

Union Forum

18:30 – 20:00, Monday 23 April 2026, Microsoft Teams

Membership

Role	Name	Initials
Union Chair	Sal Fox	SF
Union President	Matt Aikin	MA
VP Voice	Luana Vasconcelos	LV
VP Activity	Kade De Gannes	KDG
VP Support	Sam Buss	SB
VP Community	Amber Dobrzanski	AD
Voice Zone Officers (PTOs)	Alfred Lovesey Heer Patel Jenny Jackson Matt Jarvis Mohammed Faiz Siddiqui	AL HP JJ MJ MF
Support Zone Officers (PTOs)	Jenny Tan Lexi Antoniou Zara Shanavaz Julia Sienko Chris Papafiggos	JT LA ZS JS CP
Community Zone Officers (PTOs)	Baris Aydin Jaden Ogunlade Vihanya Ratnayake Kethan Kotian Hashir Ahmed	BA JO VR KK HA
Activity Zone Officers (PTOs)	Mimi Gunawardena Guatam Kalra Sahil Korabandi Neha Desai Anvita Kadam	MG GK SK ND AK
Incoming Officers (In Attendance)	Waleed Shaikh Nicoelle Ocampo	WS NO
In Attendance – Student Voice Coordinator	Victoria Wiltshire	VW

Agenda

Standing Items			
1	Introductions, apologies for absence, ground rules	18:30	SF
For Discussion			
2	Update: Union Priorities 25-26	18:35	MA
3	Update: Surrey Decides	18:45	LV
4	Officer Updates – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> President VP Voice & Voice Zone 	18:55 19:00	MA LV

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VP Support & Support Zone • VP Community & Community Zone • VP Activity & Activity Zone 	19:05	SB
		19:10	AD
		19:15	KDG
5	Topic of Discussion: Student Voice Forum	19:20	LV, all officers
	1.		
Other Matters			
6	Any other business	19:50	SF

Welcome and Apologies

SF Introduced the meeting and briefly summarised Union Forum’s purpose. Apologies were noted from ZS and ND. SF reminded attendees that there was a busy agenda and to be mindful of this when sharing thoughts throughout. SF reminded students of the Q+A function and encouraged them to ask questions where needed.

Union Forum End of Year Update

SF discussed a report which had been taken to Board of Trustees on 20th April. She opened the floor up to hear thoughts on the paper from those who were in attendance at Trustees, highlighting that the aim of the paper was to discuss wins and changes from Union Forum. She also briefly shared some stats from meetings, with the first meeting having 10 students in attendance who were not current union officers when discussing the Library opening hours, and the second meeting on accommodation having 0 students.

AD shared that she believes the forum doesn’t fulfil what it is set out to do, which is to hold union officers to account. She believes that there are better ways to go about doing this.

LV shared that she thinks the main issue is that the current format no longer works for student engagement. She commented that Union Forum’s purpose was previously to discuss and vote on key changes, and gave examples of Industrial Action or the Attendance Policy, and that it is ultimately up to the next officer team to decide how these sorts of topics are discussed.

KDG believes that the format of the forum lacked engagement with being online, and shared insight that Society and Club Standings are in-person, which keeps that connection to students. She commented that this could be the same case with Union Forum.

MA discussed that, as President, he had previously suggested the removal of Union Forum, but that since it is written into the byelaws, this couldn't be the case. MA believes there are better ways for officers to be held to account, however feels that the officer team this year have been quite public facing, so this may not have been an issue. MA also feels that the individual topics discussed do have spaces at other forums within the Union, and that there is an element of duplication with Student Voice Forum.

SB commented that the Forum has become more engaging across the year, and shared an example of the powerpoint slide that Sabbs all shared, and felt that the consistency made the meeting go a lot smoother. SB also discussed the lack of follow-up from students after officers shared their updates.

SF then invited PTOs to make their comments on Union Forum.

HA suggested that a hybrid system is always a good option, then students have the choice to come physically or online. He also noted that visibility could be improved, and used the example of Surrey Decides, highlighting the importance of students knowing how they can be involved in the SU. HA suggested that merchandise for PTOs could potentially improve visibility.

JS shared the following comment via teams chat: I think students don't understand the structure of the Union Forum. Maybe students feel like it's really formal rather than a relaxed conversation about important topics. SF followed up on this by sharing an example of how officers are held to account at her previous institution, with officers taking part in live Q&A events via social media. JJ shared the following comment via teams chat: I think hybrid or potentially streaming, it's similar how Voice Forum is streamed to the Q&A function. MJ raised a comment on visibility of the forum, and also discussed how a hybrid option works for students who are commuting or have other commitments. JJ followed up on this by suggesting that Union forum is directly advertised to students who are already engaged with the SU.

