

# Confidential

## 2012/13 Review of ULU: Report to Collegiate Council

1. The University of London Union was established in 1955 in an era when the central University directly funded its institutions, the student population of the largest College was around 2,900 (18 of the 30 Colleges or medical schools had under 500 students each), the population of the University as a whole was about 24,000, and inter-collegiate study, based on physical coming together into central shared teaching spaces, was commonplace. Almost invariably, students studied full-time in one of the Colleges, and most of them expected to live in inter-collegiate or, less commonly, College-provided) halls for at least two years of their undergraduate programme. It was a very different world and a very different student experience.
2. In 1994 the University of London Act changed the basis of federal university funding, providing for direct funding of Colleges by the University Grants Committee (now HEFCE). In the same year the Education Act allowed all university establishments to develop students' unions and created a framework of governance for them, which has changed relatively little since. It also defined the responsibilities of university governing bodies for the operation of their students' unions which continues to hold despite the effect of the 2006 Charities Act (which determined that the larger students' unions, including ULU, were legally autonomous operations and separate charities subject to regulation by the Charity Commission).
3. By 1999 (with the University still operating under its old Statutes) ULU was already becoming an unusual form of students' union in that it was, in effect, expected to offer services in exchange for its grant. The Lucas Review that year stipulated that the following services should be provided:
  - a. Student Representation
  - b. Core Facilities i.e. access to facilities housed in the ULU Building on Malet Street
  - c. Representational Sport
  - d. Welfare and Support
  - e. Student Development e.g. Newspaper, SocietiesThen as now, the subscriptions from Colleges provided a significant element of ULU's income.
4. Throughout the 1990s the University systematically devolved responsibility for academic matters to Colleges. By the early 2000s Colleges were developing their own degree awarding powers and, as far as their students were concerned, were distinctive autonomous institutions. By 2011/12 at least 60% of the 120,000<sup>1</sup> students registered in the Colleges of the federal University were following degrees of their home institution. Thus, they had control over the academic experience and all but the smallest or most closely co-located of them were also providing fully for their students' social, sporting and welfare needs.
5. In 2007/08, just as the new Statutes were introduced, the first Webley Review concluded that Colleges would fund ULU to provide only those core student services which could be seen to demonstrate added value. The campaigning and representational role was, explicitly, no longer funded from the College subscription. This aligned with the logic of the extensive

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<sup>1</sup> According to 2011/12 HESA data, the fte population of the Colleges was 112,699. The head count was over 120,000.

governance reforms that the University had implemented that year – essentially that the Colleges would be at the heart of the new arrangements and that students would be represented at and through their own Colleges.

6. The trends recognised then have continued, with Colleges and College SUs providing ever-more comprehensive services and representation for their students. The widespread consciousness of “the student experience”, the advent of full-cost fees and the rhetoric of the “student at the heart of the system” and the insistence of organisations like QAA to include students at the design stage of processes that affect them, have together encouraged a culture of greater investment by institutions in provision of welfare, recreational and representational support for students. On campus, many of these services are increasingly offered through professionally staffed, and expert students’ unions.
7. Through the period, ULU’s function as a campaigning/lobbying organisation that is genuinely representative of its members has been undermined by very low levels of participation in its elections and by regular challenges to its constitutional operations. For example, 737 students voted for the (unopposed) presidential candidate in 2012; 2555 voted in a contested election in 2013. The electorate is all registered students who do not individually opt to resign their membership, i.e. over 120,000.

In the 2013 ULU elections, eight elected posts were available. ULU’s website records 19 constituencies voting – 18 Colleges and SAS. Half of them had lower than 2% turnout. The turnout ranged from 5.1% of eligible voters (Heythrop, 45 students) to 0.23% (IoE, 24 students). College SU elections do not attract high turnouts (typically between 15% and 25%) but all are significantly higher than voting numbers for ULU posts, even when campaigns and polling days coterminous. For example, in 2013 4,261 (16%) of UCL students voted in UCLU elections, 879 voted in the ULU elections. Heythrop, which at 5.1% had the highest turnout in the ULU elections, had a 29.6% turnout for their own elections.

