

The
**Cheese
Grater**

Issue 82 - Spring 2022
cheesegratermagazine.org
facebook.com/uclcheesegrater

WHEN WILL THEY LISTEN?

UCL continues to fail sexual assault survivors

**Content warning: discussion of sexual harassment and assault*

UCL's Response to Sexual Misconduct Remains Riddled with Loopholes

Rusheen Bansal

**Content Warning: this article discusses sexual harassment and assault.*

“Before a system like Report and Support existed, whenever there was an issue, we were told, ‘go to your personal tutor for everything’. Three years later, when I got to know him better, my personal tutor told me, ‘I didn’t bother learning your names. I just called you the pretty one.’”

This was Jennifer’s experience, who is now completing her PhD at UCL.

The university appears to have come a long way since. In 2019, UCL launched an online tool, [Report + Support](#), for staff and students to report instances of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. Before it, procedures were hazy, non-disclosure agreements used [heavy-handedly](#), and police action was a student’s best bet at justice.

While the administration celebrates that, after [two years of strategy group meetings](#), a system now exists, students remain frustrated over its complexity. An investigation by The Cheese Grater has uncovered that the inconsistency of UCL procedure, insufficient mitigative measures, and bureaucratic inefficiencies continue to undermine the experiences of sexual assault survivors.

Signposting faults

After experiencing a traumatic event of a sexual nature, survivors are most likely to approach a party that they trust. This may not necessarily be the [Students Union Advice Service](#) or [Dignity Advisors](#), the recommended points of contact for guidance on such incidents, but another student or a staff member such as a personal tutor,

department head, or resident advisor, who may not be well-equipped to assist in such matters.

It is safe to assume that staff, who work closely with UCL administration, may be better qualified to signpost students to the correct services. Yet, while they are encouraged to familiarise themselves with UCL policy for reporting misconduct and the subsequent courses of action available, it is not mandatory for them to do so (with the exception of Dignity Advisors). This can limit their ability to support their constituent students through a difficult time and make informed recommendations (see page 6 for in-depth coverage). Thus, students’ key points of contact may be inadequate at helping them; for the ones that do know how to help, students may not know they exist, or may feel uncomfortable approaching them.

For this reason or otherwise, survivors may approach a peer with their disclosure. However, students only have the [‘Handling Disclosures’](#) subpage on the Report + Support website to rely on. Although it offers important advice on non-judgemental listening, it does not provide specific information on how to signpost in an informed manner; it only suggests submitting a report through the Report + Support website. Yet, signposting training for students is available — it is administered to all welfare officers on society committees at the start of their terms. But for students who experience sexual misconduct outside the society environment, welfare officers may not be the most appropriate point of contact.

The fundamental issue at hand

is the absence of trained peer advocates. Most universities in the US have students specially trained as peer advocates that provide support and guidance to students who have experienced sexual harassment and misconduct. For instance, [CAASHA \(Campus Advocates Against Sexual Harassment and Assault\)](#) at Carleton College, [SVR \(Sexual Violence Response\) Peer Advocates](#) at Columbia University and [SHARE \(Sexual Health, Advocacy & Relationship Education\) advocates](#) at Reed College all undergo more than 35 hours of intensive training administered by third-party organisations to get state-certified as sexual assault advocates. Students at UCL and most other UK universities are, on the other hand, belittled, preventing them from actively combatting the prevalent rape culture surrounding them.

Hence, making signposting information accessible to all students on UCL’s webpages can not only help them better support each other but it can also dispel confusion and misinformation about university procedures. Moreover, peer advocates can prove more accessible to the student population due to the minimised age difference, rendering the reporting process less intimidating and isolating.

How existing procedure fails those who choose to report

In an interview with The Cheese Grater, Professor Sara Mole, Gender Envoy for the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Committee](#), noted: “If you are on a three-year degree, and you experience serious sexual misconduct in your first year, this incident can colour your whole experience at university because it is not going to be sorted out in a month. It’s going to take time”.

Explicit time limits have not been set for the various processes of informal or formal resolution as they depend on the severity of the case, the person being investigated (whether the reported party is a student or staff) and how long ago the incident took place. However, the points of contact listed in the summary in Figure 1 can take days, or even weeks, to respond to emails requesting clarification of procedure, availability for a meeting, or progress updates. Not only can this lack of maximal time allotments exacerbate an already distressing experience, but it can also dissuade students from pursuing further action.

[Section 7 of the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) poses yet another obstacle. One of its policies states that for outcomes of formal complaints and disciplinary cases “there may be limits to the information about the consequences to the Reported Party that can be shared with the Reporting Party”. While it also affirms that key information will be shared “to minimise any adverse effects in accessing their work or study environment”, that information remains limited to whether the complaint has been upheld or not and whether the reported party has been dismissed or expelled.

This policy opens a problematic loophole: only adverse effects in accessing the “work or study environment” are considered as an exception. Yet, in cases where the reported incident takes place in Halls or SU societies’ spaces or events, adverse effects in accessing the reporting party’s living or extracurricular environment, which do not constitute a work or study setting, [may not be deemed as exceptions](#).

In a culture rife with victim-blaming, coming forward with one’s story and pursuing formal action is itself a courageous act, and may prove

An overview of UCL procedure

Note: This is simply a summary of UCL procedures written in a brief and accessible format. It is, by no means, exhaustive (or claiming to be) and subject to greater detail. Please refer to the embedded links for UCL’s official policies before taking an action.

If you, or someone you know, experienced a traumatic incident, there are multiple routes that exist for reporting, pursuing disciplinary action and accessing support.

To file a report, or access support while reporting, you can contact the nearest staff member. They can be a personal tutor, department head, resident advisor etc. If you feel more comfortable contacting staff that you do not know personally, you can reach out to the Student Mediator, Ruth Siddall (responsible for informal resolution and guiding the involved parties through UCL’s reporting procedures), Students Union Advice Service (a UCL-independent unbiased confidential advice service on UCL procedures), or Dignity Advisors (who are uniquely trained to provide confidential information and advice on next steps). For first-year undergraduates, Student Advisors are present for confidential listening and guidance. If you’d rather speak to a student, the ones best equipped to help are SU Student Officers and Welfare Officers of a society.

It is important to note that UCL can only take formal disciplinary action on reports about incidents that have taken place on campus or UCL property and involve a UCL person. While you can still report other instances e.g., being harassed at an off-campus location by a UoL student, UCL can only provide support in those cases, or direct you to the MET police, which includes counselling, mitigating/extenuating circumstances and more to minimise

disruption to learning and mental wellbeing.

After submitting a named report, someone will contact you within 5 working days to explain possible next steps. You will also be offered support in the form of immediate care or counselling. You can also choose to pursue informal or formal action.

Informal action involves contacting the department, who can then initiate a discussion with the reported party so that they can be made aware of their actions, given a chance to alter their behaviour, avoid spaces frequented by you, or move halls, among other measures. If you do not feel comfortable contacting the department head, you can also email Ruth Siddall.

