

Student Council #2 – 2025/2026

Wednesday 2nd December 2025 – Summary

Agenda:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Dean of Students Q&A
- Update from the SU
- Idea for Change #1 – The Forum Piano
- Idea For Change #2 – Transparency and Accountability for Student Council
- Idea for Change #3 – SU Mentorship Scheme
- Idea For Change #4 – Shuttle Bus Route Update
- Elected Officer Q&A
- Idea For Change Results

Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome given by the new Chair, **David** and Deputy Chair, **Aryan** to all students in attendance in-person and online.
- This Student Council was open to all, while usually only open to student leaders such as student reps, SCOs and society committee members attend, this meeting was opened to everyone so that they could participate in the discussion with the dean of students.

Q&A with the Dean of Students Office

- This section of Council is introduced with a warning that the **subject may be sensitive, as it involves discussions of sexual violence and harassment**. Attendees are informed that should they need support or wish to disclose anything, they can speak to our Advice and Support Centre at any time during or after the session, or can speak to someone from the Dean of Students' Office after the Q&A.
- The Dean of Students' Office is responsible for student welfare and supports students with issues like health, wellbeing, accommodation, and complaints. The team members present included:
 - Geri – Dean of Students
 - Karen – Head of Safeguarding and Compliance
 - Viju – Deputy Director for Student Wellbeing
 - Claire – Deputy Director of Community & Safeguarding

The Dean of Students provided background on what they have been doing surrounding this topic.

In July 2024, the Office for Students (OfS) set out a new condition of registration to all Universities, to be in place from 1st August 2025. This needed to cover several key areas, the most important being the publication of a single source of information. This is to ensure the University is transparent about their policies and procedures on, how they support students, how they would train students and staff and how they would deal with complaints. Geri explained that a team convened in September 2024 to work through the requirements, with members across the University, including academics, student reps and support staff involved in the process.

Geri highlighted that the team recognises that the training implemented this year for students has been problematic, and the reasons for this are as follows:

In October last year, they met with a number of student reps and looked at five different training options, which were the best on offer around the sector at that time. They also explained that they have also worked with [Suzy Lamplugh](#) for the last four-five years on putting on Active Bystander Training.

The best and most popular was provider was called Good Course, it was the most expensive, but it was very helpful as it had a dashboard and data provisions, and it was very interactive and students could access it from their phones. They went through all the procurement processes, data sharing and all the legal process they needed to do. However at the end of April 2025 Good Course withdrew from the UK market, so the University had to go back through and look at the other providers. There was not enough time to go through the procurement processes to get anything in place for the 1st August.

Geri explained that the two Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVA)– Rosie and Natalie (who has since left), looked and worked through what could be done in time for the 1st August. They worked through what needed to be covered and using their expertise from being in the field for the last twelve years they developed the current training offering. They then got the training added onto Canvas which was the easiest way to get it out to students after exploring all other options.

Geri explained that this is the first iteration of the training, and the plan was to reconvene, as they need 8-9 months to get in place a new training for next academic year from other providers. The plan was to get everyone together,

student reps and partners across the University at Christmas time to go through the new options, with a plan to get the new training in place for the next academic year.

Geri said that she had asked the SU and Student reps to gather feedback which she knows they have been doing, and they have been listening to that.

Geri then said that she was happy to answer any questions, and if there is anything they could not answer on the day they would take this away and come back to update.

Q&A Section

Please note that this is not a verbatim transcript, and some inaccuracies may exist due to audio quality affecting transcription. However, we can confirm that no changes have been made to the substance of the questions and answers, and, where possible, the exact wording from the discussion has been used.

Question: Many students have told us that the training trivialises sexual harassment and assault. The fact that students can complete the quiz without even watching the video, and the presence of joke answer options. When asked about the bystander 4D students could select “Dilly...Dally...disappoint...dime...duck...Dodge...don't...dump...dance” and then the actual answer is pretty obvious, do you think that this is appropriate for discussing a serious issue such as sexual assault and harassment?

When discussing the psychological impacts of sexual misconduct, one of the options was “having no worries”. When asked what sexual assault be defined as which two of the following: “asking someone for the time...kissing someone without consent...touching someone without consent”. Do we think that these are challenging enough questions to ensure somebody understands what consent is? These questions are insensitive and undermine the seriousness of the topic.

How can the University justify releasing mandatory training on sexual misconduct that is not trauma-informed, not evidence-based, and in many places trivialises or arguably mocks the issue? And who signed off on these elements as appropriate for survivors and students learning about consent for the first time?”

Answer [Geri]: The training was put together by Rosie and Natalie who are trained and have experience with this. I understand what you're saying, obviously they're multiple choice, we have to kind of work with the format which was Canvas and, we're not academic members of staff, we do not use this regularly and we looked at how we could do this. The quiz was the easiest format because we had to roll it out for all students. We also looked at our student population and I know Natalie and Rosie were looking at this very carefully, but the majority of our students are international and they needed to find something that was broad enough to cover all. We have taken on board all of those points, because they have come up in other forums, especially some of the multiple choice elements, and they have been changed or they are being changed for Semester B. I understand what you are saying.

