

Fourth Student Council Meeting 2024/25

Meeting Summary – Wednesday 14th May 2025

Agenda:

- **Welcome**
- **Officer Trustee Election**
- **Annual General Meeting – Update from CEO**
- **Society By-Law Updates**
- **Idea for Change Updates**
- **Elected Officer Updates and Q&A**
- **Student Council Feedback**
- **AOB**

Welcome

Hamnah Baig (Chair) welcomed everyone to the final Student Council meeting of the year.

Officer Trustee Election

Libby Freeman (People and Development Manager) shared the purpose of the election. She explained that Herts SU is a charity, so it has a Board of Trustees to govern the decisions made. This is made up of students, Elected officers, a member of University staff and External members.

She explained that the President will be on the Board as they are a full-time officer, however there are three vacancies available for the part-time officers, which need to be elected in Student Council.

Each candidate either provided a video or a statement. Candidates were:

- **Judith Albert – Part-Time Officer for Creative Arts**
- **Mariangel Briceno Riverol – Part-Time Officer for Health, Medicine and Life Sciences**
- **Muhtasim Sadat Nibir – Part-Time Officer for Physics, Engineering and Computer Science**
- **Ritvik Sharma – Part-Time Officer for Business**

Student Council members voted during the meeting.

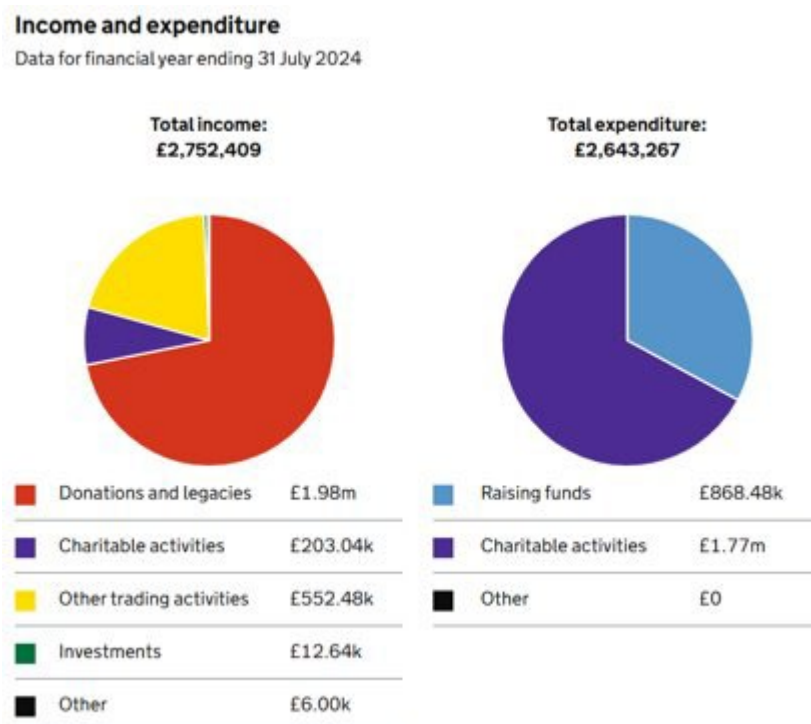
Results:

- **Judith Albert** – (6 votes)
- **Muhtasim Sadat Nibir** – (6 votes)
- **Mariangel Briceno Riverol** – (5 votes)

Libby also mentioned that the student trustee role is open, if people are interested, they can [apply here](#).

Annual General Meeting

Rebecca Hobbs (Chief Executive Officer) provided an update on the SUs finances. She explained that as a registered charity, we are responsible to our members and we have to share our finances, our income and where it is spent. This is delayed by a year due to financial reporting systems.



She explained that any income not spent was placed into the reserves. This helps in cases where unexpected costs come up.

Rebecca asked if anyone had any questions – no questions were raised.

Society By-Law Updates

Rhiannon Ellis (Academic Experience Manager) and Izzy Ralfe (Assistant Community Manager) explained that an SU by-law is a set of rules or regulations created by the Students' Union (SU) to govern its operations, structure, and procedures. They are reviewed regularly and as part of this review they came to

propose some new changes to the Society By-laws which explain how societies are run and regulated by the SU. The changes they highlighted were:

- Definitions of different societies – Academic vs non-academic
- Reduction in core committee members from four to three – Chair, Treasurer and Inclusion Officer. This will enable more societies to become active.
- Reduction in additional committee member roles from six to three. Additional committee can only be added after the society has 20 society members.
- The ability to offer free memberships and the ability to have up to 20 free non-member tickets to society events have been included as per the most recent Idea for Change.
- New Student-led events section.
- Clarified Disciplinary procedure.