You can also choose to pursue formal disciplinary action against the reported party. If your case for formal action is upheld, penalties levied may include temporary suspension, permanent expulsion, exclusion from SU spaces, and/or a monetary fine. The procedure for that is as follows:

1. You must contact the student casework team via email to send you a formal case form. It is highly recommended to contact the Students’ Union Advice Service for assistance with the form.
2. The form requires you to write a detailed statement of the event as well as attach any evidence that you can. Evidence can include:
 - Eye-witness accounts
 - Names of potential witnesses
 - Diary entries, text/social media messages or emails mentioning the event
 - Video or audio recordings (covert recordings will not be accepted – they constitute a type of misconduct themselves)

3. After submitting the form, the casework team will review it and investigate your claims.	As this process may last a month or longer, support remains available in the meantime:
4. If your formal action case is upheld, a disciplinary hearing will be set. The disciplinary panel comprises three individuals: a Chair (UCL's Vice-Provost (Education & Student Experience) or their nominee), a member of UCL academic staff and a student officer of the Students Union. It is important that all three members do not know either party, or any witnesses, personally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You can contact the Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Advisor, Darren Watts, via email for precautionary safety measures, such as security alert devices, using the SafeZone app etc.You can request same-day appointments with the Student Support and Wellbeing Services for assistance with health concerns during the procedure, which can include special academic adjustments, accommodation adjustments if you are residing in halls, access to longer-term psychological services (within or outside UCL) etc. You can submit an enquiry through askUCL or call +44 (0)2076790100.
5. At the hearing, both parties will be present but will not interact, except in some cases such as sexual harassment where both parties would not be in the same room. You are allowed to bring a 'friend' to accompany you for emotional and mental support for the entirety of the hearing. Details of the procedure of the hearing can be found on pages 13 and 14 of the student disciplinary code and procedure.	In cases where a report has been made to the police before UCL, procedure differs. It is at the university's discretion whether they want to continue their own investigation alongside the criminal investigation. However, meanwhile, they are required to offer you interim assistance in the form of mental, emotional and/or academic support. They can also levy interim measures against the reported party, which can include suspension while investigation is pending etc.
6. After the hearing, the panel will deliberate over the case – this can range anywhere from fifteen minutes to two weeks.	
7. Once a decision has been made, it will be conveyed to both parties. There are limits to the extent conveyed to the reporting party. If unsatisfied with the outcome, only the reported party can appeal the decision made.	

crucial to a survivor's efforts to gain closure. Moreover, engaging with societies' spaces and events is a key part of the university experience for a student. The ambiguity in the extent to which information can be withheld can impede these efforts and evoke further distress.

With loopholes as such embedded in current policy dictates, students may ultimately feel helpless by the inflexibility of the system.

The faults with existing mitigative training

Aside from the inefficiencies and murkiness of reporting sexual misconduct, the administration, along with the Students' Union, fails to sufficiently prevent this behaviour in the first place.

For an average UCL student, training that is available consists of three separate programmes. Yet, most students would likely be able to name only one of them: the [Active Bystander Programme](#). Launched in 2015, this compulsory training programme aims to tackle bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct and explains how to safely intervene when these behaviours arise. However, several systemic oversights suggest that the implementation of the program may be superficial rather than constructive.

Firstly, while the definitions of bullying and harassment are accompanied with tasks that demonstrated their practical uses through interactive real-life examples, the sub-section on sexual misconduct features just four sentences and one interactive flashcard that displays the definition of consent. This lack of elaboration may be explained by the other two optional training modules, [I Heart Consent](#) and [Tackling Sexual Violence](#), which cover topics pertaining to sexual misconduct in greater detail. However, they are scarcely promoted or encouraged among the wider student

population.

Further, because these immersive exercises, or the live facilitated session, do not entail graded marking of any sort, one can complete the training without getting a single answer right. Also, despite it being labelled 'mandatory', there are no academic or disciplinary penalties for failing to complete the program. Ironically, the cavalier and lenient nature of the self-directed online program is thus undermining the gravity of the very behaviours it is aiming to tackle.

In an interview with The Cheese Grater, Anya Esmail-Yakas, President of UCL Gender and Feminism Society, criticised these programs for "not being enough." She said, "administering an online course seems like UCL has ticked the box of requirements and thought 'okay we've solved this problem'... [But] in reality, that is not the case at all because issues like misogyny and racism are embedded in our cultures, and have existed since before students enter university. An online course is not going to undo the systemic oppression that has taken place for decades." Instead, Esmail-Yakas suggests holding mandatory regular and in-person sensitivity training for all students. Initiating reflective discussions among students who would normally never think or talk about such issues is key – having those important, often uncomfortable conversations is the only way to change viewpoints and behaviours.

A long road ahead

The shortcomings identified above suggest a structural failure to support survivors of sexual misconduct and prevent future such incidents. What's worse is that this system is likely to remain flawed for a long time due to UCL's bureaucratic inefficiencies.

For instance, the issues highlighted in this article overlap significantly with the findings of the [Report + Support Task and Finish group](#), which was created to investigate the effectiveness of reporting procedures in instances of racial bullying and harassment. It took the group six months to investigate and draft a report, and another four months to present it to the Academic Board for approval.

A sense of urgency seems lacking – while the administration identifies and mends its shortcomings in a tediously inefficient manner, students continue to suffer with no safety net to fall back on. However, the underestimation of the issue at hand raises a significant question – can the onus truly be put on universities when the UK government fails to prioritise sexual harassment as an endemic issue? It was only after cases like Sarah Everard's murder grabbed media attention that the UK government launched a [new and improved strategy](#) to tackle violence against women and girls.

Compared to the historic [Title IX amendment](#) in the US, which brought sexual violence in the education community to the forefront of federal legislation, the UK government has failed to set similar accountability measures in place for universities defaulting on protecting and defending students from sexual assault incidents and perpetrators. While the [Office for Students \(OfS\)](#) and [Universities UK \(UUK\)](#) have published guidelines and recommendations for robust procedures for tackling harassment and sexual misconduct, they are just that – a set of recommendations. Neither of these overarching organisations legally require universities to comply to them.

Not only does this prevent a sense of responsibility for UK universities to install comprehensive measures, but

it also leads to considerable disparities in university reporting and support policies around the country, leaving some student communities worse off than others. For instance, member institutions of University of London, which share their campus spaces and academic modules with each other, have starkly different reporting and support systems in place. Students from these institutions reside in close proximity to each other, often in the same accommodation, and interact on a regular basis. In an instance where the reporting party and the reported party are from different UoL colleges, the deficiency of a coordinated and interconnected response prevents any disciplinary action from taking place (see page 8 for in-depth coverage).

Today, UCL appears to be championing a reactive approach to sexual assault – solving problems as they arise with minimal efforts towards prevention and systematic reform. What it desperately requires is a trauma-informed and survivor-focused strategy. It needs an approach that encourages responsible behaviour; it needs a community that isn't afraid to call harmful actions out; it needs a simple, transparent system that trusts the reporting parties. At the current pace, these changes will take years to manifest. UCL has the resources and expertise to protect its students from sexual violence, harassment and trauma. What it lacks is the drive to do so in a way that works.

In response to this article, Professor Sasha Roseneil, UCL Pro-Provost (Equity and Inclusion), said: "The wellbeing and safety of our students are of the greatest importance, and we continually strive to do better in creating an inclusive environment for all members of the UCL community. This means acknowledging when harm happens, and both doing

more to respond effectively and to prevent harmful behaviours.

“We are proud to be considered sector leaders in our proactive approach to challenging unacceptable behaviour and in how we handle reports. We are working hard to address many of the issues raised in this article and are grateful to the Cheese Grater for their ideas for improvement. There is need for continuing work in this area, at UCL and at all universities.

