

NATIONAL CONFERENCE n u s 2013

Zone Policy Proposals

Circulate to officers, student councils and throughout your representation structures such as Course Representatives, Community and Welfare Reps and student activity federations.

If you need this document in another format contact NUS on 0845 5210 262 or email events@nus.org.uk

CD5a

Key information

Purpose of this document

This is an alternative version of Conference Document (CD) 5. This differs from that document as it only contains the proposals from each of the five policy zones to National Conference 2013.

We recommend that you also read the full Conference Document to allow you to take part in the accountability process of the President and Vice-Presidents.

What you need to do

You should read the reports ready to hold the vice presidents to account for the work they have done. You should use the proposals to consider whether you wish to submit amendments to the text submitted by the zones or new motions.

Policy Checklist

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| The proposals have been circulated to students so they can consider them | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student council or other bodies will be debating proposals before the end of February | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Our union has checked to see if we already have live policy on the issues | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Someone has been tasked with submitting amendments and motions before March 1 st | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I know I must use the submission pro-forma on www.nusconnect.org.uk/conference | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delegates from my union have been chosen to speak on the issues (if needed) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Read through the document and need more help?

If you require additional information please contact one of the following people:

- For issues about delegate entitlement, zone committees, reports and policy, amendments to zone policy proposals & Cross Campus Ballots contact democracy@nus.org.uk

All the above can be contacted at:

- NUS, 4th Floor, 184-192 Drummond Street, London, NW1 3HP
Telephone: 0845 521 0262

An Introduction to Zones and Policy

One of the jobs of National Conference is to set policy for NUS. This policy will create positions of principle (beliefs) and actions to be carried out (resolutions).

The work of NUS is split into 5 main 'zones'. These are:

Further Education - which covers things that affect the study and development of students in Further Education.

Higher Education - which deals with issues that affect the study and development of students in Higher Education

Society and Citizenship - where issues that affect students in wider society, the world and student engagement with those areas is worked on

Union Development - which looks at supporting students' unions in their role of supporting students and providing them with services

Welfare - which decides the work that supports the wellbeing of students in their institutions, their homes and their families

There is also a "**Priority**" Zone, the Topic of which can be chosen by the NUS National Executive.

Each zone has a Vice-President who is elected at National Conference and leads the work of this zone on a day to day basis. They are full time positions.

Each zone held a 2 day conference in October that contained both workshops and discussion as well as section that made recommendations on policy for that zone which any union could attend. The zone conference elected a 'zone committee' who support the vice-president, advise them on the work of the zone so far and also make policy recommendations based on the discussions at the zone conference. The zone committee is named at the start of each Zone report.

This document contains the report of the work done by each zone and also some recommendations from the zone committee. Students' unions can decide to alter or add to these motion suggestions by making amendments. They can also decide to add new motions to the end of the zone report. The deadline for this is March 1st.

Delegates will be emailed and asked to prioritise the ordinary motions and the order in which the zones are debated. Higher and Further Education zones will be debated as a mixed zone - i.e. all education policy will be discussed during the same period.

At National Conference delegates will have **1 job** to do based on this document

- Debate and decide whether to accept (pass) the policy recommendations from the zone committee, any amendments to this report and any new motions that students' unions submit.