8. In June 2012 the then Vice-Chancellor received a letter from the retiring Presidents of five College SUs<sup>2</sup> which outlined their significant concerns with ULU’s operations, explained that all five College SUs had been on the point of leaving ULU, and that, from this experience, a Review of its “services, processes and governance” was urgently needed.
9. Given the imminent expiry date on ULU’s lease of the Malet Street building (31 July 2014) and the importance of determining ULU’s future space needs, the University was conscious of the need to consider the scale of ULU’s activities in Malet Street, its income streams, outgoings and financial viability, and the best future use of this building.
10. Thus, five years on from the first Webley Review, a range of issues around ULU’s role within the federal University were again surfacing:
  - whether, and in what areas, it added value to students’ every day experiences
  - whether its services and facilities were being duplicated in Colleges, and if so which duplications were nonetheless valuable
  - whether it was value for money in terms of Colleges’ subscription, given the financial pressures on their own SUs
  - the legitimacy of its role as a voice for the University’s students
  - its financial sustainability.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 8

11. The Collegiate Council therefore decided upon a fundamental Review of ULU 's role as a federal students union. The Review was from the outset designed to be based on up-to-date evidence, and to call on contributions and information from a wide range of users, members and "stakeholders". In essence the Review was to determine whether ULU still provided added value to the student experience, whether it represented value for money for the Colleges that subsidised it, and whether it was appropriate to a very different HE landscape from the one that prompted its creation in 1955.

*Collegiate Council Minutes: 6 July 2012*

" It was agreed that one of the main objectives of the review should be to consider what services and benefits to Colleges ULU should deliver and whether the current model was the most appropriate way to deliver these. In considering these questions, it was important that the review group consulted widely and, in particular, obtained the formal view of the incoming sabbaticals at College students' unions."

## **Review Process**

12. The Review was formally established by the Collegiate Council on 28 September 2012 with the terms of reference and membership described in Appendix 1.
13. The Review Group met on seven occasions between 10 October 2012 and 17 April 2013 and in between meetings gathered evidence and information from all the parties identified in the terms of reference. (paragraph 18 below).
14. In addition to submissions from the groups listed in the terms of reference, the Review Group also considered background data and documentation described in paragraph 19 below. Relevant documents from the first Webley Review in 2007-08 were also consulted.
15. As the Review Group's work progressed it became clear that the original deadline of February 2013 was inappropriate and the Review period was extended to May 2013 to align with the Collegiate Council's deliberations on College subscriptions.

## **Governance**

*Review Terms of Reference (iv):*

*To consider the current governance arrangements of ULU in the light of the Memorandum of Understanding between ULU and the University of London; the Charities Act 2006 (as it relates to students' unions) and the University's obligations under the 1994 Education Act regarding students' unions*

16. The Review Group identified the key elements of ULU's governance structures which define its operation and its relationship with the University, and formed its recommendations taking them into account:
  - a) ULU's legal status: ULU is an unincorporated association, legally separate from the University. It is a separate charity, registered under the 2011 Charities Act (which consolidated the Charities Acts of 2006 and 1993).

- b) The University owns the trademark names *University of London* and *ULU*
- c) 1994 Education Act<sup>3</sup>: The Act does not require universities to set up a student union but does set out the responsibilities of the Governing Bodies where a students' union exists. The key provisions are to ensure that its financial affairs are conducted properly and transparently, and to ensure that it operates democratically.
- d) Internal governance: ULU has a Constitution (last reviewed by the University Board of Trustees in 2010) which sets out the composition and powers of the ULU Trustees, its Executive Committee and its Senate. It is based on the NUS model constitution.<sup>4</sup> Changes to the ULU Constitution require the consent of the University's Board of Trustees.

