

Referendum on changes to the Articles of Association of UEL Students' Union

1. The Board of Trustees has proposed changes to student representation structures in UEL Students' Union. The intention is to become a more-effective organisation by better understanding our members' needs and being able to act on them.
2. Members of the Students' Union, i.e. all UEL students, will have the opportunity to vote on the changes between Monday 28 and Thursday 31 October 2019. This vote is called a referendum.

Process

3. In autumn 2018, the Board of Trustees appointed an external expert to review the Students' Union's representation structures. The expert consulted with Students' Union student officers, staff and students and developed a list of recommendations. Students were asked for their opinions on an earlier draft of the proposal in spring 2019.
4. The Board adopted the expert's recommendations and, on 07 October 2019, unanimously approved (i.e. every trustee agreed) a proposal to put it to a referendum (vote) of student members.
5. Open meetings were held on 14/15/16 October 2019 where the Students' Union outlined the final proposal. Students were invited to submit amendments by 17 October 2019. No amendments were received.

What does the proposal mean?

6. The detailed changes are outlined in the motion which is available on the Students' Union website. However, we have provided a summary of the changes and the reasoning for them on page two of this document.

What is the question?

7. When you vote, you will be asked if you agree with the proposal to reform the Students' Union.
8. Vote YES if you support the reform proposal. If yes wins, the Board will implement the proposed changes.
9. Vote NO if you do not support the reform proposal. If no wins, nothing will change.

How do I vote?

10. All UEL students can vote between 10:00 and 18:00 from Monday 28 October to Thursday 31 October in East Building (Docklands), Computer and Conference Centre (CC building) (Stratford) or USS foyer (University Square Stratford).
11. Students can vote at any campus and must show their UEL ID card.

Proposal	Reason
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase maximum number of Student Trustees from one to two ▪ Change Student Trustees from elected to appointed ▪ Reduce maximum number of full-time elected Student Officers to three ▪ Amend quorum for Board of Trustees meetings 	<p>There are currently ten members of the Board of Trustees: four Student Officers, one student, four externals, one University nominee. The Student Officers are paid; the others are volunteers.</p> <p>It is proposed to change the five student positions to three Student Officers and two students. The two students would be selected, rather than elected. Having an application and selection process, rather than an election process, has been shown to greatly broaden the diversity of candidates. This would help to ensure the students on the Board better reflect our diverse student body.</p> <p>The exact roles of the Student Officers will be decided by the Board of Trustees later but are likely to be aligned to the Students' Union's key priorities, i.e. education, welfare/community and events/activities.</p> <p>The quorum is the minimum number of people required to be present to hold the meeting. This would be amended to align with the new proposal to ensure meetings could be held.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change the Executive Committee to the Student Leadership Committee ▪ Transfer powers and responsibilities from Student Council to Executive Committee ▪ Remove the Student Council 	<p>The Student Council has been a defective committee for many years; it is based on an old-fashioned, non-engaging way of hearing students' views and making decisions. Very few students vote in the elections for Council and even fewer run in the elections. It does not accurately reflect our students' diversity, their needs or their views.</p> <p>The Board intends to create a new Student Leadership Committee which would be responsible for implementation of policy which affects students. This committee would include elected full-time Student Officers and six other part-time student representatives. Three of the six reps would have roles linked to the academic/curriculum work, and three would have roles linked to activity and campaigning work.</p> <p>All members of the Student Leadership Committee would be elected by students and paid. Limiting the number of full-time Student Officers to three will mean we can pay for the six part-time representatives and the panel of 100 students.</p> <p>The Student Leadership Committee would take on most of the responsibilities and powers currently held by the Student Council, so students would still be responsible for decision-making on policy matters.</p> <p>This would be supplemented by a new panel of 100 students who would be randomly selected and used as a 'sounding board' to help understand students' needs. This panel would be rewarded for participation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarify the governance structure and Board sub-committees ▪ Standardise staff attendance and support at meetings ▪ Amend typographical errors ▪ General house-keeping 	<p>There are several smaller changes which standardise practice, amend errors and generally tidies up the Articles.</p> <p>Several Board sub-committees which do not currently meet would be deleted. Others would be moved to the bye-laws, as is standard practice elsewhere.</p>