

Student Council #4 – 2025/2026

Tuesday 24th February 2026 – Summary

Agenda:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Q&A with the Uno Bus Commercial Director
- Q&A with the Elected Officers
- Idea for Change #1 – Amendment of Society By-Laws
- Idea for Change #2 – Pay the Placement Pledge
- Updates from the SU
- Idea for Change Results

Welcome and Introductions

- **Welcome given by the Chair, David**, to all student leaders in attendance in-person and online.

Please be aware that for all of the discussion sections in this meeting, it is not a verbatim transcript and is a summary of what was discussed. We can confirm that no changes have been made to the substance of the questions and answers.

Q&A with the Uno Bus Commercial Director

- In this session, **Simon Newport, the commercial director of Uno Buses**, took questions from students.
- Firstly, he provided **some background to the company**:
Uno Buses is a separate limited company to the university, so it has to make its own profits & losses, and run its own accounts, but the university is the sole shareholder. It was established in 1992 to cover the university's split campuses, which were spread as far as Watford, and has since evolved into what can be seen today.
They operate a network of around 60 buses, based in Hatfield, as well as some London contracts, which get reinvested into uni-based services. The university provides some funding, as does Hertfordshire County Council for some projects.
Their priorities are to serve the university, local community, and other groups such as Oaklands College, for example. Therefore, he is attending council as they want to know what can be done better!

- **Q:** How much does uno bus receive from the university on average every year?
A: This number may be commercially sensitive, so he will not say directly. However, their turnover is £25 million, of which £10 million comes from Transport for London contracts, £5 million comes from concession fares, and £5 million from fares. It is implied that students can infer from there.
- **Q:** Why was there a 50p increase with the price of the tickets?
[This question is referring to a deleted Instagram post, announcing that the UH zone 1 price would increase from £2 to £2.50]
A: The whole sector is struggling. £3 is the cap, so prices cannot go above this. Concessions are also capped. One way to increase revenue is to put fares up. In October, fares increased for the general public for this zone, so the next stage would be to also increase this for students. This was going to be set for the 9th of March but has since been postponed.
He adds that it is something that has to happen due to Government imposing extra National Insurance. They will meet with SU President Jubair to find better value options for students, and new initiatives for September.
- **Q:** Would Uno bus propose extending the bus routes pass Hertfordshire? A lot of commuting students come from Essex and other counties now!
A: For any new route, the cost of operation is higher than fare revenue, so it requires additional funding from UH. An example of Colchester is given, where there could be theoretical revenue of £200,000 but the cost could be £400,000 so money from the university is needed.
- **Q:** 99% of the bus drivers don't give student discount, they say that it is not working or something.
Q: Students are still being told to pay for travel between campuses (not on the Shuttle) despite the AskHerts website stating that all buses should provide it.
A: Notices have been posted at bus stops, on buses, and every driver has been written to, but there are challenges with 300 staff doing different routes.
He asks that students contact unobus@herts.ac.uk to investigate, so that the driver can be identified and spoken with by their manager. Students should include the route, time, location and, if possible, bus registration number in their report. *[These can be provided by attaching a photo of your ticket.]*
- **Q:** What is Uno doing about overcrowding and bus timing issues, and what steps are being taken to make sure that students are not late for lectures, or do not have long waits after placements, as much as an hour?
A: Addressing specifically the Queensbury route, at the end of last year, they proposed more journeys for the 614, and were going to add two more in the morning and evening. It was going to cost £400,000, but there was a £150,000 shortfall. Uno asked the university if they would pay for this shortfall, but the

request was denied. Buses going into London require a specific class of bus due to regulations.

For the 602, frequency has increased to every 15 minutes by adding an extra four buses into the timetable.

They have noticed an increase in student numbers from the railway station but note that they operate ten buses per hour between the station and university.

