

# Student Spaces Project

## Executive Summary

This project proposes to transform the Tait Building First Floor Staff Common Room into a multi-purpose student-facing communal space in an answer to the urgent plea for more student spaces at City, University of London.

The proposal below will demonstrate:

- The strategic advantages for re-purposing the space.
- The current underutilisation of the space.
- The demand for the space.
- The long-term benefits of transforming the space.

In short, the Union proposes that, given the unique demands of City as a non-campus University catering for a diverse range of student lifestyles, there is a pressing and demonstrable need for increased student-facing communal space which can be met by the redevelopment of the Tait Building First Floor Staff Common Room into a multi-purpose Student Common Room. The proposed project will serve the student-body first and foremost, but also fulfil University and Union strategic objectives, and contribute towards the long-term growth of City, University of London into a higher education institution with a strong sense of community and care at the heart of its student life, promoting the success, comfort, and wellbeing of its students.

## Alignment with the Education & Student Strategy

### Vision & Strategy 2026

Being placed consistently best in NSS in London and top 20% in the UK for student experience is a priority for City, and creating multi-purpose and student friendly spaces for our students will support this ambition.

This student spaces project aligns with and supports ambitions with the ESS and the 2021 Delivery Plan has several points that this project directly feeds into.

1J. “Continue to work with the Students’ Union to grow the success and quality of Academic Societies across all Schools; enabling every student to build experiences outside of the curriculum, whilst gaining valuable professional development as part of an ever growing community at City.”

2D. “Work in partnership with the Students’ Union to explore how we will maximise student input and collaboration as we progress work to support the student experience and broader community. - Provide support to the SU in assessing options for greater community focused space to benefit students.”

The project will fulfil both of these aims in building a non-curricular space designed to facilitate an open community environment for the benefit of students.

## Alignment with City’s Space Policy

City’s Space Policy provides a list of priorities and ambitions for our teaching, study, social and staff areas. The policy clearly identifies the first priority to be teaching spaces and the second as communal \ student-facing space. The policy also identifies one of the responsibilities for the SMC to be the maximising the efficiency of our spaces. This project directly aligns with the policy’s student-facing space priority and urges City to maximise the utility of underused spaces.

## Alignment with City Students' Union Strategic Plan 2019-2022

This proposal aims to support the City Students' Union's Strategic Plan. The strategy is based on extensive student opinion research and the Union believes the priorities represented in the strategy reflect the true concerns, wishes and demands of City's student body and therefore are now underpinning the Union's activities and ambitions. The student spaces project aligns with the Union's Vision and Mission and all of the 4 priorities, especially Priority 4.

**Our Vision:** You have a great time as a student at City and when you graduate you believe your time here has given you the skills and experiences to achieve your goals.

**Our Mission:** The Students' Union will empower student success, with services and support that enhance your time at City and beyond.

**Priority 4:** Your Health, Happiness and Community

4.4: Developing opportunities, spaces and external partnerships for you to make friends on your course or around your interests.