We had to go with Canvas as a platform, we explored other things with Learning Computer Services and we knew that Canvas was not the best fit, but we had to do something. Canvas is based on assessments for your academic studies, so you would undertake your module and you can take an online test. With this type of training, it is not a system that is geared up for you being able to watch the video and then do the quiz after and if you haven't done that then it would stop you from doing that. It can't do that. It doesn't have that level of technology within the system. It is disappointing to hear that people have chosen to go straight to the quiz. We tried to give clear instructions around that we would expect students to do. But like any assessment of course a student can choose not to go to modules and still submit an assessment at the end. That's reality. I think with the system we always knew it would need improving and we always wanted more feedback, and we have that so thank you. Our aim for September is to have a more interactive, off-the-shelf product, through a provider that is very good at doing things. That is what Good Course was and we were excited, students were excited by that and it was disappointing we could not get that out for the 1st August. It was never our desire to keep this platform and this type of training, but it was the answer to an issue at the time, with limited time and limited resources, unfortunately.

Question: On what you are saying about how you've actually implemented this so that it's available to a broader audience across the student population. I think that does raise the question that there are some racialised assumptions and simplifying content for international students, and I think that's quite, that's really disappointing.

In a meeting you've had with a student last week, you repeatedly said that the training has been simplified because many students don't have English as a first language. So instead of offering translations, multiple language versions or culturally contextualised materials, you have just lowered the quality for everybody and that risks implying that also international students are responsible for needing oversimplification which also feeds into racialised assumptions here. So why did the University choose to reduce the quality of the training instead of providing these different options and does the University understand and recognise that these are harmful implications when you're framing international students as a barrier to high quality content for the rest of the student body and those international students.

Answer [Geri]: As I said we had to put this out for all students. So to do broad training for the whole entire student body, not just our international students, for students with different backgrounds within our home student body. Our intention was not to oversimplify. If this is how it has come across, I am truly sorry, that was not our intention. Our intention within that short period of time was to cover what we needed to cover and to try and think how we could make it accessible for as many students as possible within the Canvas infrastructure. It was not to trivialise or make assumptions and if that's the way it comes across, we're absolutely mortified and we care very deeply about this. This is not something we are going to do for a tick box, it's not that at all.

Question: While you listed all of the options that were given to the various quizzes, your response to that, okay I understand you had to deal with Canvas, we'll get to that, but your response to the question as to why these options were given in the first place, with something as serious as sexual harassment training. Your response to that question was because you wanted to make it as broad as possible for international students. I'm sorry but maybe your intention, I don't really understand your intention is not there but there is a tendency in the way you're responding; you are inherently, there is a bias here because you are assuming that in order to make it accessible to international students, you have to somehow give these ridiculous options in Canvas quizzes. I just think that's not okay as an international student, to be honest, that's very offensive.

Answer [Viju]: I think those option answers, we take on board, that perhaps those kind of options were not suitable. It wasn't linked to the international body in terms of choosing those options. The wider point is around what the content, I think that is what Geri is referring to, the content we have to cover as part of our registration, and as part of the registration what we need to do is be able to convey to all

students home and international what constitutes harassment, sexual misconduct so that we are meeting the requirement we have to have under E6. As Geri highlighted we weren't doing this lightly, it's not the only thing we offer and what we are planning to offer in terms of education, training and support. This is one approach to it that we have to do that is mandated to us by the OFS, but we put in lots of other activities and we have a plan moving forward that this would be much more of a tiered approach, offering a variety of options including face-to-face training, including conversations around healthy relationships, including what consent looks like. I am sorry if it came across that we chose examples that looked as if we weren't taking this seriously. There was no way intended to say that it is linked to it being meaningful to the international population.

Question: What are you guys doing to ensure that all academic staff are ensuring that students are filling this in? Because I know from an SCO point of view that even now when we go and ask students if they've conducted it they aren't aware that it is mandatory and that it's not being told to them by academics that it is mandatory. So are you educating academic staff to ensure that this is rolled out consistently across all cohorts.

Answer [Geri]: One thing we have learnt from is that we have 230 programmes here at the University so it is a real multi-layered approach to communication. We have been going out and in the lead up to it, we have been to every meeting, Academic Board, all of the meeting structures across the University and going out to every School's senior team before the start of the academic year to convey the training and staff communication. All staff over the last two years everyone has had to do the online training themselves, and they have been doing reminders, but I think in a large organisation we understand sometimes things get lost and we have been to the programme leader forum. Any forum we can get in front of staff we have been doing.

Question: Thank you so much for doing that and if you can continue to do that that will be greatly appreciated because at the moment from a student perspective we are not seeing that reminder from the academics. It sounds like it is stopping at them and is not being rolled out so if you could remind them that once they're reminded we need to be reminded that would be greatly appreciated.

Question: Yesterday I [Jubair, SU President] had a conversation with Chris Waters and they are launching a new app for the accommodation students to record maintenance things. I requested them if they can align and if you can help them

to create a section in that app for our accommodation students on the estates and sexual harassment training in there, to let the students know what is their boundaries. I would request to know your thoughts on that and how dean of students would support estates and on campus students in getting this.