Questions from students

- **Question/Comment from Student Council Member:** Due to the elections already have taken place, will the reduction in core committee from four to three mean that the Secretaries are no longer committee?
 - **Staff Response** – If the Secretary role has already been elected, they can remain on the core committee for the 2026/26 academic year. If the Secretary role was not elected, then this role can be added as an additional role once they have 20 members.
- **Question/Comment from Student Council Member:** Is it possible to change the names of Treasurer and Inclusion Officer to something more employable? E.g. Instead of Treasurer could it be Finance Officer, and instead of Inclusion Officer could it be DEI Officer.
 - **Staff Response:** This is an interesting idea, and we will take this away and update at the next Student Council meeting.
 - **ACTION – Provide an update on changes to society committee roles at the next Student Council meeting.**

Student Council members voted on the amended Society By-Laws during the meeting.

Results: 19 For, 3 Against, 1 Abstain – Society By-Laws passed (*The By-Laws are now in effect and will soon be published on the SU website [here](#).*)

Idea for Change Updates

Idea for Change: Urgent Actions for Women's Safety on Campus

Rohit Mahadevu (President) said that since the past meeting he has been trying to gain further context of the issue and provided an update on the following points mentioned in the Idea for Change:

- **Lighting at bus stops**
 - Estates and Security have confirmed that all lights are regularly checked and all lights at the bus stops are working; they are also happy to meet and walk around with students so that any areas of concern can be picked up and a solution found. They recently replaced all the lighting at the De Havilland car park to LED (brighter lights).
- **Launch a dedicated research project led by the SU**
 - The National Student Survey (NSS), (open to all final year undergraduate students) included an optional survey on gathering feedback around the prevalence of sexual violence on campus. The University also mirrored the question set and sent out to all remaining students to complete (which has just closed and they have received a 12% response rate).
 - Rohit explained that once the results are published later this summer from both surveys, we will look to identify any additional research that needs to be conducted.
- **Update the Safe Club page on the Herts SU website**
 - Webpages are currently being reviewed to ensure that it is clear for students to report and instances of harassment in the nightclub. Updates will be completed before the start of 2025/26 academic year.
- **Increase preventative measures in the Forum Nightclub against spiking and harassment.**
 - New collateral for the venue has already been added that highlights the SUs zero-tolerance approach to various actions, including harassment, inappropriate touching, sexualised comments, exposing yourself amongst other things, and will expand on this over summer and into next year too.
 - Drink spiking test strips are also already available in the venue and if a student is concerned that their drink has been spiked, they just need to ask to speak to any member of staff in the venue, and they will then carry out the test on the drink.
- **Produce an anti-harassment and consent education campaign**
 - The SU is collaborating on a campaign with the University around this topic over the summer with a view to launching ahead of 25/26 academic year, which will align with new mandatory training modules that are being brought in for all students from 1st August 2025.

Rohit also read a direct update from the Dean of Students regarding everything that the University currently does on this topic. This includes:

- There are two full-time members of staff who oversee the harassment, domestic and sexual misconduct service. They are qualified Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence support practitioners.
- The support the team can offer includes working with GP or referring students to therapy at the University. They also support students with external processes such as police or court if necessary.
- There are two options for student to report incidents to the University; students can report anonymously or speak to an adviser, we currently use **Report + Support – Report + Support – University of Hertfordshire**. The system has been set up for students to report, or any member of the University community.
- The University has worked closely with the Students' Union Elected Officers for several years and have worked jointly on many projects such as the 'Can't Buy My Silence pledge', a campaign committed to ending the practice of NDAs in sexual harassment cases in the Higher Education sector.
- Funding was also secured in previous years with the local community safety partnership from the Home Office to work on Train the Trainer course that was created by the Students' Union and Safer Places. This funding has been spent and is no longer available.
- Staff from the Dean of Students meet with University Security, Police, Accommodation and the SU to discuss any issues happening on campus.
- The first week of the ResLife Balance Campaign in Semester A and B was focused on safety and security. The Reslife team worked overnight during this week on the popular event nights to promote a joint support and awareness initiative #HertsSaferNights.
- The University worked with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hertfordshire, and Hertfordshire County Council, and the partnership secured Home Office funding in 2021 as part of the Government's Safer Streets programme to carry out a number of projects in Hatfield, with a focus on preventing violence against women and girls. The funding enabled the University to purchase personal safety alarms, and for the SU to deliver a planned programme of active bystander training – equipping staff and students with the skills and confidence to challenge unacceptable behaviours.
- The University also worked with **Hollie Guard** to provide the Hollie Guard Extra personal safety app to vulnerable students and staff. This mobile app offers a 24/7 dedicated emergency response service, as well as location

monitoring, emergency contact notifications and in-built deterrents, giving users the confidence to travel safely.

