



STUDENT
COUNCIL

BI-YEARLY REFLECTION REPORT

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Written by the UC Student Council '25-'26



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Fall

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ABBREVIATIONS

UCSC	University College Student Council
AAO	Academic Affairs Officer
BoS	Board of Studies
CAR	Campus Affairs Representatives
CC	Connect Centre
FLISS	First Generation Low Income and Scholarship Students
MT	Management Team
UCSA	University College Student Association
UCSRN	University College Student Representatives of the Netherlands
UCUC	University College Utrecht Council

INTRODUCTION

The bi-yearly reflection report is written by the UC Student Council every semester. The UCSC constitutes the student side of co-governance at UCU: members sit on various governing bodies of our college and are part of the making and checking of academic and non-academic policy. One of our primary roles is representing the student voice in these processes – which means that we actively seek student input on matters being discussed. This year's UCSC members are:



Yuna Luisetto (She/Her)
Chair, Vice-chair UCUC



Dede Kotey (She/Her)
AAO, Student Rep. UCUC.



Felicitas Schliese (She/Her)
Student Assessor, student member MT, visiting member BoS



Phileine de Widt (She/Her)
AAO, Student Rep. BoS



Mathilda Lueg (She/Her)
Secretary, Student Rep. UCUC



Evan Hovey (He/Him)
AAO, Student Rep. UCUC, UCSRN Academic Rep.

Our work is in part determined by the themes and activities of the respective bodies in which we hold positions and in part by the day-to-day work that comes with running our own board. Additionally, every UCSC board plans out several aims and projects to work on during their board year.

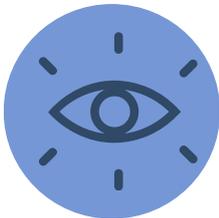
In this report, we will outline the progress in regard to the aims we set for our board year, but also highlight other relevant achievements. Having presented our goals to the student body at the beginning of the academic year, this report serves to provide students with an update on past and upcoming work. This also works towards our aim of increasing the transparency and visibility of our work and gives students a means of holding us accountable. There are also internal benefits as it serves as a checkpoint to provide all of us with an overview of our work thus far and allows us to consider the remainder of our board year. This report will also give our successors a clear overview of our year's work. As such, we continue to strongly recommend that future boards make it standard practice to write and publish these bi-yearly reports.

THE AIMS OF 2025-2026



Academic Clarity

With our aim of academic clarity we want to ensure that everyone can easily access the information they need to make informed decisions regarding their curriculum and know where to find the support they need along the way.



Visibility

A lot of our Student Council work is going on behind the scenes and many decisions made only reach the student body through updates of the website or the occasional email. With our visibility aim we want to make the work that we do more transparent and accessible and foster a better relation between the student body and college hall.



Future & Career

With our aim of future and career we organize the chance to meet UCU alumni, get introduced to internship opportunities and learn more about masters options at the UCU Next events!



Community

Our community aim goes beyond the purely academic and aims to ensure that students feel connected to their place of study, know where to find different types of support, and are informed about their rights as students.



Enrichment

In our enrichment aim we turn the focus to all aspects that are moving beyond the basic UCU curriculum and academia more broadly. Through focusing on the aspects of decolonisation and Gen AI we stay up to date on current debates in academia and ensure that student voices are heard in the development of new policies.

LOOKING BACK

BODIES & TEAMS

All members of the UC Student Council take part in various co-governorship bodies, teams, and groups. In this section of the report, we reflect on our activities in the UCUC, BoS, MT, and UCSRN.

The UCUC



The University College Utrecht Council (UCUC) is a body within the College that ensures that the interests of students and staff are represented. Comprising of four staff/faculty members and four UCSC members, the Council has engaged in discussions, advised, and granted approval on various topics throughout the academic year. Notably, we examined and approved the budget for 2025-2026. Another crucial task of the Council is synthesizing the course evaluations and creating summaries of the valuable feedback given. These summaries are then examined to find areas of improvement and are brought to course instructors, fellows, cluster chairs, and the BoS. The council has also been working to promote and raise awareness about the current situation surrounding national educational budget cuts, as well as the steps being taken in response to them.

The BoS



In the Board of Studies, we have been discussing everything in regards to education at UCU, ranging from the educational vision to the implementation of budget cuts as well as approving new courses. An exciting new course that has been developed is Beginner Economics. Additionally, some of the projects that are being worked on are with regards to interdisciplinarity at UCU, the uses of AI in courses and looking at how to lower work pressure for staff and students. Of course, we have also been working on the implementation of the budget cuts, which means we have discussed what courses to alternate or to cut in order to save the necessary amount.