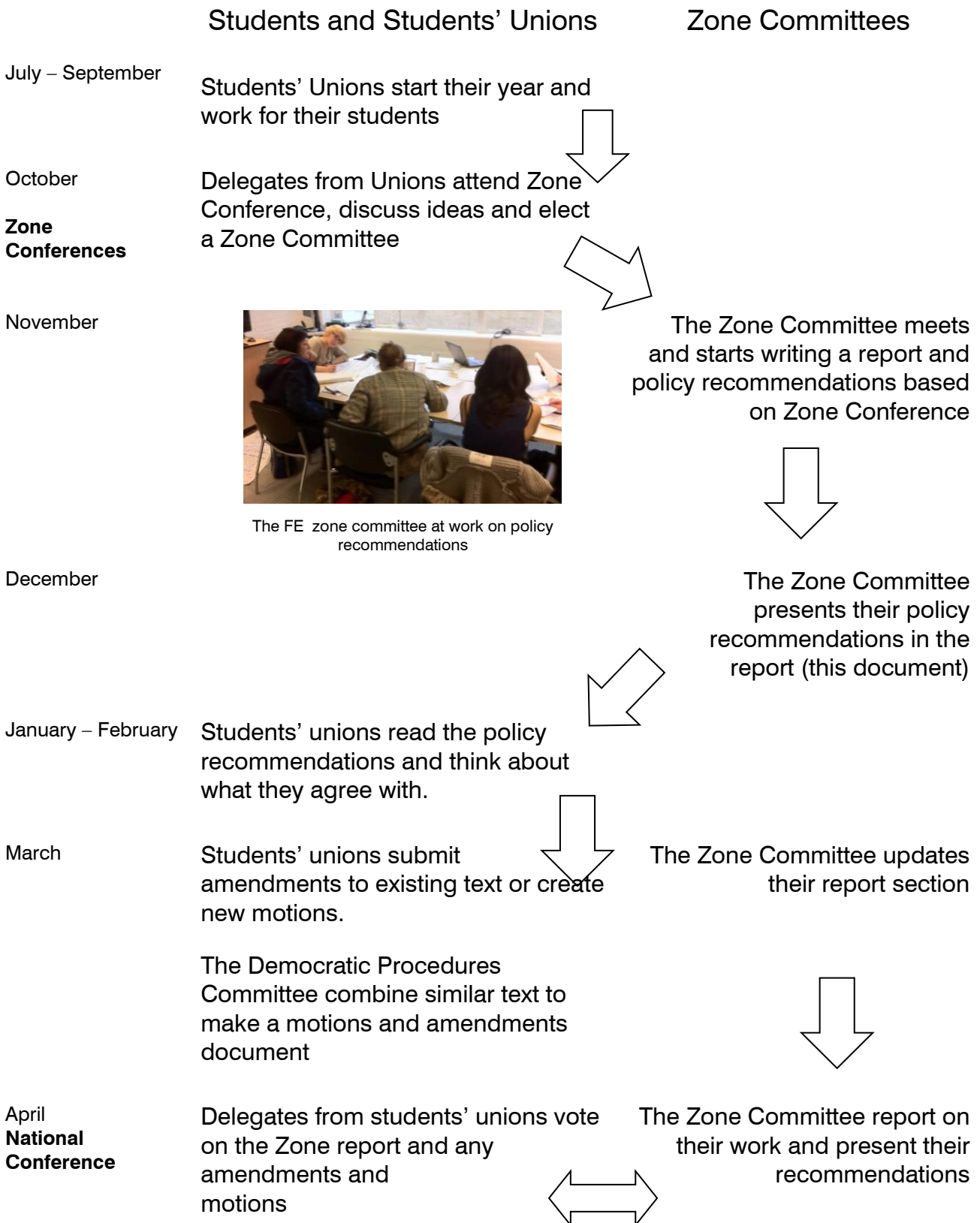
Any motions (including amendments) that National Conference votes on and passes will become the policy of NUS next year. The vice-presidents and zone committee will use it to set priorities and areas of work and use it to help influence the discussions and workshops at zone conference in the autumn of 2013 where the process will begin again for next National Conference.

Page 6 explains this process in a diagram.

This year the Democratic Procedures Committee (DPC) have submitted a number of motions. These are not part of the zones but are included in the back of this motions document.

National Conference 2013 | Zone Reports & Proposals

How the process works



How to use this document

This document is split into 5 zones, each with 2 sections - one that is a report and one that has policy recommendation. They are formatted very similarly with 2 columns.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the discussions at Zone Conferences and other work that has occurred during the year, the Zone Committees recommend policy to conference.

In the left hand column they give some background to explain why it is needed - why students and unions want it and the affect it has.

In the right hand column of the report the zone will suggest some positions and mandates on the issue - work that needs to be done.

In total this right hand section cannot be longer than 2,500 words for any one zone.