Answer [Claire]: That app is only for ULiving, College Lane campus. The provider Derment FM have decide to purchase an app so that primarily students can see when their post is available for collection a bit like with DPD or Yodel notification and to streamline the process and improve the student experience and to log maintenance jobs and to see where the job is. The app has other functionality, of which at the moment ULiving are pausing on to get that right to get that because it is important, they bought it, we didn't as a University. The De Havilland campus and their provider has not gone with that model, they have a different contract with us and they have decided not too.

Absolutely take on board what you're saying and we're actually very excited in the ResLife team about what functionality might be available in this app. But at this point in time I am not going to over promise it is solely bought for the purpose of these two things and as that develops and if it is successful we will open that consultation up via Chris Waters and myself [Claire Hartridge] as the two managers of the University side, one to see if it is something we need to push more for and to possibly ask for money through the capex scheme through the University to De Havilland and then what other functionality is going to work for us as a University to put things on. At this point on time I will be honest we will not use that functionality at this point as because it has been bought for a different purpose, but it is definitely a conversation ULiving is happy to have with us and we are happy to have, but it won't be for September. For September they need to get those two functionalities that they need and will enhance the student experience before we look at that avenue. The second part is that I think its great to have content on there but my priority and our priority is to be able to educate our student community as a whole. We have 30,000 students and in halls of residences at the moment we have about 4000 students, so I think our priority is to get that educational piece right for all student community through a good provider like we were hoping for September just gone and then explore that as a complementary, along with other complementary things for other students.

Question: Lack of an awareness campaign surrounding Speak Up as a resource for students who have experienced sexual misconduct or harassment, but it seems that even senior management is confused about the situation in regards to that. Students have repeatedly told socialist students that they don't know

what Speak Up is or how to access it. Many still might believe that Report and Support exists because nothing was widely advertised. Even you referred to the system as Speak Out on one occasion when speaking to a student and if the Dean of Students doesn't know the name of the reporting system, this reflects a deep institutional failure. Why was rebrand launched without any meaningful awareness campaign and what immediate actions will be taken to ensure students actually know how to report incidents and get help.

Answer [Geri]: We have had an anonymous reporting system in place since 2021 and we went to Report and Support in 2022 and then this year we had a contract with Report and Support that was coming to an end and we were looking at integrating with our safeguarding system, hence we went to the new system. We have worked closely with the SU actually on the zero tolerance campaign and the awareness with anonymous reporting and how to seek support, This was a structured, staggered campaign deliberately. We know sometimes at the start of the year this can be very hectic for students and often things can get lost. Everything was on the website, where report and support was it sat in its place and it all went in the single source of information. I know that the officers have collaborated with us and it is something that we spoke about to our advice team about and we are looking at enhancing what we do. The 16 Days of Activism is ongoing at the moment and there is a publicity campaign that Karen and the team are doing as well, we can certainly take that way and apologies if I have not said the correct terminology, we are all human, I am human, it wouldn't have been deliberate.

Answer [Karen]: There is Speak Out that is the staff anonymous reporting system.

Question: Not to nitpick but it just seemed that even outside of that singular mistake, there is a lack of information and clarity amongst the student body in relation to Speak Up and I feel as though it's like there are some students not feeling confident in reporting incidents and not sure where they're supposed to go or if they're using the correct resource so they just don't bother in the first place and its really important that they do feel that.

Answer [Geri]: Students are reporting but if you had any other ideas of how we can reach students and if there are things that we're not doing, we'd really happily take those on board. If there are channels we are not using let us know.

Question: What kind of limitations are there to the confidentiality of reports in investigations?

Answer [Geri]: So in terms of the teams that investigate, they are trained investigators and they have done enhanced courses in terms of allegations of harassment and sexual misconduct. *Unfortunately, this question was not picked up via the recorded transcript due to where the student was sat in the room, however this is the question summarised from the notes made in the meeting.*

Question: They have done courses?

Answer [Geri]: They are trained to investigate, they are qualified. In terms of support for students, they are supported through Karen's team and they are trained IDVAs and ISVAs. This sits within student wellbeing; there are a number of therapeutic interventions that the team would support and refer things through to.

[Viju] There are a range of therapeutic modalities that sit within the counselling and mental health team. Specifically to deal with trauma, we have two specialist counsellors trained in EMDR which is a trauma approach. In terms of your question around cultural competencies as well, it is a diverse team, diverse in terms of different cultural backgrounds, gender, it is something that we keep under review constantly and if there is something, a need we are not meeting, we are happy to have a conversation around this and to see where the gaps are and it something we are very alert to and we keep under review. The counselling and mental health team work very closely with the sexual harassment and sexual violence team and there is a lot of joint working to offer support. In terms of confidentiality, it is what the student wants. Obviously if we need to explore further or report formally all of that is meeting with the student. We will always work with what the student wants to do and is ready to do. In terms of confidentiality boundaries, that will determine how confidentiality is managed. Confidentiality is also very specific to different roles within the University. The counsellors and mental health team have specific criteria for confidentiality that is determined by their professional regulators.