In 2008 and again in November 2011, ULU published a Code of Compliance with the 1994 Education Act which deals with, inter alia, the right of individual members (registered students) to opt out of membership. It also sets out the financial governance, conditions of affiliation with other bodies, and the scope for members to express dissatisfaction with Union organisation.<sup>5</sup>

- e) The Union's relationship with the University is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2011.<sup>6</sup> The MoU deals with, inter alia, responsibilities for contracts, staffing, complaints and discipline, use of the University crest and trademark, relations with the media, health and safety, internal audit, business continuity etc. It should be signed by the in-coming President each year.
- f) University Statutes and Ordinances<sup>7</sup>: the current (2008) Statutes make no reference to ULU but the Ordinances assume its existence in references on a number of operational matters – for example ULU's obligation to provide annual accounts and to submit the Constitution for review, the President's right to request attendance at meetings of the Board and Collegiate Council, ULU's role in representing students registered at the central University (ie the School of Advanced Study, SAS, or the International Academy, UoLIA) in disciplinary or grievance procedures.

17. The powers of the University in relation to ULU thus include the following :

- a) It may, but need not, provide funding;
- b) It may, but need not, permit ULU to operate from University-owned premises; and
- c) It can control, limit and withdraw the use of the name ULU or University of London; but
- d) It cannot require ULU to wind itself up.

## **Services, Complementarity with College SUs, and Stakeholder Input**

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3 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/30/part/II>

4 [http://www.ulucol.ac.uk/content/621963/your\\_union/governance/ulu\\_constitution/](http://www.ulucol.ac.uk/content/621963/your_union/governance/ulu_constitution/)

5 [http://www.ulucol.ac.uk/files/ulu\\_code\\_of\\_practice\(1\).pdf](http://www.ulucol.ac.uk/files/ulu_code_of_practice(1).pdf)

6 Available on UoL quorum in the BoT papers Nov 11

7 <http://www.london.ac.uk/972.html>

*Review Terms of Reference (i) and (ii)*

*To consider the requirements, including the demand for services and representation, from a central students' union. In so doing to consider evidence from:.. College Students' Unions, Students of the School of Advanced Study (SAS), ULU Trustees and Senators, and the ULU Chief Executive, Heads of Colleges, National Union of Students, British Universities and Colleges Sport*

and

*To consider how a federal students' union complements local students' unions and local services in enhancing the overall student experience. In so doing to consider evidence from a variety of sources including:..Central Academic Bodies (CABs) National Student Surveys, Views of Managers from Colleges/CABs with responsibility for the student experience.*

18. The Group sought information and evidence from each of the groups listed above, in the following forms:

a) College Students' Unions:

The Deputy University Secretary wrote to each College SU (Appendix 2). Fifteen replies were received. Most of these were made in writing, and most were received by the requested date and were thus reflected in the summary attached at Appendix 3. Replies were mainly from SU Executives, some which followed wider circulation, and some from individuals. Some members of the Review Group also consulted their SUs formally or informally, as did several Heads of Colleges during the Review period so that the Group was confident that it had a good level of written and anecdotal information about College SU priorities. The anonymised summary responses were shared with ULU.

b) Students of the School of Advanced Study (SAS);

Individual letters were sent (Appendix 4). Only one response was received, commending the gym and swimming pool.

c) ULU Trustees and Senators, and the ULU Chief Executive:

By letters attached at Appendix 5. The Vice-President, as Acting Chair of Trustees, made a personal written submission (Appendix 9.1) and the Sabbatical Officers together presented their vision to the Review Group at the third (12 December 2012) meeting (power point presentation Appendix 9.2).

The Chief Executive and her staff provided an excellent and comprehensive overview statement on all of ULU's current and recent activities: *The Future of University of London Union*. This analysis reported on structures and scale of operations, financial performance, management, targets, markets and current usage (Appendix 9).

d) Heads of Colleges:

Initially by email from the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Review Group with a request that they consult appropriate colleagues (appendix 6). The progress of the Review and the trends evidenced by those who had contributed to the information gathering was discussed in detail at the Collegiate Council meeting on 15 February 2013), followed by a further survey of Heads of Colleges.

e) The National Union of Students:

By letter (appendix 7), in a meeting between the NUS Chief Executive and the University Secretary and Deputy Secretary, and in telephone conversations.