### Reasons behind the project

#### A. Current use of the space

Area = 124m<sup>2</sup>

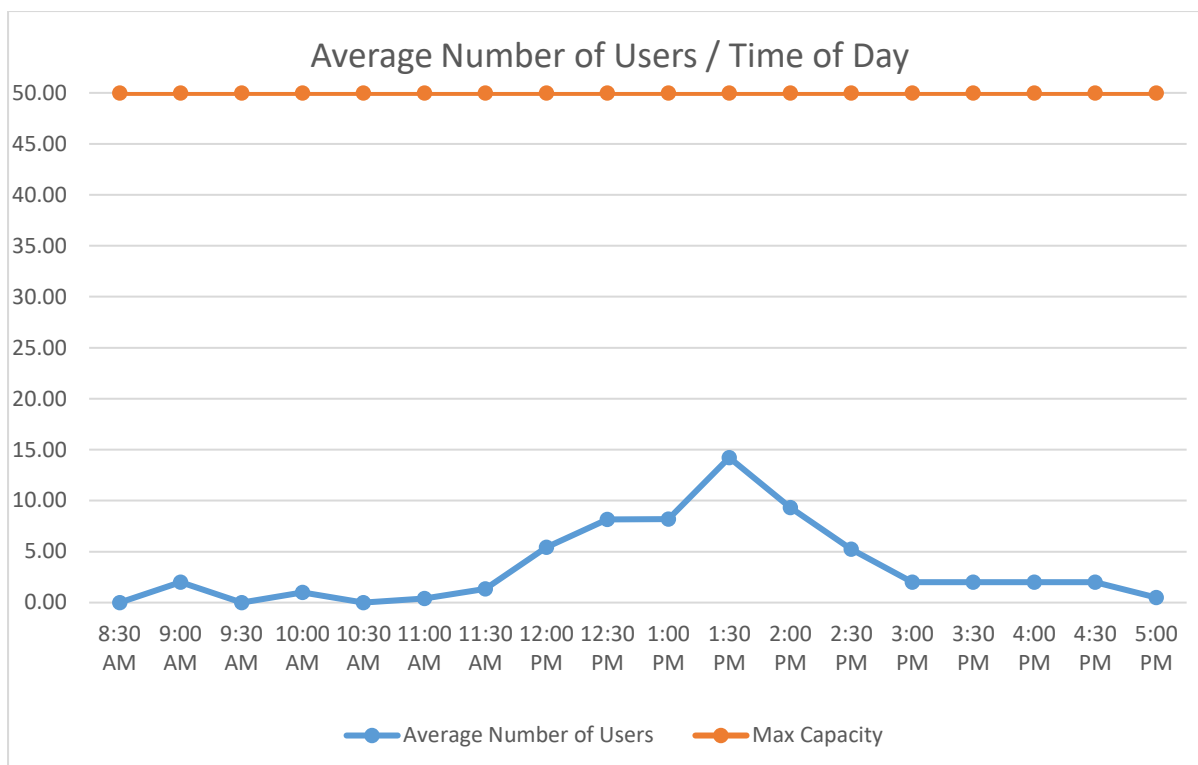
Capacity = 50

It is the Union's belief that the staff common room is underused. The use during morning and afternoon periods is very low and data shows that the only significant use is during lunch periods.

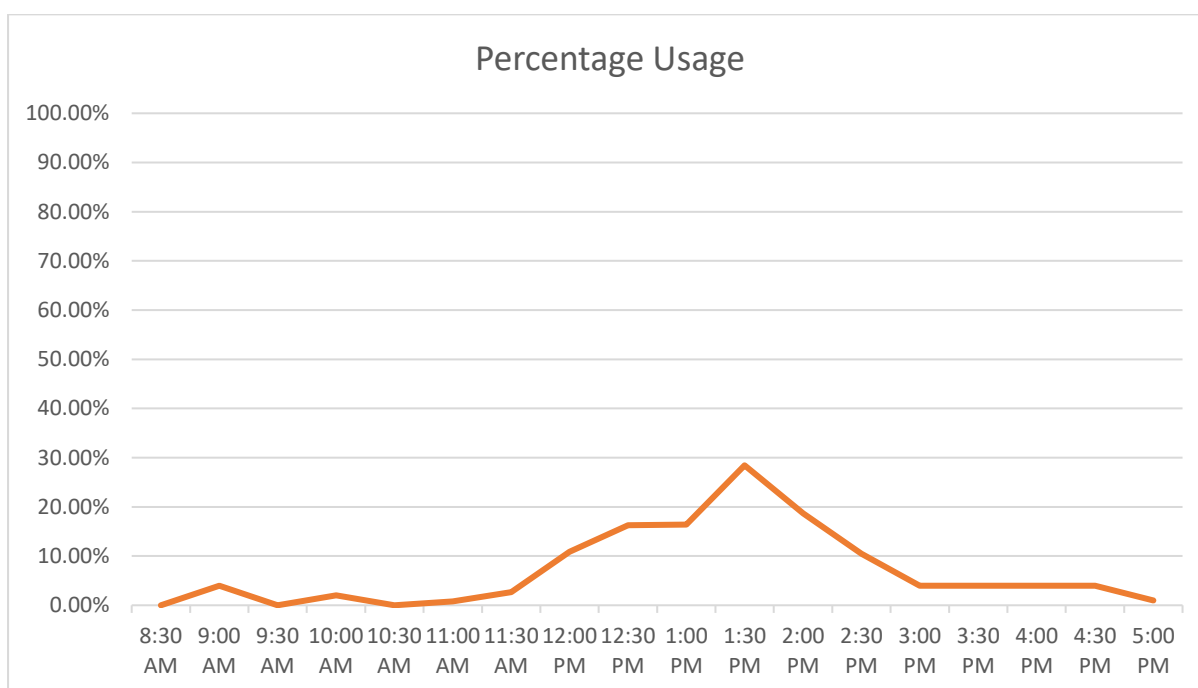
Our observations show that some SMCSE staff have meetings in the space occasionally. Most of the use is by SMCSE academic staff and by some professional staff from central university services and by SU staff. Our observations also indicate a moderate use of the area by PhD students.