VW highlighted that SF, in her capacity as Student Voice Assistant, will be working alongside the Sabbs to review Union forum broadly. Suggested changes and recommendations will be shared with the incoming officer team for them to collaborate with SU Staff members to outline the structure of Union Forum next semester. There then followed a discussion on the potential for societies to be greater involved in the promotion and engagement of the forum.

The meeting then moved on to Officer Updates.

MA began by sharing his updates as President, outlining that he didn't have too much to update on, due to the previous forum being fairly recent. He discussed his involvement in the Post-Graduate Graduation Ceremonies, University and SU meetings including Senate, Leadership and Board of Trustees and Team Surrey. He also discussed his recent meeting with the University's Vice Chancellor, with topics including Transnational Education and Student Recruitment. He has been newly added to Operations committee, where topics such as the price of Accommodation are discussed. Finally, he shared about his involvement in the University rebrand and campus master planning discussions.

LV shared her updated, including some student voice highlights around assessment criteria and International Student Support. She also shared that there had been 150 nominations from students for the STAG Awards. She gave thanks to officers who had contributed towards the agenda for the upcoming Student Voice Forum. She shared some EDI updates and highlighted several campaigns she had been working on, including Speak Week. LV invited all officers to attend the upcoming Course Rep Awards. The Voice Zone PTOs then shared their updates, including JJ supporting with Union Ball and STAG Awards shortlisting, their work on revamping the Personal Tutor Scheme, course rep socials and promotional materials for the Voice Zone. HP discussed their work on Personal Tutors within a peer-support model and on a loyalty card scheme within Manor Park Social.

SB shared her Support Zone updates, with Don't Worry Surrey coming up in May with lots of activities for students to be involved in, such as animal therapy sessions and an online mindfulness session. She shared that they are also collaborating with the Centre for Wellbeing to host events around with community garden. She discussed work that is being done around the new Renters Rights Bill coming in for May, and the support which is available for students around this. SB also shared information on campaign work, including her collaboration with AD on the Light up the Night campaign, a Neurodiversity Week craft session in collaboration with LV and her work on the University Mental Health Charter. She commented that OSCAR panels continue to take up a fair amount of her team's time. SB shared updates on behalf of ZS, which included work on Don't Worry Surrey, advice on how students can apply for their Masters', and has continued to support the Talk Together. She then shared updates on CB's work around LGBT+ awareness. JS shared an update on the Access to Success pilot event, having written a news story which includes a feedback survey opportunity for students. JT shared her updates on the Surrey Weekends Project, with a growing number of societies getting involved with this initiative.

AD shared updates from the Community Zone, including the One World Gala, Cost of Living initiatives including the Belonging Breakfast, the Community Pantry and her ongoing collaboration with other SUs and their Cost of Living initiatives. She discussed volunteering opportunities available to students, as well as working on Grad Ball, clearing out of the Community Hub, meeting with the Meningitis Research Hub. HA shared his progress around increasing the number of lockers available to students, and work on support for International Students. VR shared updates on her work around Women's History Month in collaboration with LV and KDG, which laid the groundwork for re-establishing the Women in Engineering Society. She also updated on campaign work around the 30-second rapid feedback forms.

KDG shared her updates, including Team Surrey's Varsity Win, the upcoming Union and Colours Ball, and the final Society and Club Standings, with food being offered to Signatories for this session. She updated on her campaign work surrounding the Black Sports Collective, with the University providing £2,000 worth of funding towards the project, off the back of the Union's original request for £300. She discussed the Entrepreneurship Week in collaboration with the Student Enterprise Team, as well as upcoming Committee Training in-person for new signatories as well as an SME Fair for students. MG shared her updates from University Meetings she attended, including Transport and Union and Colours Ball.

The Officer Updates then came to a close, with LV finishing up the meeting with a brief discussion surrounding the upcoming Student Experience Subcommittee (SESC). She shared that since the University wish to make this committee more student-led, with recommendations being sent to the committee pulled from a range of feedback mechanisms. Off the back of this, she is keen to collate feedback from officers for the next set of recommendations which will be presented to the University on the 13th of May, and shared a Menti with those in attendance to collate more recommendations.

SF closed the meeting and thanked all of those in attendance for coming to the final Union Forum for 2025/26.