

# minutes

meeting of: National Executive Council (thirteenth meeting)

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place: London Resource Centre

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date and time: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2011

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**Present:**

**Members:**

President & Chair  
Zones

**Name**

Liam Burns  
Toni Pearce & Shane Mann (Further Education)  
Usman Ali & Sophie Richardson (Higher Education);  
Danielle Grufferty & Aakash Naik (Society & Citizenship);  
Ed Marsh & Paddy Stearn (Union Development);  
Pete Mercer & Pete Woodward (Welfare)

Liberation

Kanja Sesay and Anil Sachdeo (Black Students);  
Rupy Kaur and Matthew Bond (Disabled Students);  
Vicki Baars & Alan Bailey (LGBT);  
Estelle Hart & Kelley Temple (Womens);

Sections

Christina Yan Zhang & Mateus Wysocki (International Students)  
Joshua McKenzie & Fee Wood (Mature & Part Time Students);  
George Charonis & Dante Micheaux (Postgraduate Students)

Nations

Luke Young & Raechel Matthey (NUS Wales)  
Robin Parker & Graeme Kirkpatrick (NUS Scotland);  
Adrienne Peltz & Stuart Cannell (NUS-USI)

Block

Mark Bergfeld, Nes Cazimoglu, Michael Chessum, Lauren Crowley, Matt East, Ruby Hirsch, Taylor Kane, Aaron Kiely, Joe Oliver, Surya Prakash Bhatta, Mary Prescott, Josh Rowlands, Daniel Stevens, Stevie Wise

In attendance:

Staff

Matt Hyde (Chief Executive), Jim Dickinson (Director Policy and Delivery);  
Vic Langer (Assistant Director Policy and Delivery); Dan Francis  
(Democratic Services Advisor); Nick Smith (Democratic Services  
Co-ordinator)

Observers:

Stephanie Lloyd (NUS Wales Women's Officer), Jack Matthews

Apologies:

Zones

Liberation

Nations

Sections

Block

Staff

Nes Cazimoglu, Rachel Wenstone  
Graeme Wise

# minutes

## 1. Introductory & Administration

- 1.1 Liam Burns (LB) opened the meeting and outlined the way he hoped the NEC would work over the coming year.
- 1.2 Apologies were noted
- 1.3 There were no conflicts as interest
- 1.4 and 1.5 The minutes were approved for accuracy. There were no matters arising.

## 2. Reports and accountability

2.1 LB presented his report and asked for any questions or comments especially on the items he had outlined in his report. The NEC discussed the virtues of Liam being part of the Independent Task force on Communication Funding Reforms and whether NUS could be seen as in favour of the reforms, but agreed that Liam should stay on the group. This would allow another position for student views to be put across.

The proposal for two groups to look at Student Support and Activism and Campaigning was approved and would include input from across NUS' different groups.

Mark Bergfeld (MB) asked whether the NEC would keep to the policy set by National Conference or call a National Demonstration. Michael Chessum (MC) believed that further facts had come to light since the Conference. Toni Pearce (TP) reminded the NEC that major cuts had been happening in Further Education without a call for a National Demonstration before now. Usman Ali (UA) believed that the position was the same since April.

The appointments and the report as a whole were *approved*.

2.2 The Zone Convenors presented their reports there were the following questions and issues arising.

**Further Education** – TP presented her report and added her work on apprentice wages with the Association of College and on Information, Advice and Guidance.

**Higher Education** – UA reassured the NEC that he had tried to argue against the introduction of a students' union question in the Key Information Sets as outlined in Conference policy but the decision had been made.

**Society and Citizenship** – Danielle Grufferty (DG) presented her report and the NEC noted her work on Widening Participation and the difficulties with communication within the Zone to students.

**Union Development** – Ed Marsh (EM) discussed the work on the National volunteer accreditation scheme. He did not believe that encouraging students' unions not to stock papers published by News International would bring down that company.

**Welfare** – Pete Mercer (PM) presented his report. There was a request for the work on students and crime to be expanded to include FE students

All Zone reports were *approved*.