- f) British Universities and Colleges Sport:  
By web-site survey and telephone consultation with the BUCS Head of Sports on 23 January).
- g) National Student Satisfaction Surveys and local satisfaction surveys  
Desk research looked for benchmark data from public National Student Survey records and media articles on student satisfaction with SU provision nationally. All Colleges were also asked if they had, and were willing to share, relevant information from their own local student satisfaction surveys. Only UCL was able to offer a substantive response (an analysis of its services and members engagement commissioned by UCLU in 2010). Others referred the Review to the NSS, which does not yield this granularity of information).
- h) One of the prompts for the Review (paragraph 8) had been a letter from five out-going College SU Presidents (18 June 2012) expressing their Unions' dissatisfaction with ULU's operations and governance (appendix 8). The concerns raised by the retiring SU Presidents included the following:  
"the governance of ULU appears to be weak, strategic planning processes are poor, its finances are opaque and its election turnouts bring its democratic legitimacy into serious question...Many of ULUs functions are important, however in practice they are executed poorly.....we have several questions we want you to consider; Do ULUs current structures allow for it to implement its functions in an effective way? Could other unions implement ULUs services/ functions more effectively? Do some of ULUs underperforming functions need to be closed down?"

The University Secretary met all of the authors to ensure that their concerns were understood and accurately reflected in the Review process. He also informally tested their assertions against the opinions of current SU officers.

## Documentation

- 19. In addition to information gathered above, the Review also considered:
  - a) ULU Financial Statements 2011-12 with extracts from and trend analysis based on the financial returns of earlier years
  - b) The final report of the 2008 Financial Review
  - c) The lease on the Malet Street building (main terms were understood but not considered in detail)
  - d) ULU's governance documentation: the 1994 Education Act, Constitution and Memorandum of Understanding
  - e) ULU usage data for membership of clubs and societies in 2011-12. (Appendix 9, especially page 14 and annexes 10,12 and 14)
  - f) ULU usage data for other social, recreational and commercial use of Malet Street

## Principal findings

20. ToR 1 was designed to establish the demand for services and for representation.

a) Services

College SUs were generally appreciative of the facilities provided in Malet Street, singling out the swimming pool and gym, printing, free room hire for meetings, the Venue as a student-controlled location for live music gigs and other events that are too large to host at some College SUs, and the competitively priced and “student friendly” cafe and shop. These statements of support were widespread across the College SU responses though inevitably the facilities are likely to be of most immediate benefit to students based close to Malet Street.

ULU’s usage data (Appendix 9) and financial returns also support the impression of a busy day-time use of the cafe, shop and bars, the gym and pool. For example, there were 2671 recorded usages of Energy Base in October 2012, of which 2108 were by students, 486 were by associate members (predominantly but not exclusively staff) and 77 “others”. Usage reflects the pattern of the academic year.

ULU records also show the attendance for 10 Friday Club Nights, with around 8,500 participants across the sample of 10 reported in 2011/12. These events had also successfully attracted Imperial College students, associate members and others (e.g. College of Law).

Daily footfall through the building for day-time use of the cafe, shops, bars etc is not normally systematically recorded but any regular user of the building will know how very busy it is during term-time day times. When the current Review started, ULU monitored day-time access for a period, and their records indicate that around 1,000 individuals came into ULU for some purpose during the busiest mid-day period, on a typical mid week, term-time day.

Where membership is routinely recorded (e.g. Energy Base and Club nights) UCL alone typically accounts for around 30% of the participation.

ULU publishes a student newspaper (*London Student*) intended to be of interest to the whole University student body, and distributed free to all Colleges. It attracted only three comments in the SU responses but does appear to be widely read and highly visible. Nine Colleges have student newspapers; some also have radio and TV. For all, however, these traditional but costly media outlets are supplemented by comprehensive electronic communications – web-sites and social networking links.

b) Clubs and Societies

In terms of clubs and societies, there were expressions of support from the College SUs for the range on offer, and a generally shared assumption that this breadth of provision was of especial benefit to the smaller Colleges. College SU responses also valued the access ULU provides to training and development of personal expertise in the subject of the club or society.