- The University will also be introducing student and staff training this year and all students will have to complete mandatory training during induction from September. More information about the Universities approach including information on staff, student training, how to report, support that we offer and our policies and procedures can be found on their website; [Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct | About us | Uni of Herts](#)

Rohit also added that the Dean of Students would welcome the opportunity to meet with any students that would like to discuss this area in more detail, so that they can full understand any issues students are facing and ensure that action can be taken. Rohit said if anyone would be interested in this to email

officers@hertssu.com

Questions from students

- **Question/Comment from Student Council Member:** Is the SU/University open for student-led research to happen, with societies and SCOs to lead it by gathering feedback from students about their experiences. It was not felt that the data that has been collected is accurate as students do not trust the University or the SU.
 - **Staff Response:** As this is a very sensitive topic, there will need to be safeguarding around this and potentially ethical approval is required if there were to carry out a survey. Advised to email research@hertssu.com to gain some further advice.
- **Question/Comment from Student Council Member:** What can we do if students don't trust the system? This comes from the lack of seriousness taken around period products in bathrooms.
 - **Elected Officer Response:** Rohit suggested a meeting with the SU and the University to help find a way forward on the issue.
- **Question/Comment from Student Council Member:** Students felt that there is a lack of urgency on this issue and want quicker progress to be made on the

Idea for Change: Improving transparency and accountability in Herts SU

Rhiannon and Libby provided a full update which included:

- **Student Council minutes and Officer Reports to be publicly available within two weeks of each meeting and provide at least four weeks' notice before each meeting.**
 - This has been done and it has been diarised in the Academic Experience Team calendars (who oversee the administration for

Student Council) for the next academic year to ensure that this continues to take place.

- **Create an annual calendar of Student Council meetings at the start of the academic year and distribute to all student leaders.**
 - Planning for the next academic year has started within the SU and the dates have internally been confirmed. We will ensure that an email is sent out four weeks before the first Student Council advising all student leaders of all the meetings.
- **A monthly update to be published by Officers on their key achievements and actions in the period. Require SU officers to report on all motion progress within the monthly updates proposed in this motion.**
 - With the Officers' roles finishing soon (late May/Early July), we have planned to start publishing monthly reports to all students from the start of the next academic year. These will likely start from October when officers have finalised their action plans for the year. We will investigate where/how is best to publish this to students for best visibility.

Questions from students

- **Question/Comment from Student Council Member:** Students asked if these officer updates will be shared with all students not just Student Council Members.
 - **Staff Response:** Libby said that they will be shared with all students.
- **Question/Comment from Student Council Member:** Student asked if the Student Council dates will also be shared in SCO/Student Rep Training.
 - **Staff Response:** Rhiannon confirmed that this will happen.

Idea for Change: Allow Free Society Memberships and Free Ticket Options for non-members

The amendments have been made and were included in the Society By-Laws that were passed at the meeting. **This Idea for Change has now been completed.**

Actions from Previous Meeting

Action: Rohit and Pavan to provide an update at the next Student Council about bus ticket prices increases being communicated.

- Rohit advised that the changes in bus prices were communicated to students via email, and it has also been added to the Uno Bus website [here](#).

Action: Zhora to provide an update on timeline for sanitary products installation in SPECTRA, and locations of all sanitary dispensers on campus.

- Zhora updated that unfortunately she has not had any response back from the University so will be chasing them again.

Updates and Q&A from the Elected Officers

Each officer provided an update on what they have been working on. Please read the Elected Officer Report for full details [here](#).

Question/Comment from Student Council Member: Student asked whether the MP visit that was mentioned, by will involve any student interaction.

- **Officer Response:** Rohit said that this time it will not but we are hopeful it will happen again next academic year and these discussions would be a good chance for the council to discuss next year. Rohit said if there is anything students would like to be raised with the MP then to send him an email at officers@hertssu.com

Student Council Feedback

Hamnah led a mentimeter discussion about this. The results will be used by the ACE team to improve council for next year.

Any other business – AOB:

Rebecca took the time to thank Hamnah for all of her work as Student Council Chair, who has been the longest serving Chair (three consecutive years). She also took the time to thank all of the students that participated in Student Council this year, the 2024-25 Elected Officers, and the Academic Experience Team

Actions Log:

Action	Notes	Assigned to	Update Due
Provide an update on changes to society committee roles at the next Student Council meeting.		Herts SU	First Student Council Meeting of 2025-26.