The Union would also like to highlight that student spaces (courtyard cafeteria and the space in front of the faith centre), both during busy lunch hours and morning and afternoon times, are packed and students often struggle to find spaces to eat, socialise or study, indicating a clear demand for increased student-facing spaces.

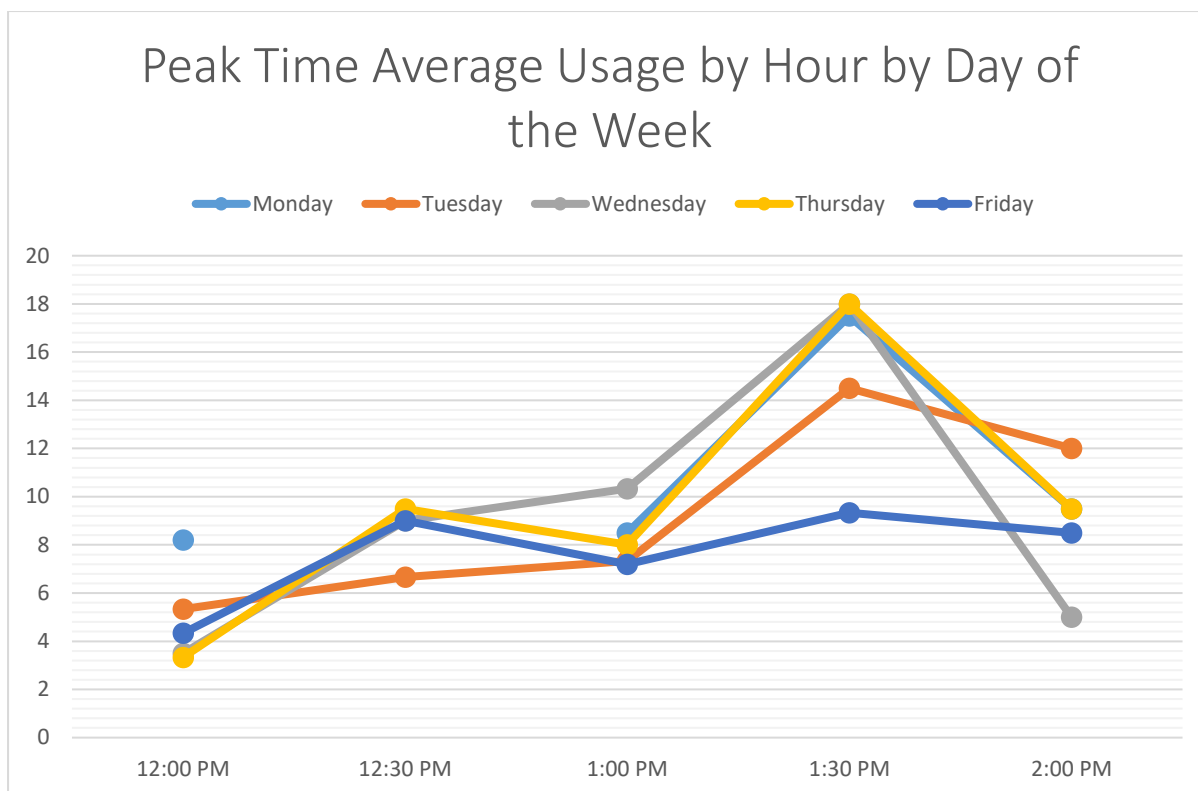
Monitoring data shown in Appendix 1.



**Graph 1: Average number of users in the room across 30 minute intervals**



**Graph 2: Occupancy of the space (capacity 50 = 100%)**



**Graph 3: Average number of users in peak hours (lunch time) across work days.**

### **B. Commuter students**

“Did you know that City has the second highest percentage of commuter students in the UK? ([Julie Voce, Learning at City](#))”. “A lack of adequate common rooms and locker facilities can leave commuters feel they lack a “home” on campus. ([David Morris, The Guardian](#))”.