- **Q:** Issues are raised with the 635 to Watford, particularly for placement students, especially with not showing up on a Monday. The 614 to Barnet hospital is also mentioned.
A: Simon suggests the 243 as another option to Barnet hospital, although it takes longer due to calling at Potters Bar, it is an hourly service. He once again asks students to email specifics to let them know what is going wrong.
- **Q:** Can we address the concern about the shuttle service being frequently late or cancelled during peak hours, affecting students' punctuality and schedules?
A: They are not aware of any shuttle cancellations currently happening, though acknowledges there were issues at the start of term.
- **Q:** Students are still paying for travelling from De Hav to College Lane, and bus drivers are very rude to students when they refuse to pay.
Q: The Uno drivers can be very rude to students. They kick students off for every small inconvenience. What has UNO done about this complaint for 2 years?
A: Every driver has been written to outline what is expected of them. In a company with around 300 drivers, he estimates that while about 80% of them do their job well, they then may have about 20% with poor character. He urges students again to raise these issues, with details, by email. This allows the driver to be identified and can act as evidence for disciplinary procedures where appropriate.
- **Q:** Could drivers have name badges to help identify them for these reports?
A: There may be legislation such as GDPR as a barrier to this, but it can be investigated.
- **Q:** Healthcare workers have to wear name badges, could this be an indication that drivers could do the same?
Q: If nurses everywhere are required to wear name badges at all times, including student nurses on placements, why can bus drivers not wear name badges?
A: This is acknowledged as a good point and something to be looked into. It may be a union agreement issue, but he will check.

- **Q:** How can students find out what happens to the drivers who are reported in this way?
A: They are not allowed to disclose the outcome of disciplinarys.
- **Q:** Will there ever be bus route to Finsbury Park? As this is what Jubair has said might be worked on
A: This is up to the university to consider for funding now, as Uno has completed costing it up. This process is the same as if a council, for example, wanted a new route to a new housing estate development.
- **Q:** Will there be a free shuttle from the station to the university? This is also something that Jubair has provided updates about.
A: Restates that ten buses per hour run from the station to the university. To answer if it can be free, it must be noted that there is £3.5 million revenue per year on that journey, so the university would have to make up for that revenue somehow.
Finsbury Park has been considered as it would help out students who join the network from east London. Another option explored, with Jubair, is a deal for students who live on campus, next year.
- **Q:** Is there a possibility of more X10 buses to be in service? As a lot of students come from Luton.
A: The answer is no, but currently they have four tri-axel double decker buses. The timetable has been changed to do what is called 'contra-flow timing', where in the morning, the buses run empty to Luton from Hatfield to get there faster, and then to come back again with students more frequently. In the evening, the opposite happens to take passengers to Luton and then run back out of service to Hatfield as quickly as possible.
To increase frequency further, due to the traffic on the route, they would have to put more buses in the fleet, and there are additional costs for that, so at the moment, the answer is no, but they will do their best to ensure everything runs. Currently, they run about 99% of their mileage, so there are occasions where buses break down, just by the nature of the amount of miles that they do, as well as any staff sickness.
- **Q:** Can the free travel between campuses include the accommodation stops? This would be useful for 653, getting from CL student estate to De Hav for exams
Q: Why can't we have a free bus for student exit? At least the 653, it would make it easier for students to travel to De Hav instead of going to the Forum.
Q: Not expecting new bus, but at least 653 from student exit to De Hav.
A: The current arrangement is that the free travel is only for shuttle stops, but this can be looked at in the future.

- **Q:** Will you improve the arrival times for non-popular buses such as the 341?
A: The 341 is run for Hertfordshire County Council, who pay for it and set the timetable and there is nothing Uno can do about this.
- **Q:** Can the number of buses services be increased during peak times? For example, the 614 has an hour gap (at least) between 4 and 6pm, but buses are full.
A: No, as it needs to be costed somehow. An extra 614 has been put in the evening, and another in the morning. However, they will continue to review where the gaps are and if it is possible to fill them. They may be able to get another one in for about 6:30pm but acknowledge this may be a bit too late.
- **Q:** The 653 northbound (towards Welwyn Garden City) is fairly inconsistent with timing, especially in the afternoon hours when trying to head home.
A: The 653 was timed in September, because there were quite often some quite big gaps, but they tried to make it about half hourly.
If any journeys missing, or there are any buses that do not turn up, let them know and they can try to provide an answer as to why, for example bus breakdowns, driver sickness or roadworks.
- **Q:** The Creative Arts Students' Elected Officer Judith has raised to the university's estates team about disabled access for the bus stop at the Todd Building stop but was referred to the council as the university does not own the land there. She requests support from Uno with this.
A: Simon suggests reaching out with an email for a further, separate conversation about this.
- **Q:** Could there be a shuttle stop in the main entrance of De Havilland campus, where the law building is?
A: This would also need to be a further conversation via email, as the council would have to be involved.
- If there are further questions due to time restraints, there is an offer from Simon to return to take more questions. Also, he would be happy to return for a dedicated bespoke Q and A session.
- **Q:** What does Uno Bus do to support disabled customers getting on the buses in wheelchairs?
A: Drivers are trained to lower the vehicle and put the ramp down, and how to assist the wheelchair user to board themselves independently. The driver should not push the wheelchair on, as there are situations where it has caused injury. The wheelchair user is supposed to get onto the vehicle themselves and occupy the associated bay.
As for the bay, it can be used by other people, but the driver must ask people stood in the wheelchair bay to move. If it is a full vehicle, they cannot be asked