However, ULU’s usage data do not show that these expressions of support and interest are actually manifest in membership of clubs and societies. The summary data provided in the ULU submission, from sign-up figures (which do not reflect the actual participation across whole years, though it is unclear whether they are higher or lower than actual participation rates) indicate that in 2010/11 a total of 1744

individuals were signed up members of clubs and societies. Of these, around 90 were staff or others; over 660 were from UCL, so that fewer than 1000 students from the other (then) 18 Colleges appeared to be active participants. As a benchmark, membership of QMUL's 130 clubs and societies in March 2013 was 4,200, with 1,500 students participating in club sports.

c) Sport

Intercollegiate sport remains very important to College SUs, despite the formal alliances of the majority of SUs with BUCS. Though there were some criticism of elements of ULU's organisation and administration in this area, its role as a focus for intercollegiate sport was in general strongly supported. There was particular enthusiasm for ULU's work in sports-related development (e.g. refereeing, specialist sports first aid course, life-saving, coaching). King's appears to be the only other SU offering sports support in the form of training and qualifications.

The survey of College Students' Unions was undertaken early in what was for most of them their first year of membership of BUCS and this is undoubtedly a changing landscape for them, which is not necessarily easy for them to engage with. Despite the advantages that BUCS' professional structure and national role provides, the evidence from College SUs indicated that ULU could be expected to remain as a positive force in co-ordination of inter-collegiate sports at all levels, and University-level elite sports participation.

ULU offers some sports which are not provided anywhere else in the University (e.g. canoe club, life-saving, water-polo, scuba diving) or provided only in a very few College SUs (eg archery, gymnastics, rifle shooting, fencing, sailing). However, it also duplicates provision: for example, it runs 1 of approximately 30 football clubs, 1 of 22 hockey clubs.

d) Music

Though not mentioned specifically in SU returns, the same comments probably apply to elite musical activity. ULU itself sees intercollegiate music as a USP, though individual participation is again very small in number. Membership of the Chamber Choir is around 27-30, with up to 10 places turning over each year. Last year around 50 individuals auditioned for places. The University of London Symphony Orchestra is around 70-100 strong with entry by competitive audition.

e) Social benefits

In terms of important, albeit less tangible issues, several SU responses included comment on the potential or actual enrichment of the student experience through a shared central London base that enables students from any College (especially the smaller and/or non-Bloomsbury Colleges) to feel part of a greater whole. The range of facilities, clubs, societies and sporting opportunities was said to be valued by small SUs that cannot provide a full range of their own. Access to ULU's facilities and activities was also recognised as a marketing advantage for small Colleges.

f) Representational and campaigning role

College SUs were almost uniformly critical of ULU's track record in delivering its representational responsibilities. The long-standing problem of low turn-out in elections was a cause for concern and seen as undermining the legitimacy of the representational role.

SU comments reported widespread reported frustration with wasted opportunities to create a strong voice for London students on London issues, and College SU responses suggested a general desire that London-specific issues should become a greater focus of a London-wide Union (23 below).

Where College SUs did comment positively, it was in the area of networking (notably the new network for small and specialist institutions and London-wide networks for specialist groups or causes) and acknowledgement that ULU's collective expertise and greater resources could be helpful to local SUs in developing local campaigning and lobbying activity.

There was recognition of the efforts of the current Vice-President who as Acting President had worked effectively with the Student Activities Team to (inter alia), create a small and specialist unions network, to develop a programme of visits to College SUs and to improve communication with local SUs and especially their sabbatical officers.

This improvement was nonetheless seen by College SUs as ad hominem and fragile, with ULU's core governance structures not trusted to deliver consistent, robust democratic representation. Criticism and desire for change was widespread, from the retiring presidents whose letter had helped to trigger the Review through to smaller Colleges responding to the survey who believed that their voice could not be heard in the present constitutional structure.

21. ToR 2 was designed to establish how the federal students' union complements local students' unions and local services, in enhancing the overall student experience.

College SUs were asked to comment on areas of unmet need, and of potential for development in ULU, and whether they felt that ULU served the needs of the University's large and disparate student body. In summary, the general response from College SUs was negative: that ULU does not, and for some years has not represented the University's student body; that it might have the potential to do this but only with greater resources, different governance arrangements and a different focus (primarily on London issues).

