



Ben Ramsdale #1 for Block of 15

A National Movement needs every Union

Small and Specialist

Being President of Liverpool Hope is the most amazing experience I have ever had. But trying to make change and empower students with a very small sabbatical and staff team presents a lot of challenges. Across the country, small and specialist Unions are achieving great things but we need to do more to harness their potential within the student movement. Small and Specialist unions, both HE and FE, make up a huge part of NUS's membership.

The current government education agenda means that small and specialist institutions are facing a real threat to their survival. The decision to study in a small institution or specialise in subjects such as the creative arts must be protected and celebrated.

While there are specific things that small and specialist unions need, I think that to carry on splitting us into a special interest group would be a mistake. I want to see everything NUS produces, campaigns, briefings, events, charters, training etc., to be made fully adaptable and accessible to Unions of all sizes regardless of staff support, budget or space. Our problem is when we make the assumption that all unions have similar resources and best practice can simply be reproduced anywhere easily. This does not mean having small and specialist as an after-thought but embedding our needs at every level of NUS planning and delivery.

"Ben's enthusiasm & determination to both engage with and win for students never fails to inspire me. His politics is sport on, grounded both in SUs campaigning for change and the education we should all be imagining. He would be fantastic on Block."

Maggie Hayes, Liverpool Guild and NEC

"The NEC needs to be able to scrutinise if our campaigns, projects and events are accessible to small and specialists. With student number control causing havoc, unpaid internships in studio subjects rife and S&S Unions underfunded - I can think of no one better to give that scrutiny than Ben"

Liam Burns, NUS National President

As well as this, I want to see:

- Real engagement on national issues with all small and specialist unions - we're not all in GuildHE
- Support and training to empower volunteers - many of us rely on them and some unions have no sabbatical officers
- Real networking opportunities for small and specialist - a support network is vital
- A level playing field for HE and FE - just relying on HE unions to support FE is not working

I believe that this empowerment is crucial to the success of the student movement and I am convinced we can do it. Elect me to Block and I will fight to make this National Union accessible to all.

My Record

- 2012-13 - President and Chair of Trustees at Liverpool Hope Students' Union
- 2010-12 - Secretary (part-time position) at Liverpool Hope Students' Union
- 2012-13 - NUS & NUS LGBT Delegate for Liverpool Hope Students' Union
- 2011-12 - Secretary and Treasurer of Liverpool Hope Music Society
- 2009-12 - BA Music Course Representative for Liverpool Hope

My Politics

I am a progressive left, social democrat who believes in real, pragmatic solutions and making genuine change. I am a member of the Labour Party although not a Labour Student.