Question: When they are in a very vulnerable position, they will want confidentiality. *Unfortunately, this question was not picked up via the recorded transcript due to where the student was sat in the room, however this is the question summarised from the notes made in the meeting.*

Answer [Viju]: The conversation when Rosie and the team are working with a student who has experience sexual violence its going to be an ongoing conversation about what the student feels, what they want, what does support look like, what does reporting look like and that is a journey that the member of

staff will guide the student through. Sometimes the student is very sure about what they want to do and what confidentiality looks like. It is a conversation piece, it is not just up to the student to decide, because we are very aware that this is a really sensitive and triggering and if they have had a really difficult experience and traumatic time for them they may not always be in the right frame of mind in that moment. It is not just a one off conversation or a one off contact, it is an ongoing supportive relationship.

Question: From my understanding the training, the initial plan for training, started five months before the implementation, when that plan fell through, instead of continuing the student consultation you *[unable to confirm wording]* because it had to be done quickly. You then went, or either an individual person or a very small team went on their own and had a couple of people look at it. Why was the decision made not to consult the students further about what they should do in the meantime to get something up there. Before assuming a more thorough method followed and also why was it not communicated to students initially that this had fallen through and we would be getting a different quality training than expected. Why is that communicated directly to the student body?

Answer [Geri]: I take on board what you are saying. We went back to the options what was there from the student panel and we looked at what the second choice was etc. That was quite a difference away from what they wanted and we didn't want to go with the second best. By the time we got to that we had reached out and looked at other things we were in May and by then we had lost a lot and it was the end of term by then. We were communicating but not with the entire student body. I absolutely take on board what you have said and we should of gone back and said to them this is what we were doing. I can only apologise for that, we didn't do it and I think we learned a lesson from that.

Question: The video contains really dangerously incomplete information. This is a direct quote, those under 13 cannot consent, that is pretty dangerously incomplete information. The vast majority of the student body is above 18, also the vast majority of the student body, *[unable to confirm wording]* 13 isn't an appropriate age. The question from the society is, in light of students relying on the university as an authoritative source of information this guidance is legally required to be given to students, does UH accept releasing inaccurate and incomplete safeguarding information possesses a risk to students, and will you commit to correcting this immediately rather than waiting for the next iteration? It really upset me when I saw it, thank you.

Answer [Geri]: I'm sorry. We are changing that absolutely and we do have students who are under 16 but it is not a majority, absolutely accept that. Karen's team has worked on this and are looking to put that right.

Answer [Karen]: We are looking at it. The legal age of consent to have sex is 16 and not younger and the training is missing that context. That capacity question can be misleading, particularly around the age of consent. There is that legal capacity part of consent, but we are now looking at sticking to the legal age of consent in the training. *Unfortunately, this question was not picked up fully via the recorded transcript, however this is the question summarised from what can be heard via the recording and transcript.*

Question: I would like it to be comprehensive to have both of those information provided.

Answer [Karen]: Is it going to be corrected. No the way the assessment works on Canva is a way that the quiz that has been put up and the assessment, if we are to change that we have to take it down, re-do it and get you all to re-do the training and the assessment. That is not an option on the cards right now with resources and capacity. Semester B intake will have the training re-done. What we plan to do is other training alongside that training that students can book onto, especially face-to-face I think that has come out other forums that they want more information or they want to have the ability to ask a question at the end. We are looking at that model, but the training already up there, the Canvas platform does not allow us to take a slide out, slot a slide in, they will have to take the whole platform and put it back up again and I think with what we are dealing with students with opt out and other things, we've got to be sensitive and we've got to be careful and we do completely understand what you're saying, so what we need to is come up with a model where we can get information out there, but it is not going to be that we can change the training on each platform for each assessment portal, it just can't be done, we don't have the ability to do that and then allow people not to go back in and do it if they've found it traumatic etc. It's just been a very difficult platform to use, its not fit for what we want it to be, its an assessment platform that was Canva is, it's a learning environment, I don't want to overpromise and by saying we can do that and tomorrow you will see a change in the module, it is not possible to do that. Absolutely we take on board that needs to change, so we've got to think about how to we compliment the fact that this went wrong, that this is misunderstood, this wasn't our intention to mislead.

Question: All the answers that we have heard today, as well as, we have been at this for the past 8 months, almost, we haven't met with you [*unable to confirm wording*] we have been continuing in contact, to be honest, in July with the SU and then since October with you and you have mentioned that the training, when it fell through it was taken up by someone who was well experienced. You mentioned that because the school administrators weren't aware of whether the training is mandatory or how to make sure the students do it, that was like you said, that the response to that was that we're going to send more e-mail reminders. Other than that, there's also you mentioned in one of the emails communicated to us that there is something called the 0 tolerance total support policy. However, when we try to Google on it, we can't find any link or anything on it. The one page that I found goes to 404. My point here is from a student perspective, what I'm seeing is there are individuals who are trying to make things better, but on a structural level, the University, from top to the bottom and by bottom here, I mean the professors who interact with us. It just doesn't serve the students right now or, even when students pointed out the dangerous training and the process when it fell through. Your response is that we apologise. Sorry. I'm sorry, but for something as serious as this the response cannot be we'll try to do better. There has to be some action and I think the action cannot take place because the structure within which all of this is happening fundamentally does not respond to student needs. I'm not arguing the individual view as you here, I think all of your intentions are 100% in line with what we want. But the structures that you have put that within which you're working and that you are supporting and part of this does not work. I'm sorry but it should not take this much effort and fighting from us students to get something so basic here and I think, I still don't see that from any of you that you want to actually go beyond what has already not worked for the past multiple years at this point.