Zones can submit up to 5 motions.

It is your role as delegates to decide whether the right hand column contains the right positions on issues and the right actions for the year ahead. The left hand column will not become policy of NUS and is background only.

If you disagree, you may submit amendments to this policy recommendation.

If you want work to occur that hasn't been suggested by the zone committee at all then you can submit an ordinary motion.

All current policy for that particular zone is listed at the front of each recommendations section.

The Democratic Procedures Committee will take these amendments and motions and combine (composite) them into an accessible document.

What you should do now...

1. Circulate this document around your students' unions - your student council, senate, general meeting or other policy setting body. Ask your course representatives their views, as well as accommodation and welfare reps, student and liberation groups and students in classrooms. Make a decision on what you like and what you think needs to change.
2. You have until March to do this - so use the time wisely!
3. Write amendments if the work you want to see being done currently exists in the report or motions if they do not. For example, if you want to change some policy around course representatives that is an amendment. If no policy has been written on course representatives at all this is an Ordinary motion.
4. Each union can submit up to 1,400 words of text to conference. This 'word allowance' is over all zones, all amendments and all motions, so use your words carefully.

For example, Fibchester students' council passes an amendment to the Welfare zone report which adds 250 words of text. It also submits a new motion to the Society and Citizenship zone which is 1,000 words long. If it wanted to amend any other recommendation or write a new motion it would have 150 words to 'use'.

5. If you wish to delete text from a motion, your amendment should read "To delete [words from the motion]". The words 'to delete' will count towards your word allowance.
6. You must submit your amendments and amendments by Friday 1st March 2013. Details of how to do so will appear at the end of January 2013 on our website www.nusconnect.org.uk/conference
7. The amendments and motions will be combined into a single document. This is sometimes called 'compositing'. Democratic Procedures Committee will suggest how this should happen, but if you submitted text you can come along to Drafting Commissions to discuss how the motion should come together.
8. Meanwhile you should be electing your delegates by cross campus ballot (unless you have a specific exception) and training them in the issues that will be discussed and what your union believes in relation to them.
9. Keep up to date with the goings on by keeping an eye on nusconnect and following @nusuk on twitter and #NUSNC13
10. If you have any questions about the policy process contact democracy@nus.org.uk or ffion.bartley@nus.org.uk

Some practical things to consider when submitting amendments and motions

Firstly you should make sure you're not submitting motions that cover the same policy as some which already exists. www.nusconnect.org.uk/about/policy holds a list of all current zone policy.

Because each union has 1,400 words of text to use, you will need to consider both how you debate the text you want to put in and how you will divide your word allowance.

It is up to individual unions how they do this and our suggestions are not exhaustive, but there are a number of methods you could use.

You could debate all the potential amendments and new motions at your student council, with one of the resolutions as "The proposer of this motion shall write an amendment [or ordinary motion] within the word limits allowed.

After student council, your chair can divide 1,400 by the number of successful amendments and motions and the successful proposers write a motion to National Conference of up to that amount.

For example: Fibchester City College student council debates 4 amendments to the policy recommendations and 2 ordinary motions. 2 of the amendments and both the ordinary motions pass. The proposers of each of these now have 350 words each to write an amendment or ordinary motion that reflects what was passed in the student council.

You could set limits for each amendment or motion. You vote on the order the motions are debated at student council. Once you have passed a number of motions that equal 1,400 words this becomes your text to National Conference.

For example: Fibchester Hope have 3 HE policy amendments, 2 Society and Citizenship motions, 2 Union Development amendments and 2 Welfare amendments. They have set a word limit of 200 words. After a vote to decide the order they debate the Union Development amendments (1 of which passes), the 2 Society and Citizenship motions (both of which pass) and the 3 HE amendments (all 3 of which pass). They are left with the 2 welfare motions. If they pass the first one, the second does not get discussed as they have passed text up to their 1,400 words.

You could allocate 280 words to each of 5 zones and ask the students with an interest in that zone's work to write amendments or motions up to that amount. They then choose which one they want to put forward. You may then want to ratify this through your student council.