- 2.3 The Liberation Officers presented their reports to note.
- 2.4 The International Students and Postgraduate students presented their reports to note.
- 2.5 The Nations presented their reports to note.

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2.6 Dante Micheaux (DM) presented the report of the Scrutiny Group on the Black Students' Campaign Summer Conference. The following recommendations were approved.

1. Dates for all conferences should be established no later than 31 July of each year, with venues to be booked as early as possible, respective of varying reservation policies.
2. Lead officers should not operate registration systems but allow Events staff to do so.
3. Events staff should not organise any aspect of a conference that is in direct conflict with requests of a Campaign, unless the requests have been denied, via communication in writing to the Campaign Convener, due to a violation of accessibility, safeguarding or health/safety policies.
4. NEC should enforce the code of conduct if any officer registers delegates outside of established systems.
5. When organising events all parties will endeavour to work together to agree a final budget, venue and fee. When an agreement cannot, however, be made, the decision will be referred to the President as chair of both the NEC and the Board in the first instance. If the President's decision is still not agreeable, an appeal can be lodged by a Campaign Convener and a final decision will be reached by a group consisting of one Lay Trustee, one Student Trustee and one officer Trustee from the Trustee Board (Trustee Appeals Committee). In the event that the NEC is unhappy with the decision made by said group, it can hold the Trustee Board to account via the usual channels. Should an officer attempt to undermine a decision taken by the President/Trustee Appeals Committee, it will be viewed as an infringement of the Code of Conduct.
6. When a breach of policy occurs or is likely to occur, the person in breach of the policy should be informed in writing.
7. Given the historically problematic relationship between the NUS leadership and the Black Students' Campaign, the opportunity of a mentor from an appropriate organisation should be utilized by NUS to ensure that support is in place to deal with concerns of poor working relations and practices in a neutral and timely way. NUS should enhance diversity training for all officers.
8. NUS should enhance diversity training for all line managers and full-time elected officers.
9. NUS should enhance policy training for all full-time elected officers with special attention to discussions on planning events and how policy informs said planning.
10. All established procedures concerning events, including practical implications should be published in a single document and made an explicit part of Full-Time Officer inductions. This should also include a detailed section on the flow of communication between the Events staff and the lead political officer of each event.
11. NEC should undertake discussion on, and ultimately determine what the definition of autonomy in practice will be for NUS, concerning Liberation Campaigns.

LB would bring back a proposal on deadlines for events. The Liberation, Equality and Diversity scrutiny group was tasked with looking into recommendation 11 above.

The NEC offered their thanks to DM for his work on this issue.