Answer [Geri]: I hear what you're saying. I think from my point of view, obviously we were aware of. Was it April? And I responded immediately, asking for me to come to meet the students, and then I didn't hear anything.

Question: And there's a reason for that. Honestly, the reason you wanted us to meet with you in November last or two weeks ago.

Answer [Geri]: I tried to meet with you before.

Question: We didn't get any information.

Answer [Geri]: I did respond immediately when that was brought up and I've got that e-mail. Obviously you know, we offered to meet but coming here, we want it to be an open student forum, so the structure is there to support and I know that obviously you think it's broken but we are here to support and I think we want to make the change. The student training, obviously you know, we're working on all of the other things we want to support on it and like I said before it became mandatory. This is something that we have supported for many years. We supported it being mandatory. We actually supported this coming in because it's something that's very, very important. We've all got lived personal experience and we absolutely want to make this work. I don't think that it's broken. I think we can make this right, but we wanted the conversation to be with all. I hear what you're saying. Take that feedback on the board and work together.

So just to add to Geri's point about, there are some structural processes that don't always make things easy in a large organisation. However, I have to say that we at Hertfordshire have been doing a lot of this supportive work for many years and before the mandatory condition came in with this training, there's some things that we have listened to and are going to take away and are going to learn. What we've also had is 14,000 students who've completed the training and we've had good feedback from a number of students and one of the things that has been an outcome that we wanted was when we were raising this awareness and we're offering this training and we're giving some guidance through this training and through other means, what we're getting is students feeling confident enough to come forward and to report to get support, to get guidance, to make decisions about what they want to do next and year on year. Over the last three years, we've had an increase in the number of students accessing the services that we provide here at Hertfordshire because they're confident they feel more confident about coming and seeking the help. So while there is a concern that you know that you've raised about a number of things that we've discussed today, the other side of it is but you know, we have had a huge number of students who've completed the training. We've had positive feedback and we've had numbers of increasing numbers of students who feel confident and comfortable in coming forward to report their experiences and to get support and guidance.

The session came to a close. If any students would like to contact the Dean of Students Office you can do so by emailing deanofstudents@herts.ac.uk

Delivered by Phill, Director of Advocacy & Opportunities at the SU.

- **Herts Unfiltered update**

- Across all of the phases we have engaged 7300 students which is more than double the number of students we engaged with last year.
- Everything has been fed back to the University on areas such as community building, personal tutoring, induction, well-being, loneliness, timetabling and buses.
- All of these areas have been turned into a set of recommendations which can be found on the [Herts SU website](#).
- The next stages will include repeating this process for new Semester B students.

- **Elections update:**

- There will now be a 3-week campaign period and as part of this societies will be offered the opportunity to run full funded activities as part of this process. Further information on this will be sent out to societies via the Society Newsletter.
- There will be two weeks of in-person voting only and there will be ballots across the Schools. There will be some students eligible for an online vote with further details shared closer to the time.
- There is also a change to the structure of the Elected Officer roles from one full-time elected Officer, to now there will be two full-time Elected Officers. There will be one President that focuses on Education and one that focuses on Community.
- The 9 part-time officer roles are also being changed to new Student Community Organiser roles, as the current School Community Organiser roles moved over to the SU at the start of this academic year and there has been a lot of overlap. These new roles will work with university teams such as Widening Access and EDI, similarly to how the School Community Organisers work with their Schools.
- This will mean than rather than having 10 Senior Student Leaders there will be a team of up to 38 Senior Student Leaders.
- Phill also explained that Student Council normally elects part-time officers to join the Board of Trustees, and moving forward Student Council will elect two of the SCOs to join instead.
- Elections Timeline:
 - Nominations – 2nd February – 23rd February
 - Candidate Checks – 23rd February – 27th February
 - Campaigning – 2nd March – 20th March
 - Society Events – 2nd March – 12th March
 - Voting – 9th March – 20th March

- Results – 25th March

For all of the Ideas for Change sections please note that this is not a verbatim transcript, however, we can confirm that no changes have been made to the substance of the questions and answers.

Idea for Change #1 – The Forum Piano

- Piano moved to Elehouse, would like it restored to previous location, so that it is accessible to students. The advantages of social opportunities for friend making are missed by the students who raised it and echoed by others.
- Questions & comments from student leaders, and answers given by the presenting student:
 - **Q:** Where in the Forum would the piano be?
A: The Location would be under stairs next to the indoor entrance to the Elehouse, opposite the Forum restaurant.
 - **Comments:** Student had a really lovely memory of meeting people by recognising the songs that were being played. Others agreed and echoed the comment. It was also nice to also hear music in that space.