Co-incidentally, at the time of the Review, the NUS was considering the re-establishment of some form of London Office with responsibility for co-ordination and development of pan-London campaigning, representing all students across London. The NUS already represents the wider London student voice on principal public fora – London Higher, Mayor's Office, London Housing Covenant, in negotiations with TfL.

Desk research into BUCS provision and a telephone consultation with its Head of Sports had provided the Review Group with information on BUCS's current structures, including its regional governance which has representation from every member institution. As a national operation it has access to policy makers and funders of student sport, with significantly scaled resources for local SU participants. It does not impact on inter-collegiate sport and its activities are solely around team sports.

Across the 18 Colleges of the University, there are at least 16 Students' Unions, between them serving a London-based population of over 120,000 students. Provision of services and facilities in each SU is of course extremely varied, even between comparably-sized institutions. At present (with some exceptions) students of one College cannot easily access the facilities of another: that is, while there is a general acceptance of individual casual use, there are only limited formal arrangements for shared access.

Appendix 10 gives an indication of current resources in terms of sabbatical officers, clubs, sports, number and types of services across the Colleges.

22. Heads of Colleges were asked whether they believed that ULU represented value for money for their students. The great majority responded, and they were unanimous that it did not. The majority also responded favourably to a further question – if their subscription to ULU were to stop would they wish, in some form, to use the saving to enhance *local* student support.

## **Pan-London Provision**

23. Interest in developing some form of London-wide structure for campaigning, lobbying and representing the views of all London students (within and outwith the University) was expressed in several forms and across all stakeholder groups in the Review process.
- a) SU responses referred to the desirability of ULU focussing more closely on the concerns of students on London-specific issues;
  - b) The ULU Sabbaticals foresaw the advantages of the NUS or another (independent) body in due course taking collective responsibility for London-wide student issues on behalf of all London students. They saw an independent (non-NUS) body as potentially funded through grants from existing Students' Unions. With the increased co-ordination of effort and the increased authority of that comprehensive position, they argued that such an organisation would be able to speak with significant influence;
  - c) The NUS had reported strong interest from its London-wide FE and HE members to create a structure that could provide a focussed support for all London students on London-specific issues;
  - d) When asked whether in principle whether they would support such the development of pan-London provision – whether under the auspices of the NUS or a separate independent operation – the majority of Heads of Colleges responded that they would and that they believed their SUs would also welcome the development.
24. The Group was conscious that the timing of its report could not be allowed to impact on the concurrent NUS process. Nonetheless, the emerging support for pan-London political representation, co-ordinated campaigning and lobbying on London issues for all London students, was recognised.

## **Finances**

## Review Terms of Reference (v)

*To consider the financial accountability and financial sustainability of ULU, taking into account the current subscription model, ULU's registration as a separate charity and the lease and the long-term maintenance of the ULU building.*

### 25. Overview

ULU's annual budget is prepared in accordance with its financial regulations, and is approved by ULU Senate and ULU Trustees before being submitted to the Collegiate Council for University level approval on behalf of the Board of Trustees. ULU reports termly on income and expenditure to the Collegiate Council.

Payment of the College subscription is exclusively for the following purposes (as agreed following the first Webley Review paragraph 5)

Student representation (President and Vice President)

Representative sport

Societies

London Student newspaper

Swimming Pool

The total College subsidy for 2012/13 was £733k, of which £400k was ring-fenced for representative sport.

### 26. Financial Sustainability

At 31 July 2012, ULU had short term deposits of £1.4m. Its principal income streams are shown below.

#### ULU Gross Income

	2011-12	2010-11
Student Shop	289,893	298,738
Bars	629,239	495,361
Birkbeck	331,393	244,793
Catering	403,029	463,002
Lunchbox	596,621	613,550
Print Shop	222,924	198,683
Conference	556,032	554,529
Recreation	723,843	845,463
Marketing	46,875	52,918
London Student	7,035	18,661
Rentals	72,572	72,006
Investments	22,686	22,711
Memberships	35,704	31,855
College Contribution to Premises	83,173	79,212
Grant	716,382	768,265

**4,737,401**      **4,759,747**

*Note that the closure of the pool and gym for refurbishment in summer 2011 had a negative impact on "recreation" revenue.*