2.7 There was no update from the Block members at this stage.

### **3. Motions and Proposals**

3.1 This item was referred to the Clerks to allow debate on other issues at the NEC.

3.2 The NEC approved the topline figures for the budget allocations following National Conference mandate.

# minutes

3.3 The NEC noted the strategic plan updated following National Conference mandates.

3.4 The NEC received a presentation and discussion on the government White Paper and OFFA agreements.

3.5 Motions and Amendments

Motion 1 – Support for Oxford’s “No Confidence” campaign

Speech for: MC  
Speech against: None  
Vote: Motion PASSES

Motion 2 - Rest of UK Fees & Cross Border Flows

Speech for: Robin Parker (RP)  
Speech against: None  
Vote: Motion PASSES

Motion 6 – Student Strike

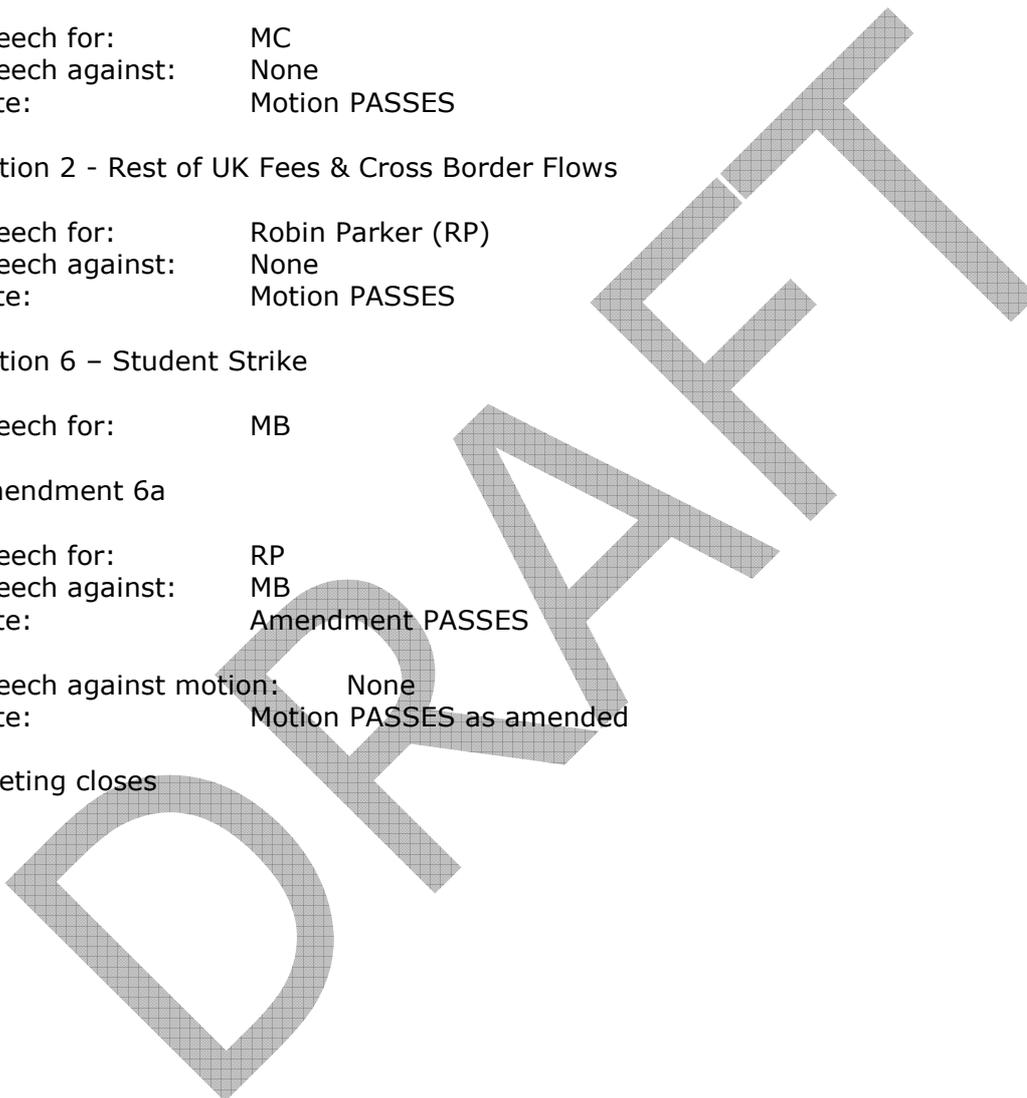
Speech for: MB

Amendment 6a

Speech for: RP  
Speech against: MB  
Vote: Amendment PASSES

Speech against motion: None  
Vote: Motion PASSES as amended

Meeting closes



# resolutions

## Support for Oxfords 'No Confidence' campaign

### NEC notes:

1. The Westminster Government's recent White Paper on Higher Education.
2. The proposal to guarantee £9,000 fees for applicants with AAB grades at A-Level, and to allow Universities uncapped competition to recruit students with these grades.
3. The Coalition Government's response to the original Browne Review of Higher Education, the decision to raise the cap on fees to £9,000 and to introduce a market into Higher Education in the UK.
4. Increasingly divergent policies on Higher Education funding across the devolved governments of the UK
5. The 'No Confidence' campaign initiated at Oxford University which allows students and staff to jointly condemn the policies being implemented by the Coalition Government in further and higher education.

