

VOTE **EXPERIENCE**

USMAN ALI, VP HIGHER EDUCATION



EDUCATION JUST GOT SERIOUS.

This year has been one of the most challenging years in the student movement. We have seen the biggest changes to Higher Education as we know it with fees in England being trebled to as high as £9,000 per year; all parts of the UK are facing cuts to their budget and the largest attack to widening participation depriving the poorest in our community to have access to education.

CHAMPIONING WIDENING PARTICIPATION.

I have been at the forefront of fighting for fair access; not only challenging the sector on their opinions on widening participation and access but also our own movement and the status quo. We need to be leading by example and ensure fair access and participation is protected and is taken seriously.

- I will ensure we continue to strive to ensure that the student movement is at the forefront of widening participation deepening and embedding the policies I have started this year.
- I will work with the Vice President Society and Citizenship to help develop students' unions to be at the forefront of outreach work. Students are the experts and that expertise is needed to raise aspirations to enter higher education, especially with the cuts to AimHigher.
- I will develop a training programme throughout the year to train sabbatical officers, course representatives and students' union staff to be advocates for and be able to engage with widening participation at a policy level within the institution and at a local level, this will build capacity in students' unions to be the vanguard of helping people to have access to an education.

Mobility between courses and institutions needs to be more accessible. With many students from hard to reach backgrounds dropping out because of choosing the wrong course or institution they need to be supported to be able to move between institutions to providing them with real options and alternatives. Switching and exiting between courses has to be made a lot easier, so potential drop out students are 'back on course.'

NUS needs to champion the needs of adult learners. Many need a second chance to an education or an opportunity to re skill. Cuts to the adult learning grants will have a significant impact on these great people who can make a huge impact on society. The concept of debt to a potential adult learner, who is still paying it off, is completely different to a young person who has never been in debt.

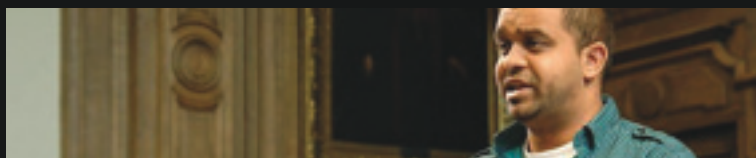
The same people that the education system failed in the past is now the same people the education system is failing in the future – we can not allow this to happen.

- I will lobby and fight for adult learners to be able to access education and be supported to succeed.
- Education needs to be flexible to the needs of the individual. I will lobby college and universities to deliver courses where the community is rather than expecting people to come to them – education providers should make more use of schools and other community hubs to deliver provision.

Simply put – fighting so people of all ages have access to a education is the right thing to do and a responsibility for us all.

“Usman has been a champion of the smaller emerging Unions and institutions, something I have been a bit annoyed about with NUS in the past. He broke my perception on this and restored my faith!!”

**Michael Collins, President,
University of Worcester students' union**



PROTECTING STUDENTS IN A TIME WHEN THEY NEED US MOST.

Students have always expected a high quality student experience, but they are increasingly expecting more. We must fight to protect students and their rights, they can not be paying more for less.

Students need proper inductions to prepare them properly for their course – too many students, particularly international students, fall foul to plagiarism rules due to not understanding what is expected of them – an effective, year-round induction would support the needs of students better.

- I will work with students' unions to lobby their institution for clearer, more accessible and understandable advice and guidance around plagiarism. Not just simply being talked at.
- I will work with the International students officer and ensure campaigns are developed all across campuses to standardise 'plagiarism rules' so it is not different on different courses.
- I will work to reform complaints and disciplinary procedures in our institutions, developing deadlines and independent support on campus and externally, working to improve the OIA, ensuring all students are dealt with quickly and justly.

In the past we could be complacent on widening participation and the rights of students... We can not afford to be complacent any more. It is no longer acceptable that complaints and appeals take over a year. It is no longer acceptable that a student does not have termly contact (at a minimum) with their personal tutor. It is no longer acceptable that universities are not inline with the online world and it is no longer acceptable that students do not have the correct information to aid them with vital future decisions. That information should also provide students with information on where exactly their fees have been spent!

A low quality education is just not acceptable. More powers to the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) and other regulatory bodies is needed in order to sanction universities that are not providing what they say they will.

Simply put – protecting students is the right thing to do and a responsibility for us all.

EXPERIENCE. PASSION. HONESTY.

We need experience for the challenges ahead. We need a Vice President Higher Education that will continue to battle for the rights of our students and ensure the diversity of our students are engaged in their education and learning experience. Representation needs to be a priority and the student voice needs to be louder, clearer and listened to more than ever before.

THE STUDENT VOICE.

As a movement representation needs to be our core value. Our actions display our priorities.

- I will work with students' union management and elected officers to conduct research on finance spent on representation in comparison to other services like commercial activities.

Our representation services cannot just be 9 till 5 anymore. They need to be accessible at times that suit the diversity of our students not at times that suit us.

Lets really see what the priority is in the students' union and together lets ensure it is representation.

Any student should be able to come to a students' union and be able to speak to any elected full time officer and be able to speak to them about education issues.

- I will look in to new ways to deliver education policy and information briefings to reach out to all officers. Not just sending information out for the sake of it, but be able to measure the impact of the material we produce

Course reps are the grassroots of our movement and are the ground agents for change and the people who make small changes that make a huge difference to the learning experience of their fellow course students.

Course Reps should be well trained, supported by their SU, equipped with the key issues at a local and national

level and feel supported in their ability to achieve change. I will continue to ensure that academic representation via course reps is at the heart of students' unions.

Representation of different students is not just a tick box exercise to me but something I believe in. This year I launched the first ever Part Time students brief full of facts, figures and information to help students' union represent this forgotten range of students. Next year I will work with the Vice President Union Development to conduct research on how we can represent placement students.

Simply put – Representation is the right thing to do and a responsibility for us all.

Next year we need expertise. Decisions will be made at a local level and cuts will begin to bite even more. We need to ensure that students' unions are provided with this expert advice and we equip them and fight with them, side by side, for the future of our education.

Simply put – I will be fighting for the student movement to be champions of widening participation. I will fight to protect the rights of students and fight to ensure the student voice is represented as a core of what we do. These issues are the right things to focus on in the current times and if elected, it is a responsibility upon me to deliver on it.

“Usman is always on hand for information, support and help. He is a real people’s Vice President with an unrivalled knowledge base where it matters most.”

**Emilie Tapping,
VP Academic Affairs, Kings College London**



We need experience for the challenges ahead. We need a Vice President Higher Education that will continue to battle for the rights of our students and ensure the diversity of our students are engaged in their education and learning experience. Representation needs to be a priority and the student voice needs to be louder, clearer and listened to more than ever before.

I have the EXPERIENCE for the challenges ahead. I'm PASSIONATE about the issues that need defending and HONEST in my approach.

**THAT'S WHY I'M RE-RUNNING TO BE YOUR
VICE PRESIDENT HIGHER EDUCATION.**

Check out my website for more details and for more accessible manifesto versions: www.usmanali.co.uk
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