to leave, but they must be asked to move. The wheelchair user must then occupy the space themselves; they cannot go elsewhere.

[Further guidance about this matter can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buses-and-coaches-features-and-help-for-disabled-people/buses-and-coaches-features-and-help-for-disabled-people>]

- Simon emphasises that they cannot get everything right every time, but they will deal with things, particularly when students let them know by email. He says that they want the experience to be great, and that students are important to them.
- **The email for students to contact Uno is unobus@herts.ac.uk.**

Q&A with the Elected Officers

- Creative Arts Students' Officer Judith shares an update that there are extended workshop hours from 9:30am to 8:30pm during the exam weeks in April, following difficult lobbying with the technical managers in the Creative Arts School.
She encourages students to make the most of this time, and put it to good use, as it was challenging to secure.
- Health, Medicine & Life Sciences Students' Officer Mariangel introduces herself, to clarify what they do as school-based officers. They look issues both within their schools and the wider university, so for example, things such as Uno buses- understanding that they can be a necessary part of placements in their school. This sort of thing covers the wider university experience, while also keeping their school in mind.
They also host events for students, and outreach stalls for collecting feedback and ideas. The EleHouse reopening is pointed out as an example of this.
She encourages students to ask if they are unsure what the Elected Officers are getting done, and welcome being challenged. She also extends apologies for when things do not happen as quickly as may be wanted, as this is a commitment they have taken on alongside their studies.
- There is a question for the Women Students' Officer about provision of pads, which she will respond to in writing after the meeting.

Idea for Change #1 – Pay the Placement Pledge

From the slides presented, the details of the Idea for Change were as follows:

- **What is the issue?**
 - Students throughout the university undertake placements, some are optional, but the majority of placements, particularly for HML students, are mandatory parts of their studies.

- The University of Essex Students' Union have launched a campaign to tackle un-paid placements, with a particular focus on nursing.
- **Why is this of interest to students?**
 - Many placements take over students' lives, leading students unable to take on paid work, or get involved in the things that make university more than just study.
 - The University of Essex's Students' Union's campaign found that 70% of nursing students have considered quitting due to financial pressures, compared to 26-41% of undergraduates overall.
- **What would you like Herts SU to do moving forward?**
 - Herts SU should join the campaign, with other students' unions to push for paid placements.
 - The campaign should be broadened to cover all placement opportunities, not just nursing students.
- **Full details of the proposal can be found here: [Student Council](#).**
- **Q:** A student raises the importance of the fact that there is upfront cost to placements, such as for travel.
A: Mariangel agrees – sometimes there are bursaries for home students, but it does add to the challenge of unpaid placements.
- **Q:** Why is the placement particularly focused on nursing? It should be equal for all.
A: Another student answers, in support, "I think nursing is only being used as an example, but the campaign highlights it is for all courses which require mandatory placements".
The first student clarifies – "Because paid placement is important as you are giving up your time to gain experience but to also afford to turn up to the placement shifts".
- **Q:** How are we going to tackle the costs?
A: As students, we do not have all the answers, we just need to tackle it at the moment. She agrees that it is just a case of time to deal with these things. There is support from the law school.

Idea For Change #2 – Amendment of Society By-Laws

From the slides presented, the details of the Idea for Change were as follows:

- **What is the idea for change?**
 - If a society committee member is not active for one month, they should be removed from the committee, and a new committee member put in place via an election.
- **Why is this of interest to students?**
 - Lack of engagement from a committee has a negative impact on the programmes, university, and students' union.
 - Students should get value for their money spent joining these societies.