As a key demographic at City, this project will deliver a vital service to commuter students to make them feel comfortable and at home and give them the opportunities to pass their time in a welcoming social space. The Union have been informed that SMCSE will be prioritising commuter student support in the next academic year and envisage this project dovetailing with their ambitions, providing additional support to commuter students.

### **C. Sense of belonging**

Our communal areas are not all very student-friendly and inviting. At City, we struggle to build a community and a sense of belonging. The Union believes that one of the reasons for this is the lack of student central spaces outside of canteen and cafeteria areas. The Union envisages this project contributing to a sense of inclusivity and belonging at City.

### **D. Lack of common rooms**

Some of our schools and programmes have common rooms and study areas allocated only for their own students (Law, CASS UG & PG, Computer Science etc.), whereas a majority of our SASS & SHS students do not have access to such social and study areas allocated specifically. This project would cater to all students with unrestricted access across schools and departments.

### **E. Location**

The staff common room is located in the heart of an already heavily-populated student area. It is next to the Courtyard Cafeteria, the courtyard open space, the Students’ Union Reception and Shop, the faith centre, the prayer rooms and is in close proximity to City Bar. This project would supplement an already buzzing area with another hub of student activity,

improving the student experience while also reducing the burden on the heavily-trafficked surrounding sites.

The Union would also like to emphasize that the Courtyard cafeteria seating area is very busy every day and often students struggle to find a space to sit. An additional student space close by would give more options to students, especially during busy lunch hours.

#### **F. Tait Building**

Most of the teaching for our Health students takes place in Tait Building Levels 2 & 3; a Tait Building Student Common Room would serve as an ideal space for students using the building to relax, study, eat and spend time in between their lectures, tutorials and skills sessions that take long hours. This project would give all our students, but especially our SHS students a space where they can feel comfortable and at-home.

#### **G. Value for money**

Our students pay high fees for their City experience, ranging from £9,250 to 15K and more. It is City's responsibility to provide adequate social spaces for students, and the Union's priority to drive value-for-money (Strategy Priority 2).

#### **H. SU – More student facing areas**

The Union has grown significantly over the years, however the lack of student-facing Union spaces and lack of promotional areas is an obstacle to the continuation of its growth. This space, if branded as an SU space will allow the Union to have a larger presence on campus.

#### **I. Microwaves**

The microwave area next to the canteen has been an issue for the last few years, as many students prefer to bring food with them and use the only microwave facility during peak lunch hours. There are constant and very long queues most days. The Union proposes to install 6-10 microwaves in the partitioned kitchen area already existing in the room and if viable, as per student wishes, reserve kosher, halal, vegan and vegetarian only microwaves.

#### **J. NSS Wins**

City's ambitious plans to improve its student satisfaction results align well with this project as this may be an easy and student facing win for our students who will be filling out NSS, PTES, PRES and the NSS-indicator Your Voice 1 & 2 surveys.

#### **K. Bookable space for our student groups**

In 2018/19 the Union had 109 societies, organising academic, careers, cultural, faith and campaigning events all year around. They often struggle to book spaces for their events due to the sheer number of timetabled activities across campus. This room may be turned into a bookable space from 5pm onwards to allow societies to run events in a social and dynamic space, which is easier to book.

## Collective TU Response, received 15/10/2019

Space & Management Committee received the formal joint response sent by UCU & Unison & Unite attached to this proposal.

### Staff Common Room Current Set Up



### Suggested space re-allocation

The Union requests the space to be allocated to the control of the Students' Union completely. This means that the space will be re-designed and transformed by the SU and will be represented as a Students' Union space. The room bookings will be carried out by the Union and not centrally. The room will be bookable by societies in the afternoons.

The Union does not seek to restrict access to any academic or professional staff. Members of staff may enter as they wish to have lunch, have staff meetings, have personal tutor meetings, or attend SU events. The only restriction to the space may arise from previously agreed, timetabled and closed student group events. The Union will also suggest improvements to the facilities and furnishings including: acquisition of more cooking facilities, microwave ovens, and cutlery; an update in furniture and potential additions such as TVs for promotion purposes.

**Recommendation for the Space & Management Committee:** to approve the proposal and allocate the Tait Level 1 Common Room to City Students' Union.