Results: 28 for, 0 against, 4 abstain – Idea has passed

Idea For Change #2 – Transparency and Accountability for Student Council

- This idea would like a list of all voters on ideas for change to be published online, to have more transparency within Council in regard to voting so that students can see what Student Leaders vote for / against.
- Questions from student leaders, and answers given by the presenting student and their society's other members:
 - **Q:** Are the Elected Officers allowed to vote?
A: No.
 - **Q:** Is this a GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) issue?
A: Phone numbers will not be published, names will be.
 - **Q:** For clarification, since the majority of students in leadership roles are unelected (e.g. Student Reps are unelected (usually) and School Community Organisers are also unelected) will this also include them?
A: Yes – basically, everyone who can come to Student Council, their names whether they voted for, against or abstained, it should be on there.

- **Q:** Is there potential for backlash or harassment to students who may vote on controversial issues?
A: If a student votes in a way deemed controversial then their name should be shared so that they can be held accountable. The student feels that the backlash received would be warranted.
The hope is that students contact voters to question their votes, as it can be described as an increase in participation.
- **Q:** Agreement that it can be challenging for students to engage in student leadership activities such as council meetings. However, could this idea for change become a barrier for some students to not engage, who do not have further capacity to have further involvement?
A: These students should be questioned on their views, so that others can be informed about whether they can trust them- or wish to advocate for their removal from their student leader role.
- **Q:** Is increasing accountability for student leaders limited due to their limited ability to enact change?
A: The student would like to see further pressure on the university.
- **Q:** This could create a big harassment issue for student leaders.
A: The general public cannot view the lists, but all students would be able to log in to view the list of names.
- **Q:** An Officer has experienced aggression while running an Outreach stall on campus, from a student who disagrees with them, seeking to hold them accountable. This student has sought contacts of the Officer and there is mention of further extension to this harassment.
A: The Dean of Students team would deal with these kinds of situations as they happen.

Results: 15 for, 10 against, 7 abstain – Idea has passed

Idea For Change #3 – SU Mentorship Scheme

- This idea would see the creation of a new mentorship programme run by the SU, that pairs first-year students with experienced upper-year peers or alumni. Mentors would provide academic guidance, wellbeing support and advice on navigating university life. It could be through light, occasional contact or optional drop-in structure instead of weekly meetings.
- Questions from student leaders, and answers given by the presenting student:
 - **Q:** What considerations are there for safeguarding and relevance of alumni's experience?

A, from President: University is already running a mentorship programme with alumni from a range of graduation years to share experience, and currently there are no issues raised.

A: Another student echoes that similar programmes have shown success without safeguarding concerns, but the existing reporting structures could mitigate any occurrences in future.

- **Feedback:** Societies provide similar benefits, but a course specific mentorship contact could provide others.

Results: 21 for, 2 against, 5 abstain – Idea has passed

Idea For Change #4 – Shuttle Bus Route Update

- This idea would be for the free UNO inter-campus and park & ride shuttle bus service to stop additionally at Hatfield railway station. The hope is that it would increase attendance to classes.
- It is requested, in addition to the idea, that Elected Officers share meeting minutes with students- so that other students can find contact details of staff present and question them on timeframes.
- Response from President:
This proposal is being raised already in meetings with UNO and the University teams. There is exploration into locating a budget for this service, and potential routes.
Jubair has highlighted that this provision would represent a commitment from the University to supporting commuting students. Additionally, this could help all students reallocate their finances for other purposes which are raised as concerns, e.g. catering.
There is emphasis in response on a demand for a specific timeline. Jubair raises that updates will already come ahead of this requested timeline.
- Questions from student leaders, and answers given by the presenting student:
 - **Q:** Could the scheme be extended to St Albans railway station?
A: This could perhaps be raised separately later.
 - **Q:** Are there considerations about the availability of the main inter-campus shuttles to alleviate potential for overcrowding?
A: The University should allocate resources to add more services in addition to the inter-campus shuttles and make them all free.
 - **Q:** Why should this be specifically for the station? Are there considerations about the delays it could cause to existing bus services?
A: The University should implement this idea in such a way that all buses are not delayed and are free.

- A student raises that any UNO bus travelling between campuses is free. Jubair confirms this and that any student who is charged between the two campuses can contact UNO for a refund, and himself – with the bus number so that he can support this. The ticket can be used to show route, date, time, and bus number.