“Following a victim/survivor empowerment approach we offer

multiple avenues for reporting bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct to allow those who have experienced harm to select the reporting route that feels safest, of which Report + Support is one option, and often the first port of call.

“We recently commissioned a user experience evaluation of Report + Support, which highlighted a need for greater clarity on our procedures in order to improve understanding and trust, and suggested that we should consider providing advocacy support. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Team has already implemented changes, and we are continuing to grow our Active Bystander Programme, which has been running successfully for seven years. We are also developing a new Student Respect and Inclusion Module that sets out expected behaviour and consequences for misconduct.

“Bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct are never acceptable at UCL, and we encourage all members of our community to report any experiences of such behaviour, so that we can take action to prevent further instances.”

The Story of How Rape Went Unpunished At UCL

“It feels like he would have had to murder me for UCL to actually kick him out.”

Alfie Pannell

**Content warning: this article details a real case of sexual violence.*

For the purposes of the victim’s privacy, this article uses a pseudonym.

In April 2021, Grace, a first year UCL student at halls, was raped twice by another resident. This is the story of her ordeal and the university’s categorical failure to provide her with adequate support.

“I was at Halls and I met this guy once through some friends of mine. We were just hanging out in my friend’s room but the whole vibe there was strange. He wanted to give them some privacy so we went to his room but I had made it very clear, ‘I don’t want to have sex with you, I don’t want to kiss you.’ There just wasn’t the attraction. Just from my part, it wasn’t there.”

Despite clearly refusing sex, Grace’s attacker physically forced himself on her.

“At first I didn’t realize that I was raped. But I went back to my room and I started crying, crying for hours,

and I was like, ‘something is wrong’. But I didn’t know what, so I talked to my friends about it. And they were like ‘oh yeah, it’s just because sex, for girls, it’s a big thing. And it’s normal to have these emotions.’ But it wasn’t really normal that I couldn’t stop crying. I felt disgusting.”

Her attacker continued to send her inappropriate messages suggesting that “we can have more fun if you want to.” Grace felt she needed to make it clear to him again that she was not interested.

“I remember me and my friends were having dinner in the main building. I felt uncomfortable and I knew he wanted more from me even though I had made it clear to him that I didn’t want to have sex whatsoever, I just, I was just confused. I just didn’t realise what was going on. So then I asked my friends, ‘should I go to his room to talk about this and tell him that I really don’t want you to touch me or should I do it in public?’ My friends were like, ‘go to his room. There’s nothing wrong with it.”

“Again, I didn’t realise, I didn’t realise, I felt disgusting – but I didn’t realize it was rape, it felt like it was normal for men to force you to do things you don’t

want to do because I was just like, oh, I owe it to him, I owe it to men, I must have wanted it.”

“So then, the second time I went to his room to tell him, I don’t think I feel really comfortable about the whole situation, and I don’t want you to touch me, blah blah blah. And then it happened again. And that was when I realised it’s not okay because when it ended, when he was content, basically I went back to my friend’s room, but it was a whole thing. My friends basically didn’t believe me.”

Luckily, one of her friends did believe her. She too had been a victim of sexual assault when she was younger.

“She told me we should go to the hospital because, I don’t want to go into too much detail, but my state, it wasn’t right. It just wasn’t. There was loads of physical stuff - bruises, blood everywhere. So she told me, ‘go to the hospital right now.’ So then I went to the hospital – the bleeding was just very bad – and the nurse told me: ‘you do realize you’ve been raped twice.’ So that’s when I realized - well, I had realized, but, hearing that from someone else, then you’re like ‘fuck, it actually– it actually happened twice.”

Grace called her mother, who lives abroad, to tell her what had happened. The next day, Grace’s mother and brother flew to London to see her. Despite Grace’s protests, worried she would ruin her assaulter’s life and that she shared part of the blame, her mother insisted that she should report the rape to the police. This proved emotionally gruelling, as she had to sit for fifteen hours recounting, in as much detail as possible, what had happened. The police then provided her with a restraining order against her attacker, but their investigation into the incident still remains incomplete a year later.

After going to the police, Grace decided to contact her personal tutor so that UCL could take action against her rapist. However, she was informed that, even though she had a restraining order against him, they could not act against her rapist until the police concluded their investigation. Grace was told not to file a complaint on Report + Support as it would be useless while the police investigate.

Grace deplored this failure by UCL to punish her abuser, saying “I have proof that he did it to me and other girls as well, but they just don’t care. I think it’s ridiculous that right now I can’t report him to UCL because the police are already doing something. Everyone knows how fucked up the police here are, like they aren’t really doing anything. This is one of the reasons why so many girls don’t go to them, because everyone kind of discourages going to the police. And so does UCL by having these sorts of policies.”

In fact, UCL does have a policy regarding criminal investigations. Their [disciplinary code](#) states that “where criminal investigations and/or judicial proceedings are ongoing... the University will usually continue its own investigation and any disciplinary action.” However, they also state that

“where a disciplinary offence is also subject to a criminal investigation, UCL may suspend the disciplinary process until the criminal investigation and legal proceedings have been concluded.” It appears therefore that UCL is not obliged to wait for the police to conclude their investigation in order to act, but instead chose to pursue the latter route of waiting for criminal proceedings to conclude. In the meantime, Grace’s rapist is free to go about his life as normal at UCL.

Despite UCL not taking disciplinary measures, Grace’s personal tutor informed her that they could offer various support tools. She booked an appointment through AskUCL with Student Support and Wellbeing Services who provided her with extensions on her assignments. They also referred her to UCL’s Security and Crime Prevention team; Grace soon received a call reaffirming what her personal tutor told her about Report + Support. Although Grace begged the security advisor to do something, she said that legally they were unable to take action against the student until the police were finished.

However, the Security Team offered other tools to support Grace. First, they said they could monitor Grace’s UCL ID card and her rapist’s, and then notify Grace if they were close to each other on campus so that she could take necessary measures to avoid him. While the offer was welcome, Grace also felt the onus had been put on her, not her rapist, to respect the restraining order on campus. UCL also offered to provide Grace with a tool to protect herself if she returned to campus: a device that, when she pressed the button, would alert a nearby security guard to her whereabouts, who would come find her in case of an emergency. Finally, they said they could provide three security guards to help protect her when she moved out of accommodation. Yet, after this call with the Security and

Crime Prevention team, they did not follow up, despite indicating that they would, and none of their offers materialised. Grace, preoccupied with her trauma and emotionally exhausted, did not follow up either.

After her disappointing experience with the Crime Prevention team, Grace was referred to the UCL Rape Crisis Adviser by her tutor: “She called me and said ‘this is a safe space to talk about whatever is on your mind’. So then I did, but - I wish I was kidding - the woman wasn’t speaking. I told her what happened, and then there were 15 minutes of silence. So I was sat there thinking, ‘do I need to say anything, do you want me to?’ and then after 15 minutes, she was like, ‘oh, that sounds really exhausting.’ And I told her, ‘yeah, it is’. Again, for five minutes or ten minutes – silence. And then she was like, ‘oh, your time is over. Contact Support and Wellbeing Services if you need more help.”

[According to UCL](#), the Rape Crisis Adviser appointment is not “a counselling session, but an opportunity to talk about the impact that the incident has had on you. You can talk about your options and the process of reporting to the police with the adviser if you wish to do so.” Grace, expecting support, said the silence “made me feel ashamed because I was just talking about how this guy ruined me and the woman just didn’t seem to care.”