For example: Coleg Fibchester Undeb Myfyrwyr have a Welfare Committee that discuss Welfare issues, an Education Committee, a Sports and Societies Council and an Ethics and Environment group. All of these can be attended by all students and discuss motions for Welfare, Higher and Further Education, Union Development and Society and Citizenship respectively. The text they choose becomes the union's text to National Conference.

Training and supporting your delegates

You'll want to train and support your delegates to National Conference to ensure your union's voice is represented accurately and strongly and that the delegates themselves get a positive experience. Delegates at Conference have an amazing job to do in deciding the direction of NUS, and if they have clarity about their role and the policy process, are empowered to participate and can be assured they represent the views of their peers and not just themselves the three day conference can become an unforgettable time.

Make sure all delegates understand their role

To hold the officers of NUS to account on the work that they have done, to set the direction of the NUS for the year ahead through the policy that is set and to choose new officers to lead the organisation up until National Conference 2013. They should do all these things considering the views of students at their institution.

Ensure all delegates understand the policy being discussed

This is especially true of delegates who aren't experts in a certain area. Why is the NSS used? What has it meant for your union? What does NSS even stand for? You could ask a representative for each of the areas to go through and discuss the policy with delegates - so the VP Education discusses that zone, and the VP Student Rights and Diversity discusses the Welfare motions.

What is your union's stance on the policies?

You may have passed student council policy on the issues before, or you may pass specific stances during the run up to this National Conference. If you haven't done this, you should seek information that will help delegates make a decision. What do course reps think about tutor contact? Do your Politics Society believe voter registration is an important campaign?

What skills do your delegates need?

Delegates at conference may want to make a speech without having planned to do so before. Can you offer them public speaking training? Can the debating society offer some suggestions and tips?

What else do your delegates need?

It is important that delegations know each other and look out for one another. They'll be sitting together for three days so it would be good for them to meet informally before April and get a chance to travel up to the Sheffield together. They should be able to rely on the delegate leader to ensure that they get their accommodation and know when they'll meet up over the Conference.

Make sure delegates look after themselves

With the debates so exciting, fringes to go to and socialising late into the night, delegates can forget to look after themselves. They should make sure they're getting sleep and food and are clear about what they'll be discussing. It sounds basic, but more than one delegate over the years has become so absorbed in what's going on around them that they've missed meals!

Priority Zone: Policy Recommendations

This section outlines the recommendations from the Priority Zone to National Conference which you can submit amendments to. Ordinary motions cannot be submitted to this Zone but must be submitted to one of the five policy zones (or the AGM for NUS matters).

A Vision for the Future of Education (101)

There are currently many different notions of what underpins NUS' thinking on education- these include something about 'the public good', about 'thinking tertiary', about people 'becoming effective in the world'. Over the summer the Vice Presidents considered how they might organise their work for the year ahead in line with a broad "tertiary" agenda- that is, to consider how their work contributes to a focus on the following areas: Learning, Labour & Localities.

This motion seeks to consolidate and progress this work on the future of education, developing a long term vision for education for the first time. We will also be seeking wider engagement with experts in the field and others who have set out related 'visions' for education, in an attempt to connect this work to wider debates. We will continue these debates in the new year with a view to amending this motion in time for National Conference.

Conference Believes

1. NUS policy is usually written to respond to the "here and now"- to deal with issues and problems in front of us.
2. Many of these debates will feature at this Conference.
3. But it is important that NUS also takes a long term view, developing a vision that goes far beyond the next campaign, the next set of officers or the next General Election
4. Our tertiary education system is fragmented, compartmentalised and too far down the road of commodification for piece meal changes to represent winning campaign aims anymore. NUS must be prepared to propose radically different policies in the long term that deal with not only funding, but also the shape and structure of tertiary education as a whole and the way in which individuals and communities access those opportunities.
5. In England, there exists two qualification frameworks straddling two departments of government. Students in further education are funded by two different funding agencies and the currency of their qualifications is poorly understood by universities and employers alike. The lack of a national offer in access and progression throughout tertiary education lets down those who could benefit the most.

