the monitoring of the policy
- d) Meet regularly with the designated support staff members to plan and review SU activity and prepare for meetings
- e) Be a member of the College's Sustainability Committee and attend meetings as required.
- f) Contribute to the production of an Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of the year's activities relating to environmental issues
- g) Undertake any other duties agreed by the President and the designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of Health and Safety Officer.

6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer

- a) Be a member of, and participate fully in, the Student Union.
- b) Raise awareness of diversity, equality, welfare and safeguarding issues (including bullying) and, when appropriate, liaise with staff to bring these issues to the attention of the student body.
- c) Attend any relevant training/briefing events regarding equality and diversity issues, and student welfare and safeguarding.
- d) Run event/activities to celebrate student diversity, .
- e) When necessary, raise equality, diversity, welfare and safeguarding issues and problems with College managers, using the appropriate channels.
- f) Be fully aware of College policies relating to equality, diversity, inclusion, student support and safeguarding and, if invited, attend any related College committee or group meetings.
- g) Work to ensure that interests and issues from the diverse groups of students at the College, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are represented in the range of SU activities and events.
- h) Meet regularly with the designated support staff members to plan and review SU activity and prepare for meetings.
- i) Contribute to the production of an Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of the year's activities relating to equality, diversity, welfare and safeguarding
- j) Undertake any other duties agreed by the Equality, Diversity and inclusion Officer, the President and the designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of Equality and Diversity Officer
- k) Be a member of the College's Equality & Diversity Inclusion steering group (E&D) and attend meetings as required.

7 Sports Officer

- a) Be a member of, and participate fully in, the Student Union.
- b) Help raise student awareness of opportunities for sports participation through organising events and campaigns, including promotion through the tutorial programme and other activities as appropriate.
- c) Meet regularly with the designated support staff members to plan and review SU activity and prepare for meetings.
- d) Contribute to the production of an Annual Report by producing a summary of the year's activities relating to sporting activities and participation.
- e) Support students in the running of student-led societies and clubs.
- f) Undertake any other duties agreed by the Sports Officer, the President and the designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of Sports Officer.

8 Campaign Officer

- a) Get students to vote in things like the general and local elections and relevant internal college mock elections.
- b) Get a sense of what students are concerned about and look to develop campaigns around issues in conjunction with the SU president. This could include representing the College at London Citizens events.
- c) Support NUS campaigns e.g. Votes at 16 etc.
- d) Support other officers to make a change and difference to college life and beyond.
- e) Meet with the local council about local issues if appropriate.
- f) Contribute to the production of an Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of the year's activities relating to this role.
- g) Sign up to NUS Newsletter.

9 Promotions & Marketing Officer

- a) Be a member of, and participate fully in, the Student Union and take the lead in publicising SU activities, using social media as appropriate.
- b) Take an active role in knowing what activities, trips, visits and events are going on for CNWL and/or CWC students, in order to promote, using the monthly 'SU Newsletter' and social media as appropriate.
- c) Take an active role in knowing what each member of the Student Union is working on, in order to promote this and make the student body aware.

- d) Be a student ambassador and attend college events such as open evenings etc.
- e) Contribute to the production of an Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of the year's activities relating to this role.
- f) Undertake any other duties agreed by the Promotions & Marketing Officer, the President and the designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of Promotions & Marketing Officer.

Higher Education Officers (x2)

- a) Be a member of, and participate fully in, the Student Union.
- b) Act as chair of an HE subcommittee and support the identification of other students to support this group as appropriate.
- c) Represent higher education students in the Student Union, communicate regularly with the President and other Student Union members and report back to higher education students
- d) At Departmental meetings of course representatives, report and lead discussion on SU matters
- e) Meet regularly with the designated support staff members to plan and review SU activity and prepare for meetings
- f) Contribute to the production of an Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of the year's activities relating to higher education students
- g) Undertake any other duties agreed by the Higher Education Officer, the President and the designated support staff members to be appropriate to the position of Higher Education Officer.

10 Non-Portfolio Officers

- a) Be part of the SU executive team and attend weekly meetings
- b) Listen to and act on student views
- c) Run a number of agreed projects to improve student experience, welfare and social needs throughout the year
- d) Attend meetings with college staff to discuss and solve student issues
- e) Be a student ambassador and attend college events such as Open Evenings etc.
- f) Contribute to the production of an Annual Impact Report by producing a summary of the year's activities relating to this role

APPENDIX 2

Financial Regulations

- a) The financial year of the Students' Union will be 1 August to 31 July
- b) There will be a Students' Union Fund, supported by the College and by appropriate fund-raising activities
- c) The student union will be responsible for ensuring all transactions are processed through the Finance Office of the college and that records of expenditure are maintained.
- d) The Student Union will be responsible for the proper conduct of the Students' Union financial affairs
- e) Each term the President will submit a report showing the income and expenditure of the Students' Union, the President, the designated support staff members and any College appointed financial advisor
- f) Appropriate designated College staff will be allowed access at all times to the Students' Union's financial and other records and the Student Union will cooperate at all times with those staff members in relation to the monitoring of the Student Union's expenditure and financial affairs
- g) The Student Union will be responsible, in conjunction with the designated support staff members and any designated financial advisor, for drawing up the Student Union's budget for each academic year, and this will be subject to the approval of the Assistant Principal, Student Support
- h) The Student Union will not approve or condone any expenditure, commitment to expenditure or commitment to any course of action which may result in expenditure falling outside the Student Union's approved budget
- i) No expenditure or commitment to expenditure greater than £30 will be entered into without the written approval of two members of the Student Union and the designated support staff member
- j) All Students' Union payment orders will require two signatures, one of which will be the President, and the other, the designated staff member
- k) There will be a single petty cash float held for the purposes of the Student Union to be kept in a secure place. The total maximum amount which may be held by the Students' Union as petty cash will be £50 and all expenditure from petty cash will be recorded in detail.
- l) All cash receipts of the Student Union and any of its activities or events must be banked as soon as practicable without deduction and must not be used as petty cash or for any other purpose

- m) The Student Union will be responsible for keeping accurate accounting records of all income and expenditure of the Students' Union.
- n) The Student Union will publish a financial report including details of all income and expenditure of the Student Union each year. The report must be approved by the Student Union and submitted to the Assistant Principal, Student Support, for approval.
- o) No member of the union shall receive any profit or emolument from funds or transactions of the union.
- p) Any member of the executive responsible for the incurring unauthorised expenditure of union funds shall be liable for the repayment of the total sum involved.
- q) All spending from a cost centre within the college shall be in accordance with the latest agreed Financial Regulations for the college