Let down by the Rape Crisis Adviser, Grace heeded her advice to contact Support and Wellbeing again. Listed as a priority, she avoided the often lengthy waiting time and received an appointment in just two days. The session was productive and helpful, but unfortunately it was a one-off. The next call she received from Support and Wellbeing was two weeks later, providing a SoRA that would grant Grace extra time on assignments. However, Grace was not offered

psychological support services.

Disappointed now by a third UCL support service, Grace went back to her personal tutor for help. Her tutor told her about another service that exists: Care First. It is an independent service, paid for by UCL, that offers counselling services to students and, on the weekends, operates 24 hours a day.

One night, Grace needed help and called the hotline. However, she was met with an aggressive response of “What do you want?” Grace described hoping to meet a warm, caring person on the other end of the phone, as she had felt isolated by her discomfort speaking to friends and family about what had happened. Yet, the woman she spoke to was cold and told her to call a sexual assault hotline instead.

After that, Grace gave up on seeking help through UCL.

She considered dropping out, saying that “right after it happened, I felt like, I don’t know if I want to be at UCL anymore because my rapist was there and I told them that. I was going to drop out and I still struggle a lot with the fact that I’m at the same university as him. But, you learn to live with it I guess. It’s less tough than it was a year ago.”

Despite staying, Grace minces no words in criticising UCL, saying that “they just don’t care. The only thing they care about is academia.”

Indeed, the only support that

materialised was a SoRA, despite the procedures UCL has in place (refer to page 2 for in-depth coverage).

UCL’s ineffective response has made her regret telling anyone: “I just wish I didn’t [report it] because I’ve already been through so much. I know I probably just would have been better off processing it by myself instead of having the police who don’t do anything and only make the situation worse.”

Despite speaking out against her aggressor, she has yet to experience any form of justice. Instead, his life goes on as usual: “He still gets to go out, do his degree, go to the UCL bars and he’s dangerous. He almost killed me. It feels like he would have had to murder me for UCL to actually kick him out.”

Even one case is inexcusable, but it is unlikely that Grace is the only one to be let down by UCL’s inadequate response to rape. The university failed to act against a rapist on its campus, and did not even provide the basic tools it had promised to protect Grace from future assaults. There are serious cracks in the system, and UCL must act to stop more people from falling through them.

In response to this article, Professor Sasha Roseneil, UCL Pro-Provost (Equity and Inclusion), said: “We are profoundly troubled to learn of Grace’s experience and we are urgently looking into what went wrong for her. We offer multiple ways for reporting bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct to allow those

who have experienced harm to choose the reporting route that feels safest and most appropriate for them.

“We encourage students who feel they have experienced or witnessed bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct by another student to make a formal report to the Student Casework Team by contacting them on casework@ucl.ac.uk. This process may also be initiated through Report + Support. Where behaviour has been found to breach UCL’s policies, disciplinary action may be taken through our own processes, and this may happen while criminal investigations are ongoing. We are concerned to read that Grace was advised not to do this and we are making sure that personal tutors and student advisers give the correct advice and information.

“Our Student Support and Wellbeing Services provide a safe, confidential, and non-judgemental space, in which our students can discuss any issues that may be affecting their ability to study. Students who have experienced harassment, violence, or abuse are guided how to access a wide range of support should they need it, including support via a referral to specialist external organisations. The Adviser will talk through UCL’s procedures and inform how to make a complaint through our Student Disciplinary Procedure. They can also speak with tutors without any requirement to disclose confidential information to help the student with requests for extensions or changes to their studies. We encourage anyone struggling with their mental health and wellbeing to contact them to speak to an adviser.”

common element: justification. The survivor attempts to explain how and why they found themselves in that precarious situation in the first place. They repeat sentences like, “I was

only there because I felt safe” or, “I understand how it was irresponsible to drink so much” or, “I wasn’t even wearing anything revealing”. Because of an inescapable culture of victim-blaming surrounding us, women constantly feel the need to emphasise that they did everything they could to avoid being harassed or assaulted. They are told to alter their behaviour so they can always be alert.

In my first year at UCL, last term, I was raped.

That night, my friend, Camilla, and I were out at a freshers’ clubbing event. We were having a great time when we left the club; we decided to go back to another friend’s flat for the night. There were a group of us heading there – an equal ratio of women to men. I “felt safe”. The energy felt humourous and fun.

One of the men in that group, a UoL student, Hugo, was constantly trying to flirt with me. But, I was trying to avoid him, hinting that I was not interested. I did it as kindly and calmly as I could; I did not want to come off as “rude”.

When we finally reached the flat, Hugo sat next to me on the couch and started to touch my arms and legs, without my consent. He then proceeded to say, “I don’t want this to come off as weird, but I really want to fuck you”. Repulsed by the indecency of his speech, and still not interested, I decided to be direct and responded with, “I am not interested in having sex with you at all”. He said he respected that and left the couch.

Later in the night, I was feeling drunk and tired. I wanted to go home but Camilla did not want to leave yet. I did not want to leave her alone here so I decided to nap on the couch. Shortly after, I was jolted awake by a man kissing my neck and placing his fingers inside my underwear; it was Hugo,

who “respected” my lack of consent. Everyone else had moved to another room so we were the only ones on the couch.

As I was still half-asleep, I was slowly attempting to push him off me; yet, he resisted. He continued kissing me, insisting that “you make me so horny – you can’t just leave me like that”, suggesting that I “owe him something” due to my physical appearance.

I decided to kiss him back, hoping that he would be fulfilled and remove his hands from my body. It didn’t work.

When he tried to pin me down, I told him, “I really don’t want to have sex”. He continued to ignore me and started to force himself inside me, all while I struggled to push him away. After realising that I had no way to remove myself from this situation, I offered to perform oral sex on him so that he wouldn’t force me to have penetrative sex with him. He agreed, and after I finished, he left.

I got dressed, ran to find Camilla and we rushed out of the flat. As soon as we left, I told her, “I think I just got sexually assaulted”.

For the next few days, I felt disgusted. Conflicting thoughts flooded my mind – I felt violated, but maybe it wasn’t rape, since I had consented eventually.

“I shouldn’t have gotten drunk around people that I do not know very well”.

“I shouldn’t have slept on a random couch while my friends were in a different room”.

“I should have said no some more times; maybe I wasn’t clear enough and he got confused”.

The only person I could place blame on was... me.

I discussed the incident with my therapist, and am still working through it with them. I also decided to report this to UCL, hoping for some closure. It was extremely important for me to share this experience, in hope that I could prevent another woman from being traumatised. When I submitted the report, I was proud of myself. I did not have any expectations; I did not have an aim. I did not even feel a distinct emotion – I was not particularly angry or sad about what happened. I just wanted to control what happened next.

Some working days after my report, I received an email from a member of the Report and Support team, specifically from the Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Advisor, detailing my options for accessing support. I set up a call with them, hoping to understand how to take my report further. They told me that because Hugo does not go to UCL, and because University of London (UoL) does not have a central reporting policy, UCL cannot take any disciplinary action.

I was then told that I can report this crime to the MET Police. Yet, they also clarified the police would not be able to take any action either, unless another individual files a report against Hugo. This implies that another woman would have to get assaulted, and would have to report it, for the Police to investigate the matter. That sense of control that I craved was lost now. I felt completely helpless – ironically, the very thing I was trying to prevent, another assault, became exactly what the authorities required to take action against the perpetrator.