LOOKING BACK

BODIES & TEAMS



The MT

This has been a very busy half-year for the Management Team, dealing with the second round of budget cuts, submitting UCU's new Strategic Plan, as well as facing the potential reorganisations of our campus. Facing additional 5% budget cuts this year, the Management Team has been very grateful for all different stakeholder groups that have worked hard to come up with more ways to cut money. Nevertheless, the additional cuts are heavily impacting UCU. Mainly because of the previous as well as upcoming budget cut measures, the MT is also discussing staff and student work pressure as well as academic quality in various different contexts. Targeted saving measures have now been set and the implementation of these measures is now being worked on. Throughout the semester we had multiple successful Town Hall meetings with students (as well as staff) to gather their input and answer their questions on topics such as student housing and the possible sale of Dining Hall.



The UCSRN

This past semester, the Student Council has been representing UCU in the UCSRN Academic Committee. Meetings have revolved around organizing events for the upcoming Spring semester, including a Model United Nations event and a symposium. Early in the semester, the Student Council submitted a bidding letter in order for the UCSRN Symposium to be organized at UCU. The Academic Committee deemed UCU to be a strong fit for the event, and a team consisting of students from various University Colleges around the Netherlands are now working to organize it for the Spring. Other UCSRN commitments have included attending the general assembly at the start of the year and attending biweekly meetings with the Academic Committee.



The Voorzittersoverleg & URAAD:

UCU governance functions within the larger institution of Utrecht University. To stay informed about what is happening in other faculties, the UCSC Chair attends the monthly 'Voorzittersoverleg' (Chairs Meeting). In this meeting, the staff- and student chairs of UU's eight faculties discuss what has been on the Faculty Council agendas and exchange useful information or resources. Additionally, we stay in close contact with the URAad through monthly meetings. We use these meetings to gain perspectives from outside UCU, find a knowledgeable sparring partner, and (like the Voorzittersoverleg) exchange information or resources. The budget cuts, sale of faculty buildings and co-governance have been recurring topics during these meetings.

LOOKING BACK

PORTFOLIOS

Every Student Council works on portfolios, which are a set of projects we aim to complete each year. This section of the report reflects on our Portfolios' activities and achievements in the spring semester of our board year.

Introweek & Introtime



Introweek and Introtime were the very first project that we completed this year! Evan and Felicitas started working on it already back in summer term, joining the introweek platform together with UCSA and CAR during transition to brainstorm ideas. The main activities that student council organised for intraweek were "Getting back on Track with the track reps" "Afternoon at the Bar: Get to know staff members" and the "Academics 101" workshop, which we followed up upon during introtime with our "How to craft your curriculum workshop". This allowed us to focus on introducing academics and student tools during introweek and then during introtime give first year students some guidance on their curriculum planning going forward at UCU.



This meant that during introweek we had 3 different events. Firstly, we had our Track Rep event during Thursday lunch. We remodelled the event to be an interactive running quiz, whereby track reps are lined up on the quad. Families have to send one student to receive a trivia question from them, run back, answer it with their family, for another student to run back to the track rep. Students also had to add track reps name and tracks. The event was a success! The winning teams got to take home plants for everyone. Our second event of the week was the meet the staff borrel in the bar. This year we included a Bingo of fun facts about staff members. This made the afternoon super interactive and fun. We had a large turnout of over 70 students. For next year we recommend scheduling a bit more time, because students and bartenders were in a rush to get ready for formal dinner. Finally, we had our workshop on Navigating Academics. This workshop introduced students to how UCU academics are set up and how to navigate the different platforms such as Osiris, Blackboard, and Cursus planner. This event seemed to have helped many students, especially with Osiris and the Drop&Add Form and could be even earlier in introweek. We then held a second workshop on Crafting your Curriculum later in the semester. Here we introduced all the other options such as exchange, double degrees and minors to students when they are a little more settled in and so it doesn't feel like too much of an information overload. Additionally, we gave them some time to craft their curriculum and ask us any questions they had. The second workshop was a collaboration with our own tutors, which was a great idea and help. Splitting the workshop was incredibly successful since first year students were able to pick up more of the information without feeling too overwhelmed. Generally, our projects during introweek were incredibly successful and we hope everyone enjoyed them! We would like to thank UCSA again for all their hard work organising introweek, without them we would not have been able to have such a fun week!