Conference Further Believes

1. NUS needs a vision for how education beyond the school may look in the long term future and how the student movement might want to influence its development.
2. We need to consider the student of the future, understanding what young adults will need from an education system in 2030.
3. We need to understand student journeys in the institutions of the future, considering how further and higher education could work together as a 'whole system', and how that system could support stronger community learning and participation through the life course.
4. We also need to have a vision for students and work in the labour market of the future, considering how the relationship between further education, higher education and work may change in the future.
5. Classic conference debates posit a debate **between** liberal and vocational learning; we need a long term vision that can reconcile types of learning, and we need a strategy to create a system that delivers it.

Conference Resolves

1. To continue to develop a Vision for Education that
 - imagines a rebalancing of educational goods towards public value
 - conceives of an 'early adult' educational phase, articulated with other phases
 - focuses on individual and collective capability
 - takes a holistic view of induction into codes of knowledge and skill
 - empowers people involved in education with rights and responsibilities
 - develops tertiary systems and structures
 - embeds in both the local and the global, and connects them
 - integrates conscientiously with labour market change
 - ensures environmental sustainability
 - harnesses the development of digital technology

FE Zone: Policy Recommendations

This section outlines the recommendations from the FE Zone Committee to National Conference which you can submit amendments to. If you want to discuss an issue that has not been covered in these recommendations you can submit an ordinary motion.

The FE Zone has live policy on the following issues which are available to read in full at www.nusconnect.org.uk/about/policy

FE policy 2010– due to lapse at this Conference

- Learner Voice
- Students as co-producers
- Great Teaching and Learning
- Equality and Diversity
- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- Capital
- Information, Advice and Guidance
- Investment in Adult Education
- 16-19 Provision
- Apprentices: Practice what you preach
- Increase in 16+ Participation in the FE sector
- Enhance the experience of FE International Students
- Healthy FE
- Bogus Colleges

FE Policy 2011

- Teaching & Learning for the 21st Century
- Vocational Education
- Funding
- Student Voice
- HE in FE
- FE Support Guide
- Lifelong Learning in a Global Context

FE Policy 2012

- Keeping Colleges in check
- Offender Learning
- Free Education
- Security in Colleges
- International FE

Further education in the Tertiary Sector (201)

Our education system is highly fragmented, governed by multiple departments and agencies, and rife with discrepancies in funding, access, and entitlements. Current education policy discriminates on the grounds of age, and leaves little access to lifelong learning. We are calling for a fair and flexible education system with greater parity between further and higher education students, opportunities to return to learning later in life, and accessible options to learn whilst working.

Barriers to participation(202)

The coalition government has demonstrated a complete and systematic lack of regard for the financial hardships and barriers to participation faced by further education students. We have witnessed a sustained attack on national student support schemes, cuts to

Conference believes:

1. Further Education has long been viewed by the government, media and public as the “Cinderella sector”, picking up those students that the Higher Education sector “doesn’t want”
2. Despite increasing government rhetoric about the value of Further Education and parity of esteem between the sectors, policies and proposals do not reflect this
3. The divide between the Department for Education and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills means that there are many areas of Further Education that fall through the gaps in terms of policy i.e 16-19 vocational education and training
4. The impact of Michael Gove’s reforms to academic Further Education and schools have devalued vocational education
5. Budgets for Information, Advice and Guidance have been largely removed and the public information strategies around Further Education are not working

Conference further believes:

1. Students in the Further Education sector do not have many of the benefits that Higher Education students receive
2. Further education students are at the mercy of a broken information, advice and guidance system, with no guaranteed face-to-face guidance for under-19s
3. Higher education students have far better resourced advocacy and representation services than further education students
4. Unlike further education students, higher education students have a system of external redress for complaints about their educational experience, in the form of an independent complaints adjudicator
5. A single education department and education funder would ensure that it is not possible for politicians to shirk responsibility for the areas they aren’t interested in

Conference resolves:

1. To consult with FE students on their views about the future of Further Education in the Tertiary sector
2. To demand parity of esteem with Higher Education services such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, and funding for advocacy and guidance services