Following this, I was also offered access to some other support services. Yet, after the initial inadequate response, I did not feel comfortable approaching them.

I had filed a report thinking that if

“Rape is not normal. It is normalised.”: A First-hand Account

Anonymous

**Content warning: graphic details of rape and sexual assault.*

Note: All names have been changed.

Everyone has drunk sex at university, right? That’s what student life is all about!

Most testimonies of rape feature a

intercollegiate study is so accessible to students at UCL and other UoL institutions, so would be reporting an intercollegiate sexual assault incident. But, I guess that is more complicated.

After this disappointing experience, I stopped talking about what happened. I thought that maybe my story was normal, that it was just a “bad moment”.

Rape is not normal. It is normalised.

The other day, my friend went out to a UCL event. She texted me that she was very drunk, and she remembered she kissed a man. She proceeded to share how uncomfortable she had felt, not knowing what his face looked like.

I was studying in the Student Centre a few months later when I overheard a group of male students commenting on how “annoying” it was that a woman was too intoxicated to consent, that she could not recollect having sex with one

of these men.

Intoxication does not equal enthusiastic consent. I should not be scared to consume alcohol when I am out with my friends in the fear of another person’s hands being placed on my body without consent. It is time that we stop normalising taking advantage of people’s vulnerability.

This is not the “student life”. This is sexual harassment. This is rape.

Our Sabbatical Officers: A Year in Review

Samir Ismail: SU Correspondent

It has been a turbulent year for all at UCL. It was truly a rollercoaster ride with changing COVID conditions, numerous bouts of strikes and extremely consequential decisions like UCL leaving Stonewall. There have also been important happenings less known and less discussed: the disparate status between Liberation Networks and societies, the Students’ Union Executive rush to oppose strike action and a frankly cavalier attitude towards the wants of students and the rules and spirit of the Students’ Union.

It is worth remembering that the Sabbatical Officers work full time for a salary just over £25,000 a year. With such an important role and a very fair wage, it is important they take both their jobs and their constituents, that is the student body, seriously.

So let’s see how our Sabbatical Officers performed in this turbulent year of constant change:

Equity Officer, Arifa Aminy, has promoted important causes throughout the year, in line with her brief. As our first Equity Officer I think it is fair to say that Arifa has set a high bar. [Lobbying UCL to improve mental health facilities](#) to reduce waiting times, providing sports facilities for disabled

students and promoting more cultural celebrations were all part of Arifa’s good work. On top of this, she has organised aid for Afghanistan, pushed for more child-friendly study spaces, and spearheaded the ‘Period Project’ this year, which included a campaign to raise awareness about period poverty and provide period products free of cost. After losing her bid for re-election, it would seem that students want even more out of their Equity Officer.

Postgraduate Officer Viktoria Makai, another victim of recent elections, has been nothing but a champion to her constituents. Over the last year, she has been [lobbying UCL to secure stable fees](#), [increasing opportunities for publishing](#) and ensuring all PGAs [know their rights and have support](#). Perhaps it is a shame that she lost in the recent election. Was it an indictment on her performance or her personality? Maybe, or perhaps neither.

From our Activities and Engagement Officer this year we have seen all activities and no engagement. Ilyas Benouma has been prodigious in his ability to promote the resources available to UCL’s sports teams. But in terms of engagement, I’m afraid we’ve seen little more than can be accomplished in a few brainstorming sessions. While I have never been a

Sabbatical Officer and cannot gauge the agency they have, I would hope a dedicated elected member of the Union Executive could come up with more – more than promoting in-person events and ensuring societies have financial support. While these goals are definitely important, aren’t they the bare minimum?

From our Education Officer, Ayman Benmati, I fear that we have seen a similar performance. While [extremely important work was done](#) - reducing the BAME awarding gap and ensuring a strong EC Policy which appropriately accounts for the challenges that students focus in another irregular year - we expect this from all of our Education Officers. His other work – ‘continue to develop lines of communication to and between representatives’ and ensuring graduation is up to our expectations – is fine, but just that, fine.

Yasmeen Daoud, our outgoing Welfare and Community Officer, performed similarly. She has done important and necessary work such as [increasing access to prayer spaces](#) and [representing marginalised students effectively](#). However, with only 25% of her tenure remaining, Yasmeen is yet to start lobbying for over a quarter of her policies. She was also recently spotted heading into campus by crossing the

picket line, which forces us to ask whether she has a genuine commitment to her role? Especially now as she’s on her way out.

Leading our oh so holy Union, Osman Teklies has had an interesting year at the helm. He led [work](#) in creating more faith facilities, improved existing commercial and community spaces, made the welcome period more accessible and reviewed and renewed our sustainability policy. However, unlike previous Union Affairs Officers, Osman has managed to reach new heights of irony with [policies](#) like “putting students at the forefront of decision-making” and asserting that the Student Union Executive is the “expert on what matters for students”. Interestingly, in October, Osman led

the Union in direct contradiction to how the students voted in a referendum in February. While they defended themselves by claiming that they thought it was in the students’ best interests, it seems hard to believe the Union Executive, and Osman in particular, are ‘experts’ on the thoughts and beliefs of students. In light of this, maybe it is unsurprising that Osman also crossed the picket line last week, a clear demonstration of his apparent lack of regard for the actions and decisions of the student body. Osman’s claims that he represents the student body are not only blatantly false but also disrespectful. It raises the question whether Osman does not understand his duties as leader of the student body or whether he simply does not care?

So, there you have it. Those who tried their hardest this year lost their seats, while others decided to coast along as if no one was watching. A striking question thus arises: could our resources be better invested in different officers, or even new officers? Indeed, it seemed that while our Equity Officer, Arifa, was overworked, Ilyas, Osman and Yasmeen barely lifted a finger to go beyond their remits. It seems that in terms of equality there is much to be done. Though the SU has created positions to represent marginalised groups, the portion of their resources devoted to this cause, in at least personnel, is lacking. Officers representing women, BME, Trans, and LGBTQ+ students all work part-time and are unpaid.

Ultimately, the stamp of our Students’ Union is mediocrity.

Sabbatical Officers Hustings: Thoughts from the Chair

Alfie Pannell

For seven hours last week, I sat on stage with candidates for all six Sabbatical Officer positions and had the chance to question them about the most pressing issues facing UCL students. Now that the results are in, some were surprising and well, some were not. Here is my impression of the diverse range of candidates and those who ultimately won.

Activities & Engagement Officer

The seven candidates for this position embodied a broad range of the UCL student spectrum. The President of the Hockey Team went head to head with his counterpart from the Harry Potter Society. All of the candidates were upbeat and, to an extent, offbeat - I couldn’t take my eyes off Mirabel Brow’s fabulously flamboyant pink lashes. The session passed largely uncontroversially, with the prospective

Sabbs concurring on strategies to improve club and society inclusivity and safety. The victorious Mary McHarg, President of the Sci-Fi Society, was undoubtedly impressive, making well-reasoned arguments to present herself as sensible, if nothing else. This moderation was somewhat surprising, given that she was a member of the “radically caring” slate - however, maybe it’s why she was the only one to win. While Mary performed well, Thomas Lau proved the most passionate, in my opinion, speaking naturally about the issues at hand and exhibiting a rare candidness in an often over-rehearsed ritual. It wouldn’t surprise me if he returns for another shot next year. Yet, despite Lau breathing some energy into the discussion, it remained fairly stale - nothing concerning, but also, nothing surprising.