- For academic societies, they should get the full programme experience that can be offered.
- **What would you like Herts SU to do moving forward?**
 - Lobby for a stricter By-Law regarding societies and non-engagement. If there are no events or contact from a committee for a month, meetings should be conducted to discuss role removal.
 - SU should make clear within training that any disciplinary misconducts, and inactivity will directly lead to removal from the role without any warnings.
- **Full details of the proposal can be found here: [Student Council](#).**
- **Q:** Could we pay committee members? They may only put in around six hours of work, so it does not add up to much.
A: The SU would not have the resources for this.
Q: Could we pay just one person from a committee? This would be to incentivise them.
A: It is challenging, as the workload should be split between three committee members so they should be paid equally. If only one is paid, the other two would lose motivation.
Student reps would also want to receive the same, and that is not viable, as there is over a thousand of them.
The accreditation scheme- split into bronze, silver and gold levels- is highlighted as existing incentives.
- **Q:** Could there be more perks through points that could be redeemed, for example for Forum tickets? These could be through hours worked.
A: This could be explored and discussed!
- **Q:** With incentives, we need to bear in mind that these leadership roles will not appeal to everyone.
A: They are voluntary roles so students would know what they're getting into and have to want to do it. If they are inactive, it makes sense to offer the opportunity to another person who may be keen to make a go of it.
- **Q:** Do you think it is non-academic societies that suffer most from this?
A: It is likely both types of societies! There are challenges around missing a Chair. Inclusion Officers have limited ability to sign off finances, so a missing Treasurer likely has more impact. It is a good way to ensure activity, as a student can maintain that they want to continue as Chair, for instance, but does not do anything.
- **Q:** There are often small voting samples in the election of a Chair. They could even be voted in with a single vote. Their role is then locked in for the year.
A: This is why it may be important to vote them out. Some candidates do not face any opponents in the election.
- **Q:** In order for something to be successful, there has to be a desirable goal. The accreditation scheme may not be enough of an incentive. Could there be

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something that counts towards their degree?

A: Volunteering as a society committee member count towards the Herts Excellence Award, which is an extra award that can be achieved alongside your degree, and is separate to the accreditation scheme. Full details are on Ask Herts: [Herts Excellence Award | Ask Herts | University of Hertfordshire](#).

- There is a question about the student rep accreditation scheme, for which more details are available here: [Student Rep Accreditation Scheme](#).

Updates from the SU (Summary)

- In our elections, nominations have now closed. Campaigning and voting are coming up next!
- Candidacy eligibility checks are currently taking place.
- The plan is to have one week of voting on College Lane, and one on De Havilland.
- There will be in-person voting only for the election of Elected Officers, while societies will be run online also, as normal.
- Voting results will be announced in the EleHouse on the 25th of March.
- The full timeline / key dates were provided on the slides:

Dates

Nominations	Monday 2 nd February	-	Monday 23 rd February
Candidate Checks	Monday 23 rd February	-	Friday 27 th February
Society Events, Campaigning & Voting	Monday 9 th March	-	Friday 20 th March
Results	Wednesday 25 th March		

- **Q:** Will there be additional society elections?
A: These are being considered for May to fill additional roles. More info to come down the line.
- If anyone has any further questions, or issues to raise surrounding anything elections, they are encouraged to contact elections@hertssu.com by email.

Idea for Change Voting Results

- Both Ideas for Change were open for voting, but the results were not valid due less than 20 students voting and therefore were not quorate.
- These ideas will be brought to the next Student Council for voting once again.

Key Dates

- **Elections Voting** - Monday 9th - Friday 20th March
- **Student Council #5** - Wednesday 15th April

- **Idea For Change submission deadline** - Wednesday 1st April
- **School Student Forums:**

These are a chance for you to share your experience, raise concerns, and suggest improvements directly with senior staff, who can make change happen within your school.

HML	Tuesday 28 th April	10:00 – 12:00	Room F321, College Lane
SLE	Tuesday 12 th May	14:00 – 15:30	Room TBC, De Havilland
- Any further School Student Forum dates will be added to the events list found on this page: <https://hertssu.com/your-say/student-reps/>