Conference believes:

1. In England, the Education Maintenance Allowance was a centralised scheme with clearly defined eligibility criteria, and allowed prospective students to make choices about their education, secure in the knowledge that they would receive financial support

local transport subsidies, changes to eligibility criteria, and the introduction of student loans for further education students. Increasingly, students themselves are expected to foot the bill, whether directly for course costs, or indirectly for additional course materials, transport, and childcare. This complex and confusing system is unfair and inequitable, with access to education determined primarily by ability to pay rather than ability to learn, and discrimination against older students and those who have already attempted but been unsuccessful in gaining an education.

This complex and confusing system is compounded by a lack of advice and guidance to help students and potential students navigate the landscape and their choices. For young people in particular, the situation regarding information, advice and guidance (IAG) provision has reached crisis point, with schools determining whether students require face-to-face support.

2. In spite of the obvious benefits of a centralised scheme such as EMA, there were clear issues with the scheme, such as the removal of the £10 and £20 rates (in England), and the lack of consideration for other dependents in assessment of parental income.
3. The system of information, advice and guidance is in crisis, particularly for young people
4. The duty on schools to provide 'independent' IAG is incredibly weak; it currently applies only to those aged 14-16, and that it has to be independent from the school does not in any way guarantee impartiality. In addition, the need for face-to-face guidance is determined by schools
5. In England, 14 and 15 year olds can now legally enrol in colleges, which will have implications for college provision of IAG
6. Adults aged 24+ wishing to study for a qualification at level 3 or 4 are faced with financial penalties on all sides. Those on benefits will incur income cuts if they study for a full time course, and they are likely to incur 100% of their course fee, paid by a student loan
7. International students in further education are being victimised by the UK Border Agency and the Home Office
8. In Scotland, from 2013 the minimum income for higher education students, including a bursary and student loan, will be set at £7000, resulting in disparity in funding between further and higher education students

Conference further believes:

1. A centralised, national student support system for students of all ages is vital for widening participation in further education
2. Although EMA and ALG clearly had benefits for access and participation, the discrepancy in overall budget for each represented clear discrimination against adult students. Further education should be flexible and accessible to students of all ages
3. Students at schools where IAG is not a priority are at risk of never hearing about post-14 opportunities outside of the school, such as vocational courses, apprenticeships, and employment and training opportunities, as well as new types of institutions like University Technical Colleges
4. Many adults sacrifice employment to be able to pursue education, incurring great financial hardship, or are forced to work to support the cost of study
5. The implementation of FE fees and loans will have a disproportionate impact on those already disadvantaged in society, and represents an access crisis for disabled people, black students, and women
6. The economic arguments for a student loans system in FE do not stack up. The government has admitted it expects a very low return on its investment

7. In Scotland, students who choose to pursue a less academic and more vocational programme of study will be hit hard by the prioritisation of higher education funding

Conference resolves:

1. To work with the Welfare Zone to campaign for the immediate implementation of *Pound in Your Pocket* policy proposals
2. To establish a UK-wide student commission on IAG
3. To work with the NUS Digital project to host information and advice from students on different forms of education
4. To campaign for an independent, face-to-face service as part of a national careers service for all ages
5. To support students' unions to campaign with local schools on IAG
6. To continue the #No2FEfees campaign, calling for a complete U-turn on the policy
7. To work with sector bodies such as the Association of Colleges and NIACE to research into the uptake of FE loans and the impact of the scheme upon adult students
8. To use research findings to call for an immediate reversal of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans policy, and reinstatement of an entitlement to free level 3 qualifications
9. To call for an end to age-specific restrictions on entitlements and access
10. To work with the International Students' Campaign to take on the UK Border Agency and the Home Office, calling for a fair deal for international students
11. To work with NUS Scotland to eradicate barriers to participation faced by FE students

Employment (203)

It is time that the rhetoric surrounding vocational education and training becomes reality. This government insists that apprenticeships are a priority, and that much is being done to raise the esteem of vocational education, yet the impact of student loans in FE will be devastating for adult apprentices, vocational qualifications have been downgraded in school league tables, and work experience opportunities are under attack. The recently-published review of apprenticeships led by Doug Richard highlights that the term 'apprenticeship' has been variously misappropriated, that apprenticeships must be linked to definite employment outcomes, and that employers should compete to design the most appropriate apprenticeships for their sector. But where is the learner voice in apprenticeships?