Education Officer

When Tim Fung and Will Porter came on stage - the only two of five prospectives for this position to attend the hustings - they were chatting away like old chums. But this camaraderie soon expired, leading to perhaps the nastiest session of the day. The silver lining of a small turnout was that it increased the pressure on the two candidates to perform their best. Porter, a Secondary School teacher currently pursuing a masters in education, did not shy away from openly challenging his opponent. Fung, whose platform was largely based on closing the BAME attainment gap, failed to present a plan to do so. In fact, there was an uncomfortably long pause as he grasped at a response, while Porter’s smiling schadenfreude was rather awkwardly caught on camera. Yet, Fung’s failure to materialise a concrete response was not exceptional in a debate that remained largely theoretical, lacking any convincing

policy proposals. The end of the discussion saw open debate break out, rendering me useless as Porter subjected Tim to his own interrogations; “are you interviewing Alfie now?” was Porter’s final interjection before we closed the debate. It is perhaps no great surprise that voters opted for a third choice - Hamza Ahmed - who had sent in a video for the broadcast, successfully steering clear of the sty.

Postgraduate Officer

The three candidates for Postgraduate Officer were fittingly mature. Vikki, the incumbent, was natural and confident, undoubtedly aided by her year in office. Suhaila, who will soon replace Vikki, seemed less comfortable at the start, but by the end had lost the shake in her voice and allowed her vision of “development” to flourish. Thenmozhi, while maybe more realistic than her opponents who touted the scrapping of application fees and slashing of tuition, lacked that mendacious knack for promising people what they want. By defending these payments as a necessary evil to keep degrees competitive, it

was hard to avoid the conclusion that Thenmozhi’s policies were out of touch with her base. Suhaila and Vikki possessed the foresight to promise the world, whether they believed it or not, and their platforms were about the same. In the end, the voters opted for a change from the old guard by backing Suhaila to replace Vikki.

Welfare and Community Officer

This was yet another crowded field, with issues to tackle as lofty as the mental health crisis and academic support services. Another member of the “radical” slate, Daria, ran for this position; she undoubtedly performed well but faced a challenging field. Ziad Miqdadi was well prepared, but perhaps too much; his discourse came out rather unnaturally and appeared over-rehearsed, not helped by the fact that he came with paper in hand. Chenchen’s banana hat deserves a special mention, but, unfortunately for her, it failed to convince the voters. Ultimately, Muhammad Umair’s victory was a genuine surprise to me. Yet, I could see how his altogether

relaxed but unspectacular performance may have endeared voters, who saw him as a person instead of a politician. However, reports of him and his supporters coercing votes from unsuspecting pedestrians may partially explain his victory. In the first round of voting, Muhammad was backed by 1944 students, with an astonishing lead over Ziad, who was the second most popular with 871 votes. If Muhammad is as apt at representing students as he is at collecting votes, then we are in for a productive year.

Equity and Inclusion Officer

This session dealt with some of the most complex issues facing UCL and the SU - including how to tackle inequality based on race, religion, gender, and sexuality. The candidates were impressive and authoritative in their ability to represent marginalised voices. Arifa Aminy, the incumbent officer, provided a less ambitious, or should I say a more realistic, platform than her counterparts - perhaps a reflection of the inevitably dashed optimism engendered by a year in office.



Election Bitch

After a brief hiatus from the fear and loathing of the campaign trail, Election Bitch is pulling up her sleeves and rolling in the mud with the candidates once again. Politics hasn’t been this interesting since Donald Trump’s ejection from the Zuckerberg-Musk Media, but luckily this year’s SU election has put the crazy back in democracy.

UCLove received a much-needed

injection of controversy as it became the stage for Emma Cryer, Activities and Engagement Officer candidate, to defend herself from all sides. After heeding Students for Justice in Palestine’s demands for all the candidates to pledge to Boycott, Sanction and Divest from Israel, her name was quickly removed from the petition for being disingenuous. Evidence of her secret life as a Mossad agent is yet to materialise, but SJP were surely free from any ulterior motives.

In other news, Muhammad Mehmood bid farewell to his Welfare Officer rivals as he extorted a 1000 ballot lead by stopping people in the street and forcing them to vote for him. One can only imagine that

his constituents’ welfare will be the centrepiece of his tenure - even if not, he doesn’t need to worry about a vote of no confidence.

Other cheap tactics were deployed against the incumbent Equity Officer, Arifa Aminy. The Afghan refugee was denounced online for her grasp of the English language and campaign poster font choices. While I would certainly prefer a Times New Roman, these gladiators may have overstepped their bounds.

All in all, this election season was a nasty one, and Election Bitch is counting down the days until the next one.

Yet, she stood firm and principled, seeming eager to continue her fight for the rights of all students. Some were not convinced by Arifa, however; Mustafa Almi’ani launched a tirade accusing her of aiding and abetting transphobia on campus. Mustafa, a member of the “radically caring” slate, did not come off well berating an Afghan refugee, and mother, for being apathetic to students’ struggles. The other two prospectives, Darius and Seyi, were two sides of the same woke (and I don’t use that derogatorily) coin. On a few occasions, Seyi couldn’t help but burst out into agreement with Darius, and the two appeared genuinely selfless and passionate about the issues - certainly proving a good fit for the role. Ultimately, it was Seyi who won the election, and I have little doubt that they will fight and advocate for much needed action on Stonewall, the BAME (for want of a better word) attainment gap and many other issues.

Union Affairs Officer

Unpaid internships: when did free labour become normalised?

Wiktorcia Gucia

There is a sense of excitement when searching for summer internships on, what seems like, the endless amount of job finding sites available. The prospect of obtaining experience that may benefit your future career by building a professional social network and relevant skills, which you can later boast about in cover letters, seems like a good way to spend the summer, especially when the internship is well-paid. Yet, this is where the problem arises. London’s reputation as one of the most expensive cities in Europe is more pronounced than ever before, considering that in 2021 [London was ranked 3rd for most expensive cost of living](#). As students, we often rely on the student loan, our parents, and any other extra weekend

Two of the four prospective candidates showed up for the hustings for this position: Deniz and Anoushka. Anoushka was the final member of the “radically caring” slate while Deniz represented quite a different contingent, having cut his teeth in the law debating society this year. Undoubtedly, this experience gave him a leg up as he skillfully navigated the questions with eloquence and composure. However, most of his policies entailed increasing spending by the SU - which is already reeling from budget cuts - so it is hard to imagine him achieving many of his promises. Anoushka was unlucky to go head to head with Deniz, as she seemed less prepared but also less political - something that could have worked in her favour. Yet, ultimately, Deniz’ plentiful and well-placed campaign posters may have given him the upper hand. Now, he must show that his policies can materialise as something other than attractive rhetoric to a financially struggling student body.

Looking ahead

As Investigations Editor this year, I have been knee deep in the issues dogging UCL’s community. Marketisation, racism, transphobia, sexual misconduct and poor working conditions were the defining topics of our coverage, and indeed of the Sabbatical hustings. These seem unlikely to disappear any time soon, but as I leave for a year abroad, I hope to return to a slightly better campus. While the newly elected Sabbs represent a mixed bag, there are undoubtedly some gems in there that provide a glimmer of hope for the future. And as I hand over to a new editorial team, I can promise our readers that this magazine will continue to scrutinise the actions of the SU leadership and UCL administration as long as they (and we) exist. With transparency, we can effectuate change, and we can gradually chip away at institutional oppression and inefficiency to improve both our learning conditions and staff working conditions.

job we can get, in order to survive. However, many of us still live from month to month dreading to look at the amount of cash that England’s capital has swallowed up, and unpaid internships are only exacerbating that fear.