Results: 27 for, 0 against, 2 abstain – Idea has passed

Elected Officer Q&A

- Student leaders are invited to ask questions to the team of Elected Officers. Questions are invited to be posted on an online link to be raised anonymously, but only questions in the room are answered due to time constraints.
 - **Q:** Are the Elected Officers working on promotion for the zero tolerance / reporting system?
A: The speak up system can be found in the Herts Mobile app, and promotion will begin on social media before Christmas. It is a good system that allows for anonymous reporting.
 - **Q:** Is there data on harassment in the Forum nightclub – specifically a comparison between student-only events and the public events?
A: The Officers are in conversation with the Students' Union's Director of Operations.
- The Forum's Deputy Operations Manager is invited to join the discussion to provide specific answers:
 - A:** If something happens in the forum and is reported to the staff, it is followed by an investigation, which can be forwarded to Dean of Students and SU management, or bans where necessary. The daytime team investigates reports thoroughly.
 - **Q:** Could banned students purchase guest tickets for others to enter?
A: The student ban list is imported to the door entry machine. However, if a student returns with another form of ID (e.g. driving licence), the ban can only then be associated with this alternative form of ID when they attempt to enter the venue.
- **Further clarification provided after Council:**
To clarify the situation a little, we operate two separate banning systems because our venue is open to both students and non-student guests. Current students can be banned directly through their university student account using their student ID.
Student guests must be banned through a different system called 'Clubscan' which is commonly used by licensed premises across the UK.

The main issue is that these two systems do not communicate with each other. This means if a student is banned via the student system but later tries to enter as someone's guest, Clubscan will not flag them, and we may not realise they are banned.

Since this has been brought to our attention, we have worked with our provider to find a solution to the issue which we now have. We can now manually upload the list of banned students to our Clubscan machine, provided we have their correct student name and date of birth, which we have access to on our student database. The machine will then flag them when their government ID is scanned, and they will be stopped from entering.

There will remain a slight issue where if the name on a student ID massively differs from their legal ID (passport or driving licence), then it may not flag. However, the machine is quite intuitive and will pick up many slight differences in name changes.

Students are also not legally required to show us ID if they do not want to. As a result, we often cannot confirm whether someone is a current student or a non-student until an investigation takes place. However, we do use a core group of staff and security on the front door who are very good at visually identifying an individual who has been recently banned. So as much as possible we then stop the individual at the Clubscan machine and ban their government ID. Whilst this is not the perfect system, we have stopped a number of individuals from entering this way.

- The Forum management email is shared for any further venue-related questions: forummanagement@hertssu.com

There was not time to answer every single Slido question asked, so as promised we have asked the Elected Officers to provide a written response which you can see below.

Questions	Officer In charge	Answers
To fund free menstrual products, and how would you justify that reallocation to students who benefit from the current spending?	Shruti	Herts SU Advice allocates a portion of its service outreach budget to fund the purchase of period products, which are offered free of charge to students upon request at both SU Welcome Desks. We consider this an appropriate use of funds because it directly responds to the significant

		<p>number of students struggling to meet their living costs, as highlighted in our Herts Unfiltered data, while also ensuring students have access to essential welfare items that help minimise any potential disruption to their studies.</p>
<p>Is there any plan to improve SU engagement for De Havilland students? Many students feel as if De Havilland has been forgotten</p>	<p>Jubair</p>	<p>Yes, there is a clear plan to improve SU engagement for De Havilland students, and significant steps have already been taken to ensure the campus feels included and vibrant. Many students have expressed concerns that De Havilland can sometimes be overlooked, so we have focused on creating a wide variety of events and opportunities specifically for De Havilland students to foster engagement and community spirit.</p> <p>In Semester A alone, we organised a range of activities including the De Havilland Welcome Fair, two Speed Friending sessions, Homeware Decorating, Pop-Up SU, Grab & Go Breakfast, Monthly Market, Games Arcade (x3), Sip & Paint, Cultural Carnival, Festive Market, and Film Club. In addition, numerous society-led events regularly took place on campus, ensuring that students always had access to social, cultural, and recreational opportunities without needing to travel elsewhere. These initiatives were designed not only to entertain but also to build a sense of belonging, keep students connected to the SU,</p>

		and maintain a busy, engaging, and inclusive atmosphere on campus.
For expanding counselling services, beyond student testimonials, what hard data have you compiled to demonstrate urgency to administrators?	Jubair	<p>The data we have is all live on Herts SU website through Herts Unfiltered.</p> <p>Herts SU Advice supported 1769 students in 2024-2025 through a predominantly College Lane based advice provision – although virtual and phone appointments are available. During the week-long tongue and cheek outreach campaign, 'WTF is Herts SU', the Advice team got out of the office and delivered up to four hours of outreach activity across the campuses over five days engaging 662 students, displaying the need for ongoing, local, and easy access support.</p>
Laundry is a hidden financial burden. What specific price reduction or subsidy proposal have you submitted to administrators this semester?	Jubair	<p>Jubair has already had meeting with the Estates as well as emailed them identifying it is a hidden cost. Jubair advocated to update on the website clearly stating about the laundry prices. The Estates have informed to me that the CL laundry machines are changed and due to contract length, they will not be able to change the laundry machines of De Hav till next year. Jubair brought it up that if it is not clarified on the website whether it is free or students need to pay then it does not comply with the Consumer Rights Acts 2015.</p>
We talk a lot about resources existing. What are we doing to make	Jubair	<p>Jubair would request to know further what type of resources are meant here. We are utilizing our best from Herts SU, Jubair is pushing hard to re-</p>

sure students can use them?		open Ele House and the proposal has already been sent to the university , bring more resting areas with games across university specially in the spaces that are under used.
What are the officers doing to improve the student experience, especially for international and disabled students? They seem to get left out and isolated	Lorena	<p>Student officers are actively working to reduce isolation and improve inclusion, particularly for students who are often underrepresented or feel excluded, such as international and disabled students.</p> <p>As Disabled Students' Officer, my focus this year has been on improving access, communication, and community for disabled students, guided by an action plan that prioritises inclusive teaching practices, better pre-arrival information, and stronger collaboration between the SU and university support services</p> <p>In Semester B, I will be building on this work by collaborating with the BSL society and the LCS (Library and Computing Services) to deliver inclusive, collaborative events. These will give students the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn basic British Sign Language • Understand deaf culture and communication • Learn what support the LCS team offers and how to access disability-related services in the LRC