**Tuna Kunt**  
**President 2019/20**  
 September 2019

## Appendix 1

### Tait Building Level 1 Staff Common Room Visitor Log

Monitored by City Students' Union & PAF 04/09/2019 – 16/10/2019

No. of visitors	Day	Date	Time
5	Weds	04-Sep	14:15
0	Weds	04-Sep	15:00
11	Thurs	05-Sep	13:05
0	Thursday	05-Sep	16:00
0	Friday	09/06/2019	08:35
0	Friday	09/06/2019	09:30
0	Friday	09/06/2019	10:40
0	Friday	09/06/2019	11:30
10	Friday	09/06/2019	13:20
2	Friday	09/06/2019	2.30 pm
8	Monday	09/09/2019	13:00 - 14:00
2	Monday	09/09/2019	16:43
0	Tuesday	09/10/2019	11:00 AM
2	Tuesday	09/10/2019	12:30
6	Tuesday	09/10/2019	12:45
9	Tuesday	09/10/2019	13:40
18	Weds	09/11/2019	13:30
6	Friday	13/09/2019	12:15
2	Friday	13/09/2019	13:15
4	Monday	16/09/2019	12:15
18	Monday	16/09/2019	13:15
0	Tuesday	17/09/2019	12:15
3	Tuesday	17/09/2019	13:15
2	Weds	18/09/2019	12:15
6	Weds	18/09/2019	13:15
3	Thursday	19/09/2019	12:15
5	Thursday	19/09/2019	13:15
3	Thursday	19/09/2019	14:00
2	Friday	20/09/2019	10:00
4	Friday	20/09/2019	12:15
8	Friday	20/09/2019	13:15
4	Friday	20/09/2019	16:00
2	Monday	23/09/2019	09:00
4	Monday	23/09/2019	11.3
6	Monday	23/09/2019	12:15
4	Monday	23/09/2019	13:15
8	Tuesday	24/09/2019	12:15
7	Tuesday	24/09/2019	13:15
5	Weds	25/09/2019	12:15
6	Weds	25/09/2019	13:15
4	Thursday	26/9/2019	12:00



3	Thursday	26/09/2019	12:15
8	Thursday	26/09/2019	13:15
16	Thursday	26/09/2019	14:00
3	Thursday	26/9/2019	15:00
2	Thursday	26/9/2019	15:40
0	Fiday	27/09/2019	11:00
3	Friday	27/09/2019	12:15
9	Friday	27/09/2019	12:30
8	Friday	27/09/2019	13:00
13	Friday	27/09/2019	13:10
5	Friday	27/09/2019	13:15
3	Friday	27/09/2019	14:10
1	Monday	30/09/2019	11:50
4	Monday	30/09/2019	12:15
7	Monday	30/09/2019	13:00
8	Monday	30/09/2019	13:15
17	Monday	30/09/2019	13:30
13	Monday	30/09/2019	14:00
3	Monday	30/09/2019	15:00
8	Tuesday	10/01/2019	12:10
12	Tuesday	10/01/2019	12:30
20	Tuesday	10/01/2019	13:45
8	Thursday	10/03/2019	12:45
8	Friday	10/04/2019	13:20
8	Friday	10/04/2019	14:20
2	Monday	10/07/2019	11:30
6	Monday	10/07/2019	13:00
18	Monday	10/07/2019	13:45
4	Monday	10/07/2019	14:30
16	Tuesday	10/08/2019	13:50
2	Tuesday	10/08/2019	15:20
0	Weds	10/09/2019	11:00
9	Weds	10/09/2019	12:30
19	Weds	10/09/2019	13:15
7	Weds	10/09/2019	14:30
2	Weds	10/09/2019	15:10
3	Weds	10/09/2019	16:10
1	Weds	10/09/2019	17:00
0	Thursday	10/10/2019	10:50
11	Thursday	10/10/2019	12:35
18	Thursday	10/10/2019	13:30
3	Thursday	10/10/2019	16:15
0	Friday	10/11/2019	10:40
10	Friday	10/11/2019	13:20
14	Friday	10/11/2019	14:00
1	Friday	10/11/2019	15:15
0	Monday	14/10/2019	10:30
0	Monday	14/10/2019	11:30



26	Monday	14/10/2019	12:10
6	Monday	14/10/2019	14:14
0	Tuesday	15/10/2019	10:00
2	Tuesday	15/10/2019	11:00
2	Tuesday	15/10/2019	11:26
12	Tuesday	15/10/2019	13:00
8	Tuesday	15/10/2019	13:55
3	Tuesday	15/10/2019	15:00
0	Tuesday	15/10/2019	16:15
0	Tuesday	15/10/2019	16:50
0	Weds	16/10/2019	11:40