Yet, despite this struggle, many employers continue to promote unpaid internships for students. By normalising this type of work, they are complicit in limiting upward mobility, especially for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The [2018 Sutton Trust Report](#) shows that around 40% of young people in the UK have taken up an unpaid internship, noting that this is a significant “barrier to the best careers.” The main question is whether

employers realise the corrupt and endless cycle that unpaid internships perpetuate. When applying for work after university, most people are driven by financial opportunities because that is what our current economic system is based on: money. But to be accepted to a well-paid job, experience is needed. Unpaid internships, therefore, make the application process unequal from the start, and render “equality of opportunity” a myth.

From my position, as a student from a low socioeconomic background, the summer period can be very tough financially. In a prestigious university like UCL, many students are privileged enough to think about what country they’ll choose to go to on holiday; so,

it's often hard to accept, for the students that lack financial support, that the summer period requires finding a job, rather than sunbathing in the Bahamas. Evidently, many restaurants, pubs and shops are eager to hire students, and these options are viable, considering that no work should be deemed 'too big' or 'too small'. However, the disproportionate value which future employers will ascribe to a standard summer job versus an internship in a big corporate firm shouldn't be overlooked. In the US, it was [reported](#) that internships are judged as the most important attribute in evaluating graduates for hire, and the [same trends are evident amongst UK employers](#). Moreover, internships are most advantageous in acquiring the skills necessary to navigate the work environment. This is particularly important, as employers often don't evaluate that there are significant barriers when looking for an internship; these go beyond being rejected from internships based on the application process and encompass structural factors that many students simply can't surpass. It's no longer a question about "not bothering" to find an internship, which is the lens through which many employers view graduates that didn't

participate in any work experience during their time at university, but rather a more serious problem with the system. Nevertheless, this systemic issue isn't merely hidden, as even the official government website states that student internships are not always entitled to the National Minimum Wage, as part of the [Employment Rights and Pay for Interns](#).

The translation of free labour into official UK legislation portrays the normalisation of exploitative norms within the capitalist system, but the fast pace of the competitive market seems to have prohibited those affected from actively resisting such norms. Personally, I too, have found myself anxiously clicking on unpaid internships, afraid that by not following the elitist direction towards the job market, I will become unemployable. However, it is often useful to look at the system from a different perspective and ask yourself whether your contribution to a firm, no matter how big or small, is really not worth a single penny?

Admittedly, highlighting the struggles that students from a low socioeconomic background have when searching for internships doesn't deal

with the problem. As students, we often don't have much of an influence on political decisions when it comes to employment rights, but changes can be made at a university level. For example, although [UCL Careers](#) offers funding and support for those students that seek to find an internship, but can't settle for unpaid opportunities, this support is often not emphasised to the students that require it. I believe that these resources should be specifically put forward to students that need them, so that they can be made aware of a more equal access to the same work experience opportunities as their colleagues from a more favourable socioeconomic background.

Personally, I will carry on searching for paid internships, and make use of UCL's resources because I believe that I shouldn't be disadvantaged on the mere basis of a low familial income. Will I succeed? That is one question that all students, no matter what their socioeconomic status, ask themselves about their career prospects. I sincerely hope that if I do succeed in finding an internship, it will be on the basis of my skills, knowledge and job interest, rather than the amount of money in my account.

Congrats on becoming a dad, Michael Cera ❤️



I won't be the first to say that Michael Cera is hugely underrated. It's true that he has somewhat of a mini cult following in some circles of the interwebs, but I believe that he should be at the same heights as Marlon Brando and Leonardo DiCaprio. I feel spiritually connected to him for very logical reasons: he has the same birthday as me and was born twelve years earlier (aka a full zodiac cycle in traditional Eastern beliefs), which technically means we are soul sisters. And what kind of soul sister doesn't get a sister shoutout?

Anyway, I thought M.C. would deserve a piece especially dedicated to congratulating him on his new baby - who I assume was birthed by his significant other, but I wouldn't be surprised either if he himself had the power of childbirth. What a man, what a myth, what a legend of utmost Cerabrity status (yes, I also think he deserves his own celebrity classification - above the A-List, obviously)

WE LOVE YOU MICHAEL!

An Elegy for the £3 Meal Deal

In the last year, prices of household goods have risen by 5.5% on average; the fastest rate in the last thirty years, creating huge difficulties for families across the country.

Sainsbury's has upped its milk price, Aldi its fruits', and most importantly, the Tesco meal deal is now £3.50.

Oh meal deal, who would have thought this day would come? You are the bedrock of our nation, the one thing we all thought we could rely on, but you have now let us down. The world no longer feels safe. The ground is unstable beneath our very feet. What will be next? No pastry section in Lidl? A nightmarish thought to try to forget.

You, the Tesco meal deal, are crucial to the formation of both friends and

enemies. While it is great to bond over the love of wraps, iced coffees, triple sandwiches and alike, you also allow us to see an individual's true character, the real them. Is it morally right to be friends with someone that chooses the boiled egg mayonnaise box as their snack? No it is not. Run now.

You, the meal deal, bring all members of the community together. Tesco is the beating heart of society on a Monday lunchtime. Office workers, students, families and more all flock to your sacred space on Tottenham Court Road, where the hustle and bustle cannot be matched even by the swarms of Leicester Square tourists. Oh the drama that arises, oh the shenanigans that occur. The most difficult decision of the day must be made before the stocks deplete. It's a challenge that only

makes your end result all the tastier.

There is no greater high than a good meal deal bargain. No illicit substance matches the thrill that runs through you when you save £2.50 on a smoothie. You allow us to become an undercover thief that even security can't catch. We look the guard in the eye, smirk, laugh sardonically, and wallow in our criminal success.

I terminate with a tone of melancholy. I'm sad. Distressed. As I'm sure you are too. The £3 meal deal represents the best parts of humanity: diversity, excitement, absolute stinginess. I reject the Clubcard deal adamantly, it is not right. It is disrespectful to the memory of you, the meal deal for all, the people's lunch. I salute you. We salute you. Adieu.

Netflix, please stop commissioning Wattpad fanfiction

Look, I get why Wattpad exists. It caters to a big audience. *imagine this narration in Vanessa Hudgens' voice for the rest of the paragraph* I get it, I respect it. Even if no one wants to admit they used to read Wattpad, a lot of us did, which is terrible, but... inevitable?

HOWEVER, it is absolutely appalling that Wattpad fanfiction has found itself into the Netflix domain. One fanfic-turned-movie I could deal with, and that's *After*, because everyone already knows its context so you know to avoid it (or at least are able to watch it ironically). The *Kissing Booth* was my last straw, or so I thought until I watched *A través de mi ventana* (Spanish for 'through my window'), which has frankly driven me over the edge and made me want to jump out of

mi own ventana. It is simply a crime to pair preteen Wattpad heteronormative fantasy with Netflix. It's like saying Rihanna should have a baby with Jacob Sartorius instead.