		<p>These events are designed not only to raise awareness, but to actively bring students together in a supportive, low-pressure environment.</p> <p>Additionally, as a continuation of work from last year, the sensory study room is now officially open for student use. This space provides a quiet, low-stimulus environment for students who may find traditional study spaces overwhelming. To access the room, students simply need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Email Student Wellbeing and wait for them to accept your referral (you do need a Study Needs Agreement) 2. Collect a key card to access the room 3. Return the key card after use <p>This is a significant step forward in creating more inclusive physical spaces on campus and directly responds to feedback from neurodivergent and disabled students. Across the wider officer team, we are continuing to prioritise collaboration with societies, networks, and university teams to ensure that international and disabled students feel supported, informed, and included, not just during awareness months, but throughout the academic year.</p>
On meal plan costs, can you point to one concrete	Jubair	On Herts Unfiltered 83% % of Respondents who selected the

<p>policy change or funded initiative you've secured this semester?</p>		<p>facilities were Good or Excellent on Catering Services. Jubair is the voice of students and a bridge between students and university to make sure concerns raised by students are taken seriously by the university. When students have made good or excellent feedback on catering there is hardly any option to debate with the university on this matter. Still Jubair had meeting with the Director of Estates and university and brought up why only Aramark is there working as a monopoly in the catering services. Jubair is looking into affordable meal options for students where student feedback is highly valued, enhance the quality of food, and food availability for longer hours. Jubair has proposed to Estates to get student feedback on which food options are demanded by the students, make the menu changes with agility.</p>
<p>How are officers engaging with the communities they represent? It feels like there should be more presence.</p>	<p>Hassan (on behalf of liberation officers)</p>	<p>In terms of our work as Liberation Officers, we have been actively engaging with our respective student communities through multiple approaches. We regularly meet with societies closely connected to these demographics, such as the Disabled Voices and Allies Society, British Sign Language Society, LGBTQ+ Student Society, Afro-Caribbean Society, and others. These partnerships help us reach our target audiences more effectively.</p>

		<p>In addition, we have utilised social media to expand our outreach sharing event invitations, creating videos, and running polls to boost engagement within these communities. We also conduct in-person outreach by visiting every school, ensuring our roles are visible through our SU jumpers so students can easily approach us with feedback or questions. This combined approach has helped us strengthen communication and increase engagement across liberation groups.</p>
	<p>Judith (On behalf of school-based officers)</p>	<p>As school-based elected officers, we've been consistently engaging with students through GOATing sessions, WTF outreach, Freshers Fair, and regular drop-ins. We have collected feedback on buses, accessibility, food on-campus, timetabling, and more.</p> <p>In addition, we attend all PAGE meetings and student forums, which provide structured opportunities to understand institutional priorities and decisions. We also work closely with SCOs, who gather direct input from class reps, giving us access to detailed insights from across our schools. We use these insights to analyse issues in depth and ensure that the concerns we raise reflect both individual and collective student perspectives.</p>

		<p>We then take this feedback forward to senior staff, including Deans, technical teams, Estates, and Uno, to advocate for meaningful change. Our daily presence across campus whether through formal meetings, informal drop-ins, or outreach activities ensures we are visible and approachable, enabling students to share their priorities directly with us.</p>
<p>Could we arrange for a UNO bus from Faringdon? This would greatly assist students from East London.</p>	<p>Nibir</p>	<p>Nibir and Jubair are jointly lobbying to extend the bus service to additional student hotspots, aiming to make travel easier and more affordable. Jubair is already advocating for this extension, as it would significantly reduce travel costs from £20 to around £6 providing substantial financial relief for students. Nibir, meanwhile, is focusing on gathering further student feedback to strengthen the case. He is collecting input on students' demand for a bus on this route, the benefits they expect to gain, and an estimated number of students who would regularly use the service.</p>

Idea for Change Voting Results

- Voting opened for present Student Leaders after all four ideas for change were presented.
- **Summary of results:**
 1. **Forum Piano:** 28 for, 0 against, 4 abstain – **Idea has passed**
 2. **Transparency:** 15 for, 10 against, 2 abstain – **Idea has passed**
 3. **Mentorship:** 21 for, 2 against, 5 abstain – **Idea has passed**

4. **Station Shuttle:** 27 for, 0 against, 2 abstain – **Idea has passed**

Key Dates

Ideas For Change Deadline for Student Council #3: Wednesday 14th January

Student Council #3: Wednesday 28th January 15:00–17:00