In several meetings, the Review Group considered ULU's long-term sustainability assuming business as usual and concluded that sustainability could only be achieved if all of the following conditions applied:

- a) Colleges confirmed their continuing commitment to current or increased levels of subscription, and tied this commitment to at least a five year planning period;
- b) The University continued to subsidise the maintenance costs of the Malet Street building (around £0.75m in 2010/11) and renewed its lease, without reference to dilapidations, on the current rental and for an extended period;

- c) ULU's infrastructure costs remained constant ;
  - d) And no un-budgeted maintenance or trading losses were incurred.
27. Given the fragility of these assumptions, confirmed part-way through the Review by the advice that several Colleges were planning to end their ULU subscriptions with immediate effect, the Group concluded that ULU would not be financially sustainable in its current operating model.
28. In the judgement of the Review Group, high-level indicators about the direction of travel were clear:
- a) Reduction in College subscription had to be anticipated: though the scale and timing was unknown it was understood that withdrawal of a significant proportion College subsidy in 2013/14 could not be ruled out;
  - b) The University would not renew the Malet Street lease on the same terms, but would "normalise it" onto a full repairing lease. The costs of dilapidations and of restitution of condition at the end of the current lease in 2014 were being prepared;
  - c) ULU has financial reserves, which would be impacted by either of the above changes;
  - d) As a charity, ULU's ability to trade could be compromised by a known or predicted deficit, depending on its recovery strategies. The University Board of Trustees has responsibility under the 1994 Act for ensuring that ULU is financially accountable.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

*Review Terms of Reference (iii) and (vi)*

*To evaluate how the services currently provided by ULU fulfil the requirements that emerge from consideration of (i) and (ii).*

*And*

*In the light of the above, to advise the Collegiate Council on the options for the future Role of ULU and to make such recommendations as it considers appropriate.*

### 29. Principles

Working within the terms of reference, members of the Review Group remained very conscious of the need to determine the best possible use of resources to enhance the quality of student experience within the University. These working principles were crystallised as follows in forming the recommendations:

- a) Achieving the best quality of provision for University of London students;
- b) Achieving complementarity of provision between centrally-provided and College provided services and facilities for students;
- c) Within this, making the best possible use of resources, and avoiding duplication of commonly available provision (e.g. in clubs and societies)
- d) Ensuring that the student body itself had a voice in determining the balance of services and facilities;
- e) Financial assumptions must exclude College subscriptions and will be based on payment for services by users, plus commercial income-earning;
- f) Overall break-even should be the minimum operating requirement;
- g) Achieving a smooth transition to new arrangements for ULU staff and College and student users.

### 30. Scenarios

The Group developed a range of scenarios and considered them against the information received in the course of the Review. The scenarios ranged from closure in the event of complete loss of College subscription income, through business as usual, to various forms of improved student service provision, based in Malet Street, and run in any one of a number of University and/or partnership models.

The Group concluded that “business as usual” and the expansionist vision described by the ULU Sabbatical officers in their presentation to the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting (12.12.12) were impossible without significant increase in College subsidies.

31. Within the range of scenarios, the Group also considered closure. There are no legal requirements on the University of London to continue to provide a federal students’ union. With the exception of the c250 SAS students, and the 54,000 remote learners registered with UoLIA (*for whom provision must be made*, below paragraph 35), all students are registered in and physically based at Colleges that provide for their representational, social, welfare and sporting needs – completely so in the case of the large Colleges, and with effective and creative managed solutions in others.

However, the Review Group has not recommended closure of those facilities and services which are clearly valued by, and add value to the experience of, significant numbers of University of London students. Its recommendations are designed, explicitly, to retain the most valuable and distinctive features of the current provision, and to bring the overall provision up-to-date and relevant to the needs of today’s students.

32. Based upon the evidence gathered and the changing needs of the student population, the Review Group’s concluding focus was therefore on a scenario predicated on separation of functions into:

A focussed, well-supported pan-London operation, responsible for co-ordinated campaigning, lobbying and representation for London students on London issues. This was a clear message from College Student Unions, and from the ULU Officers themselves. Given the reported NUS interest in developing such a role, the Review Group would see the NUS as its natural home.