### NEC believes:

1. That the already destructive Higher Education policies of the Coalition Government have only become more confused as a result of the White Papers attempt to balance setting the market free with a fiscally constrained budget.
2. The UK Government's inconsistent, incoherent policy plans for Higher Education represent the attempted marketisation of our universities. This presents a serious attack on the very principle of universities as public institutions for scholarship, research and the dissemination of knowledge.
3. That it is utterly reasonable for students and staff who rightly feel aggrieved by the policies being implemented by David Willetts to campaign for local Courts and Senates to formally recognise the damage being done to further and higher education.

### NEC resolves:

1. That NUS has no confidence in the Educational policies of the Coalition Government
2. That NUS support's students unions who wish to campaign for formal recognition by governing bodies of their anger towards the current reforms of further and higher education.

## Rest of UK Fees & Cross Border Flows

### NEC Believes

1. That ideally national borders should not play a role in where a student decides to study
2. That the Westminster Government's recent fees policy is having knock-on effects in the other Nations of the UK.
3. That there are increasingly divergent funding regimes in each of the Nations in the UK and that each devolved government has decided to address the issues arising from divergent funding regimes.
4. There is a real risk that local students in the Nations might be 'squeezed out' by students from other parts of the UK looking for cheaper courses of study and that the devolved governments should take steps to avoid this.
5. That variable fees and a market in Higher Education are always damaging to access and to social mobility.

### NEC Further Believes

6. That the devolved governments should be prioritising access, firstly from within the nation, and secondly from other parts of the UK, when they are addressing what kind of fees approach to take to students from the rest of the UK.
7. That the devolved governments should take measures to protect access and to limit the negative impacts on the widening access/participation agenda of any fees rise.
8. That institutions should not have any financial incentive to recruit students from one part of the UK over students from any other part of the UK.
9. Fees increases to avoid 'fee refugees' should never be set higher than the equivalent level should that student had chosen to study in their respective part of the UK, nor should income from fees from students from the rest of the UK be used to subsidize the teaching of local students in the Nations.

# resolutions

10. That ultimate responsibility for any fee increases lies with the Westminster Government and the disgraceful education funding policies of the Coalition.

## **NEC Resolves**

1. To campaign against any policy which would reduce opportunities and access for local students.
2. To campaign against any approach to tuition fees that gives Universities a financial incentive to take students from one part of the UK over students from any other part of the UK
3. To develop a package of widening access/participation measures which would be applicable in each of the Nations.
4. To investigate the legal situation of students from the EU, and how EU legislation inter-relates with cross-border fees policies within the UK.
5. To continue to campaign to reverse the UK Government's disastrous higher education funding policy.

## **Student Strike**

### **NEC notes:**

1. At this year's Annual Conference we voted to support public sector strikes.
2. On March 26, UNITE General Secretary Len McLuskey congratulated the students for their efforts in fighting against fees and cuts.
3. On June 30 more than 750 000 public sector workers from four different trade unions went on strike in defence of their pensions. More than 30 000 demonstrated in London, and tens of thousands in both Birmingham and Manchester.
4. In France, the pensions dispute last year brought hundreds of thousands school and university students out into the streets. More than 50 universities and 600 schools were occupied against the planned pensions reforms.
5. The sovereignty of students' unions in directing the work of NUS.

### **NEC believes:**

1. The students' movement has played a key role in igniting the recent strikes on June 30.
2. The cuts in pensions will affect everyone. Pensions are not some add-on benefit. They are a hard won right.

### **NEC resolves:**

1. To write to the respective unions (NUT, ATL, PCS, UCU) who went on strike on June 30 and congratulate them for their brilliant day of action
2. To support the trade union demands for fair pensions
3. To support a day of local student strikes on affected campuses including walk-outs and occupations on the next day of industrial action where local student unions are willing.
4. To create a campaign message that links student issues to the wider cuts to public services and pensions campaigns