LOOKING BACK

PORTFOLIOS

Year Plan Presentation

One of the first events we organized as the new Student Council board was our year plan presentation. Here we presented our aims and project for the coming year and who the contact person is for them. We had this lovely event in the bar where students were able to enjoy a drink and listen to the presentation. Afterward, we added all our projects on our website so staff and students can look back at them and know who to contact for certain questions or concerns.



Track and Thesis Market

From late summer term last year into the fall semester, Phileine worked on the Track and Thesis Market which was held on November 4th. After many scheduling issues, it was decided to have this event after the midterm break. Though some prefer it earlier in the semester, the final date did result in high turnout and high efficiency. Due to the course enrollment deadline and tutor meetings, students already had many questions which they could ask all in one place. A new development this year was including the curriculum enhancement programs like East Africa, Aruba, and Jamaica. This was also successful and a good first push into further promoting these unique opportunities.

Alongside the market, we also invited the dean, Manon, to join us and meet the students as she was in her first week. This also highlighted to us the importance of inviting staff to these types of events to encourage more interaction and connection with the student body.



Teacher of the Year UU

This fall, Phileine and Yuna worked hard to submit a Teacher of the Year nomination to Utrecht University. This year we proudly nominated Teun van Gils to the Teacher Talent award. We chose to nominate Teun due to their passionate teaching style and contribution to the course curriculum through both teaching and creating programming courses. In early November the teacher portfolio and application were made, and now we anxiously await to see if Teun makes it to the next stage.



LOOKING BACK

PORTFOLIOS

PR & Communications



We started off this year's communications portfolio by updating the website, to ensure that all information about what we do, who we are, our role in governance and information from our previous events is up to date. It's a great place to look if you have any questions or want to find some resources! We also recently added a page on Dining Hall, including a report on the importance of the building, an FAQ page and ways to get involved.



This year, we decided to stop using Facebook and instead focus on Instagram and the Whatsapp group to post about our events and important news. We also did an Instagram takeover in early November where we shared more about who we are as a board.



We continued to work on the 'Did You Know' series of posts, which last year's board created to ensure that students can informally and easily access information. More posts are coming soon! Next to that we are working on a new series called "Introducing College Hall" which aims to make the work of different bodies more transparent and accessible by showing what their work looks like.

Finally, we have been sending out the monthly newsletter recapping the events and initiatives that have taken place, and also showcasing opportunities that are available for the upcoming weeks. This gets sent to all students and staff, and has been a great place to centralise and keep track of what has been going on in these busy months!

Meet the Staff



During the fall semester Phileine and Felicitas have been able to organise multiple different meet the staff events with the aim of fostering greater connections between students and staff at UCU.



To start, we had our meet the staff borrel during introweek. This was a great success as the bar was packed! First years and any other students on campus were able to meet their teachers and other members of staff and share a drink with them while discussing all the exciting things at UCU and more. Both the free drinks and snacks as well as the bingo made conversations flow and truly highlighted the purpose of the event.

Further throughout the year we had three Town Hall events. In September the theme was Housing. In November we had a Meet the Dean during the Track and Thesis Market. Lastly, in December we had one on Dining Hall matters. This year's Town Hall topics reveal to us again the importance of connecting students to staff—especially MT. It is in these places that students have a great opportunity to share their opinions and needs on topics that directly impact them. We thank everybody that showed up to these events, and we further encourage you to join as we plan to host more next semester.

LOOKING BACK

PROJECTS

Besides the formal positions that the UC Student Council holds, every board focuses on a few goals and projects in their board year. This section of the report reflects on our projects' activities and achievements in the spring semester of board year.



Wellbeing & Community

The Student Council worked collaboratively with the Wellbeing Platform in order to organize a community dinner towards the latter half of the Fall semester. Together, we made a couscous dish that was free for all students to grab and eat together in the Dining Hall. We had more than one hundred students present at the event and thoroughly enjoyed being together in such a cozy space! In another initiative to promote wellbeing at UCU, the Student Council designed a poster with a number of resources for services revolving around mental health, sexual health, and social safety. This poster has already been placed in some areas on campus, and the Student Council will work with UCU administration to spread an abridged version more widely among students.



Neurodivergent Students

Building on last year's work, Yuna and Mathilda continued the project focused on supporting neurodivergent students at UCU. Over the past year, we have been further developing existing initiatives while working to make available resources more visible and accessible to students. One of our main ongoing efforts has been the rental system for noise-cancelling headphones, which were bought by last year's council and that we are trying to actively promote.