However, it would not be impossible for such an activity to develop separately, but it would need to be financed independently, possibly, as the ULU sabbatical officers had suggested, from subscriptions from SUs across Greater London. It would not be a students’ union within the meaning of the 1994 Act, nor would it have a legal relationship with the University, or come within its governance, but could have the potential to be an influential voice for London students.

This entity, whether within the NUS or independently, would meet the wishes expressed by many College SUs, and by the ULU Officers (albeit sooner than they would have planned).

AND

A “Student [Services] Centre” based in Malet Street providing the best possible facilities and services that directly contribute to the student experience and are of

value to, and complementary to services provided by Colleges or College SUs. Some of these services and facilities exist at present; others would be developed with investment in the building and a full business plan. Some services would be of general interest, others more obviously for Bloomsbury-based students. The Student Services Centre could be run directly by the University or with partners or tenants, who could be colleges or other groups. A new legal entity would be created if necessary to support the preferred model.

Several possible variants of this model were considered but a core approach identified by the Review Group would, for example, include:

*Income-generating activities:* the swimming pool and gym; hair dresser, therapies and treatments, shops, cafes, bars, the Venue, conference hire space and services, tenanted spaces for cognate activities including College use;

*Welfare provision* (broadly defined): Housing services (expanded), a GP practice, counselling, psychiatric referral, opticians, chaplaincy/prayer rooms, legal services, debt/financial advisory service; any commonly used service that can be sensibly be shared instead of replicated in several colleges;

*Services and support:* printing, photocopying and binding; continued but enhanced co-ordination of inter-collegiate sports, of elite/niche sport which is not readily available in Colleges, and of music provision at University level that cannot be supported appropriately from an individual College. Continued support to pan-London networks such as the small and specialist Colleges' students' unions.

This approach builds on the existing provision but is focussed on those areas which are currently best used, most highly valued by members, which genuinely add value to the London student experience without excessive duplication of provision, and it assumes investment in the building after the termination of the current lease, and investment in the staff to support the change and development.

The Review Group commissioned a high-level financial model to test the viability of this approach. The model addressed the over-riding working principles and assumptions established by the Review Group (quality of provision, no College or University subsidy, based in Malet Street, operating to cover costs, no change to the overall staffing costs). The model took known market rental values (allowing for the restrictive Bedford Estate covenant), recent audited data on ULU's income and expenditure streams, and a hypothecated balance of tenanted space and conference-type lettings. It noted that the building was in need of investment, calculated from the recent condition survey at c £3.25m but demonstrated the University's recovery of this investment within five years through the rental stream. The model showed a trading surplus on a recurrent basis however considerably more detailed work would follow a decision to develop the Student Centre.

33. The Group emphasises the importance of maintaining an orderly transitional year through 2013/14.
34. The Group commends the model outlined in paragraph 32, based upon clear separation of function, and further unanimously recommends that:

- a) The University should consider providing some small start-up funding to support the free-standing pan-London organisation outlined by the ULU sabbatical officers (paragraph 32), or the development of pan-London co-ordination within NUS.
- b) Either through a Collegiate Council agreement of principle, or in bi-lateral arrangements, Colleges should consider ways to facilitate the use of one another's students' union facilities, with appropriate cross-charging arrangements. A primary intention would be to improve provision and access to facilities for students at smaller Colleges but there is clear potential for more general enrichment of experience and cost-effectiveness in provision.
- c) The central University should establish appropriate representational arrangements within SAS structures for SAS students and within UoLIA structures for students of the International Academy. The trademarked name "University of London Union (ULU)" should be reserved for the structures designed for SAS and UoLIA students registered with the central University.
- d) A Planning Group be established promptly to develop a detailed plan for sustainable, broadly based provision in Malet Street, and that the outcome of this process informs a refurbishments and space planning project to be put into effect in summer 2014, in time for the start of the academic year 2014-15, coincident with the ending of the current lease. The use of the building will be aligned with the new Estates Strategy. An outline membership structure and terms of reference are attached at Appendix 11.

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Secretary to the Review Group

24 April 2013