Imagine: you are Spanish, someone learning Spanish, or you simply want to treat yourself to an innocent little foreign language teen film on an obscure Friday night. You have exhausted *Élite* and *La Casa de Papel* (these are great series, by the way, and actually worth the watch), so your heart smiles aplenty when you bechance a new Spanish film on your Netflix front page.

Warning: spoilers ahead

You click into the film, and discover that the main character is so enamored with the boy next door that her WiFi

password is literally "Ar£s Greek G0d" in Spanish. To balance out her being a stalker, Ares Greek God also takes a leaf out of a certain vampire's book, making the incredibly rational decision to break and enter into said stalker's house. Naturally, these two underage felons are so riddled with lust that they go through the bases backwards. And then, despite him being a #player #alphamale #badboy, they fall in love (!)

Of course his rich family disapprove (and of course a five-person family living in a mansion with multiple house staff is located right next door to a single mum with a teenager), so there's a scene where #badboy Ares lies face down in a pool like a Sim you're trying to drown and, because he nearly dies, his family suddenly decides to

stop being classist (!?!). Don't get me wrong, I'm all for learning curves, but this was all so abrupt that it felt like UCL announcing the third strike of the term.

Spoilers end

This description isn't even the half of it, but I will spare you the film's Tom

nooks and Danny crannies. I must admit, though, that around 40 minutes into the film when I confirmed my suspicions in discovering through Wikipedia that it was indeed based on a Wattpad story, I employed the same mindset shift as I did with After and started watching it as a comedy instead. A splendid satire, perhaps a visual version of what someone might send

to the UCL Cheese Grater Humour section. After that, it was positively hilarious and I was much less filled with existential dread.

That said, I still think that, not unlike the existence of animal milk, Netflix adaptations of Wattpad tales should be permanently abolished. Thank you for coming to my TED talk.

Geraldine, 52, Learns Phrase ‘Gaslight Gatekeep Girlboss’ From Daughter Gessica and Decides to Build a Gempire

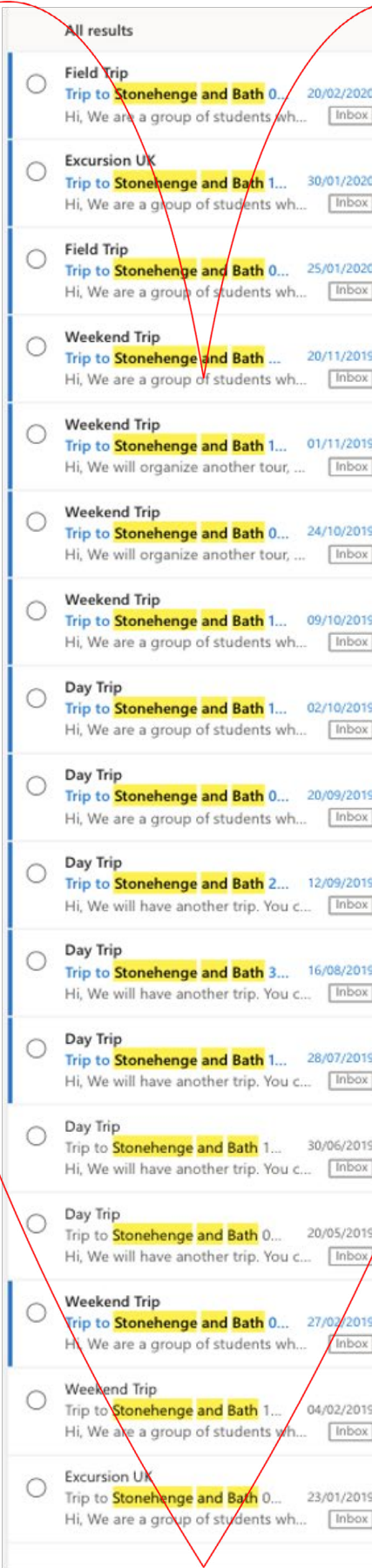


GASLIGHT GATEKEEP
GIRLBOSS

WHERE IS THE MANAGER?

ANOTHER DAY,
ANOTHER SLAY

RIP to the Group of Students Traveling to Stonehenge and Bath



Although there have been many a correlation throughout my silly little life, such as that between how much coffee I drink in the morning and how much I will hate everyone for the rest of the day, there is one which distinctly stands out: my life - and society - going downhill since the Group of Students Traveling to Stonehenge and Bath stopped emailing me.

Indeed, I like to mentally divide my time at UCL into two different sections: pre-emails about the trips to Stonehenge and Bath, and post-emails about Stonehenge and Bath. Sometimes, when I am staring into space, I indulge myself in a wondering of their whereabouts. It may be easy to think half of them are now permanently living in Bath and the other underneath the Stones of the Henge, but my personal view is that such a solid group would stick together. Perhaps they spend half of their year taking baths in Bath, and the other half Hingeing underneath the stones. Or perhaps - and this, for me, seems the more likely solution - they were not mere humans like us highovers, but traveling spirits of another realm who have now gone to conquer another university UCL as in Université catholique de Louvain.

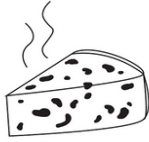
I shall end this piece with an ode:

O Group of Students Traveling to Stonehenge and Bath, wherefore art thou, Group of Students Traveling to Stonehenge and Bath?

Deny thy disappearance and swear to return, or if thou wilt not, but be sworn my ceaseless wonders of your whereabouts,

And I'll no longer be a Directioner (for I am directionless without you).

UCL BUILDINGS AS CHEESES



*The Student Centre
(where Jeremy Bentham sits,
and B1): Blue Cheese.*

Can understand why it might appeal to a few people, but is generally infected with germs and instills a mild sensation of disgust.



The Student Centre (everywhere else) - Parmesan.

A bit basic, but everyone likes it and it's sprinkled into almost every UCL student's conversations on a regular basis.



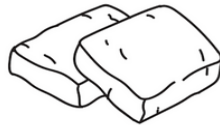
Science library - Camembert.

Smells a bit bad, but still a classic. Just as the study of science commands respect, so does the fancy-sounding name of this dairy product.



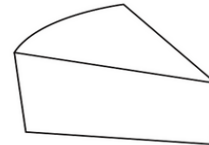
Mully's (Lewis's Building) - Beer-infused Cheese.

Need I explain more?



Main Quad/Portico - Feta.

Another classic and generally well-liked. Also, probably the UCL location (and the cheese) to have featured in the highest number of Instagram photos.



IoE - Red Leicester.

Slightly manufactured, still enjoyable.



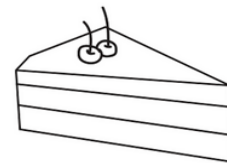
Roberts Building - Babybel.

Unique exterior, artificial interior.



SSEES Library - Burrata.

Not everyone knows about it and sounds slightly exotic, but it's one of the best of its kind out there.



Bloomsbury Theatre - Triple-layered Cheesecake.

Extravagant, varied in its contents, and sometimes incites 'ooohs' and 'ahhhs'.

UCL Cheese Grater Magazine Society

President—Maryam Badghisi
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Humour Editor—Tania Tang
Online Editor—Aiyi Mann
Graphics Editor—Anushka Barthwal

president@cheesegratermagazine.org
editor@cheesegratermagazine.org
investigations@cheesegratermagazine.org
humour@cheesegratermagazine.org
online@cheesegratermagazine.org

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