These headphones are available for all students to rent during office hours, both for studying and for exams. The renting system remains the same as last year, and the headphones continue to be part of UCSA's inventory. Our focus has mainly been on improving communication, as many students are still unaware that these resources are available to them.

Additionally, we have participated in meetings with the Learning Accommodation Agreement (LAA) committee. These discussions focused on the current state of LAAs at UCU, as well as updates and changes happening at the UU-wide level.

We are also in the process of creating accessibility guidelines that students and teachers can use to check whether their content is accessible to everyone (PowerPoints, documents, etc.). This includes aspects such as text size and colour, contrast, and which platforms support screen readers. These guidelines are intended as a supportive resource and would be accessible but not mandatory to follow.

Finally, we are working on shortening and sharing the wellbeing booklet that was created last year. This booklet includes useful information for neurodivergent students, and our aim is to make this information clearer, more accessible, and easier to engage with.



LOOKING BACK

PROJECTS

Student Support & Advocacy



The UCSRN Symposium has been the largest initiative within the “Student Advocacy” project. In our proposal to host the event, the Student Council submitted the topic of “Activism and Advocacy” as the theme for the symposium. The UCSRN is already in contact with a number of groups which deal with human rights and activism, including UNICEF. More organizations will be contacted to speak at the upcoming symposium in the Spring semester. Additionally, the Student Council has been in consistent contact with various groups of students, including PoCCo and UCUSP, who have been active in a number of campaigns both on and off-campus.

International Student Support



This year we wanted to put some effort in international student support. At the start of the academic year we organised a textbook sale in collaboration with FLISS, to raise money for the scholarship fund and give UCU students the opportunity to buy affordable second-hand textbooks. This was a hugely successful initiative, with a huge turnout of students and over 1000€ raised! This was achieved with the participation of the previous Student Council board, which organised the collection of all of these textbooks at the end of last year. We are also in the process of organising a second book sale in January for the spring semester, which will span over a week during our office hours. We are also hoping to help recruit a larger board next semester and look at how student support can be organised since more money is being allocated to the student aid fund and some of the institutional student support is changing.

UCSC Visibility



One goal of the Student Council this year has been to make ourselves and our roles in UCU governance known to students at UCU. This initiative began during Introweek, where we attempted to be present consistently at the majority of events for new students to be able to recognize our faces. During the first weeks of the semester, we organized visits to RiC classes to explain to students our role at UCU and where they can reach us should they have any concerns regarding academics or governance. This project culminated in the Midterms party, which the Student Council organized in collaboration with PartyCo with the aim of reminding students of our presence at UCU. While these events were specifically organized under the “UCSC Visibility” project, other events and initiatives implemented throughout the year—such as the Craft-Your-Curriculum workshop and the FLISS Booksale—have succeeded in increasing students’ awareness of the Student Council’s role on campus.

LOOKING BACK

PROJECTS

Gen AI



Yuna and Mathilda are currently working on a project that explores the role of generative artificial intelligence within our institution, particularly in relation to education and learning. As part of this initiative, we have been in the process of organizing an AI-focused event that will include several guest speakers as well as a broader, open discussion with our students and possibly staff as well.



The aim of this event is to bring together a variety of perspectives and types of knowledge about AI, so that students feel better informed, more confident, and more equipped to critically reflect on their own use of AI and their relationship with these technologies in an academic context. The event is planned to take place in March of next year.



In parallel, we have also been engaging in our own discussions about the ongoing development of AI, including the potential need for institutional guidelines at UCU. This includes considering how such guidelines might be integrated into the template syllabus and embedded more structurally into teaching practices. Overall, our goal is to open up a broader conversation within the institution and to initiate steps that can help make these discussions more productive, ultimately contributing to meaningful development and thoughtful engagement with AI at UCU.

Lastly, we have published a "did you know" post on Instagram about the UU wide generative AI guidelines to better inform the student population of what is allowed or not at a university level

Decolonisation



Mathilda and Dede worked on the project of decolonization together. We had initially planned to build on work from a previous Student Council project, however, we experienced some hurdles along the way. During the second half of the semester, we decided to rearrange the timeline of our project. Instead of hosting a workshop in November, it will now be planned for early spring semester. The plan is to target the workshop towards track representatives and fellows, but it will be open to anyone on campus who is interested in decolonizing their classes, curriculum and more. The project is currently in early stages.



LOOKING BACK

PROJECTS



AAOs and Track Representatives

As AAOs we work closely with the track representatives of our respective cluster in order to get as much feedback as possible. Our track representatives were selected during summer term and we had our first collective meeting at the start of fall semester. As a way to make students more aware of track representatives and the role they take on within our governing system, we hosted a Get on Track with the Track Representatives race during introweek (a new version of the previous Track Rep Treasure Hunt). Additionally, we emphasized to the track reps to introduce themselves to all the classes in their tracks, not just the level ones. The track reps keep close contact with a wide range of students, and therefore, as AAOs, we get a broad overview of how different tracks and courses are going. As well as being aware of any complaints or issues that might arise throughout the semester. The track and thesis market also helped in raising the visibility of track representatives. Towards the end of the semester we reminded our track representatives of different ways they can collect feedback for their end of the semester report.

As AAOs we also organized a focus group (Law) and midterm/in-class evaluations for a number of courses (traditionally for courses new courses/new teachers or courses the track fellow thinks it would be good to check up on). During these we ask the track representatives for their help to take notes, to help structure the conversation, or to give their own personal feedback.

Throughout the semester we regularly check up with our track reps to see how they are doing, if they are facing any issues or if they need any help with their work. This semester, everything has run very smoothly!

LOOKING AHEAD



As we enter the second half of the academic year, we are thrilled to share an exciting line up of events and initiatives while addressing some significant developments. Here's what you can look forward to:

Upcoming Events

- FLISS Book Sale - Second Edition: Get ready to dive into a treasure trove of books at the much-anticipated second edition of the FLISS book sale. Don't miss the opportunity to refresh your shelves and discover new reads.
- AI day: Join us for an AI Literacy day, which will host a few speakers to share information about different aspects of AI and a larger discussion where we will brainstorm AI in education and its role at UCU.
- decolonisation workshop: This workshop, targeted for track representatives and fellows, will be open to anyone on campus who is interested in decolonizing their classes, curriculum and more
- UCU Next: Curious about your next steps? Whether you're considering a master's program, a gap year, or exploring other academic paths, UCU Next will provide guidance and answers to your questions about academic development.

Challenges and Changes

While this semester brings excitement, it also comes with its share of challenges. Due to budget cuts and the announcement of the possible sale of Dining Hall, our first half of the board year was dedicated to identifying necessary adjustments. The different groups in charge of the budget cuts will now implement these changes, and we will keep everyone informed and engaged. We will host a second Town Hall with the MT. This will be your chance to ask questions.

Transition and Elections

Excitement continues in April with the elections for a new UC Student Council board. This marks the beginning of a transition period as we prepare to pass the torch to the next leadership team. To help you understand the process and roles, we will hold informational sessions in February. If you're curious or considering a position, don't hesitate to reach out to current board members for insights and advice.

CONCLUSION

Even though this semester was full of terrible news, the sale of one of our most important buildings, budget cuts and the insecurities from a shrinking education budget we still look back at this semester with pride in what we managed to accomplish. We are happy to note that we have successfully completed several projects we had planned earlier this year even though we had hope to do more which turned out difficult given the said news. These include presenting our year plan, helping UCSA to organise introweek, hosting the Track & Thesis Market, and a lot more!

We have also been working on ongoing projects and collaborations, such as UCU Next, the UCSRN Symposium, The diversity Coalition, and the FLISS Book Sale. We are particularly pleased to have collaborated with groups like the Alumni Office, the UCSA, and CAR. Not only that, but we are also very grateful for our continuous partnerships and are eager to continue them in the next semester.

The spring semester brings exciting opportunities as we start, continue, or finalize various projects and portfolios. These include organizing an AI literacy day, UCU NEXT, continuing our Instagram series ("Did You Know"), preparing for elections, and much more!

We will also organise more focus groups and midterm evaluations in the coming semester, including some concerning the sale of Dining Hall. Your input and participation are always appreciated and help us represent the student body as effectively as possible.

With many upcoming projects and events requiring our time and energy, we are enthusiastic about the road ahead. Having learned to work together effectively as a board over the past semester will undoubtedly benefit us in the challenges and opportunities to come.

It has been a joy to represent the student body so far, and we look forward to continuing our work as we see the rest of our projects and initiatives come to fruition in the second half of our board year. Thank you for your ongoing support and engagement!

ANY QUESTIONS?

Feel free to contact us through

Our Email

ucu.studentcouncil@uu.nl

Visit our Office Hours

Monday 18:00-19:00

Thursday 18:00-19:00

Our office is located in Dining Hall

(on the right side when coming in, opposite to UCSA's)

Send us a message on Instagram



[uc.student.council](https://www.instagram.com/uc.student.council)