Conference believes:

1. The National Minimum Wage for apprentices is £2.65 per hour. This is less than half of the general National Minimum Wage rate for those aged 21 and over, where the hourly rate is £6.19
2. According to the Skills Funding Agency 2011 Apprenticeship Pay Survey, 26 per cent of apprentices aged 24 or under were paid below the minimum wage
3. That there is a gender imbalance in some apprenticeships, with sectors such as hair and beauty offering the lowest rates of pay
4. Employers continue to claim that school and college leavers are without the necessary skills for employment
5. In England, the statutory requirement for work experience for year 10 pupils has been removed, leaving young people with no guarantee of work experience whilst at Key Stage 4
6. Work experience programmes have been criticised for being meaningless, tokenistic, and irrelevant to the world of work
7. Schools and colleges are allowed to include

work experience in 16-19 programmes of study, but they are not obliged to do so

8. Learner destinations data for further education is a poor reflection of reality

Conference further believes:

1. The apprentice pay framework reinforces the age discrimination existing in wider society
2. High quality IAG is crucial in redressing the gender imbalance in apprenticeships in some sectors
3. That the government lacks vision and strategy for work experience, resulting in its devaluation and demise
4. That work experience opportunities should be built in to Key Stage 4 and level 3, regardless of whether the programme of study is academic, vocational or both
5. Schools and colleges should consider building students' part-time employment into work experience programmes
6. The way to tackle these issues with the current work experience programme is not to abolish the statutory duty on schools
7. FE Students need to acquire transferrable skills during work experience, and skills relevant and appealing to employers
8. FE work experience programmes represent a valuable opportunity for students to gain the appropriate capital they need to enter the world of work
9. Within colleges, apprentices exist very much on the periphery of student life, and have a diminished student experience as a result
10. Students' unions have varying success at engaging with apprentices
11. The lack of evidence on FE learner destinations beyond those going to university compounds the lack of support available for the transition from FE into work

Conference resolves:

1. To conduct 'The experience of work experience' research, the aim being to protect this as a vital part of the further educational journey
2. To create a charter outlining minimum and aspirational standards for school and FE work experience, including detailed reference to pay and conditions
3. To work with the Society & Citizenship and Welfare Zones to run a campaign to increase apprentice pay
4. To campaign to equalise apprentice pay and work with the Women's Campaign to reduce the gender pay gap for apprentices, targeting the Low Pay Commission
5. To work with notgoingtouni to get figures and case studies on the numbers and types of students not going to university after further education

Qualifications & Assessment Reform (204)

The Department for Education continues to drive forward its undemocratic, ideological reforms of secondary and further education. The year 2012 saw an unprecedented level of reform proposed for the English qualifications system, with a specific focus on A levels and GCSEs. The government has paid lip-service to public consultation in this area, implementing reforms before the consultation window has closed. The prevailing narrative favours an inaccessible examination system, with far fewer resits, no modules, and – worse still – an elite set of subjects assuming priority. The reforms pay little regard to adults undertaking A levels and GCSEs, or those studying part-time.

Conference believes:

1. International qualifications such as IGCSE are not universally understood, placing UK students at a disadvantage in the global skills system
2. UCAS personal statements are restrictive in length, leaving little space for adequate contextual data
3. The route from vocational qualifications at level 3 to undergraduate study is confusing and inconsistent; vocational qualifications often do not 'dovetail' with university courses
4. BTECs and equivalent vocational qualifications are not subject to the same external marking regime as A levels, leaving students on vocational courses subject to prejudicial marking
5. There is no single qualifications framework setting out all UK qualifications and equivalencies
6. Students studying level 2 and/or 3 at college have less resit opportunities than their contemporaries at school
7. From September 2013, students will only be able to sit AS and A level exams in the summer, with no option to take exams in January
8. From September 2013, A level resit opportunities will be dramatically reduced
9. The proposed reforms to GCSEs include a continuation of the 'Ebacc' where 'core academic' subjects (English, maths, history or geography, the sciences, and a language) are prioritised
10. The reforms to GCSEs also include proposals to eradicate competition between exam boards, with a single awarding organisation appointed to deliver qualifications in each subject
11. Further Education does not have a centralised admissions system
12. Qualifications reform in Wales is moving away from Gove's new system, introducing greater equivalency between vocational and academic and allowing students to mix their forms of study
13. For years, qualifications and articulation in Scotland have allowed college students to have fair access to the Higher Education system through a variety of flexible routes
14. There is no central applications and admissions system for Further Education in the UK, making it difficult for those returning to study to see the full range of FE qualifications available

Conference further believes:

1. The government's current preference for terminal assessment disenfranchises many students
2. The current system of consideration of mitigating circumstances is flawed – students are often not made aware of the option to submit a case for mitigating circumstances, and centre staff mismanage the situation

3. The English qualifications system needs to learn from reforms that the nations that have undertaken

Conference resolves:

1. To produce a UK-wide guide to qualifications, to include international qualifications
2. To campaign for a National Qualifications Framework in England to include all qualifications and to map across to nations, allowing students to move more easily between nations if they need to
3. To campaign for a central applications and admissions system across FE and HE – allowing students to be able to see the whole range of education options available to them when making choices about their future
4. To campaign for a better understanding of vocational qualifications amongst admissions tutors
5. To campaign to hold Michael Gove democratically accountable for education policy decisions, calling him to u-turn on the resits policy, and to protect the value of formative assessment

HE Zone: Policy Recommendations

This section outlines the recommendations from the HE Zone Committee to National Conference which you can submit amendments to. If you want to discuss an issue that has not been covered in these recommendations you can submit an ordinary motion.

The HE Zone has live policy on the following issues which are available to read in full at www.nusconnect.org.uk/about/policy

HE Policy 2010– due to lapse this Conference

- Higher Education Funding
- National Student Survey (NSS) & Postgraduate Taught and Research Surveys (PTES/PRES)
- Complaints & Appeals
- Assessment and Feedback
- Quality
- ICT and Technology-enhanced learning
- Part time students
- Hidden Course Costs
- Higher Education Achievement Record
- Uniting Education Unions
- Research Concentration funding
- Academic Support
- Mission Groups
- Course Reps
- Curriculum reform
- Fair Access to Journals
- Rating the student experience on our terms
- Our role in widening participation: Students raising aspirations in communities
- Placement students, they're still our students

HE Policy 2011

- Education Funding
- Flexible Provision
- Admissions & Retention
- A 21st century teaching and learning experience
- Defining a quality experience
- Postgraduate Funding
- Enhance Students' Employability
- The reality of cuts for Liberation Students
- FE, Undergraduate & Postgraduate International Student Fees
- League Tables: If you can't beat them, change them.
- National Nursing Campaign
- UK University Overseas Campus
- Support for European Students and UK Erasmus Students: Engage the ESU
- Journal Pricing
- Professional Legal Funding

HE Policy 2012

- Postgraduate Funding and Support
- The Public Role of Higher Education
- Student engagement in teaching excellence
- Access and Admissions
- Higher Education Bill
- Education Now and Then: Tear it Down and Start Again
- Education: Public, not for Profit
- Employment and employability
- Mature students, we hardly know you
- Funding for CRB checks
- Defending Arts Education
- Supporting Placement students
- Part-time loans – a ticking time bomb

The public value of education (301)

The public value of higher education has been ignored by successive governments. In order to win the argument for reinvestment of public money into higher education we need to better articulate and evidence the public value of higher education. We must also go further to ensure our higher education institutions take responsibility for the communities in which they sit, locally, nationally and globally.

Conference Believes:

1. NUS National Conference 2012 passed policy celebrating the public role of higher education. We recognised the transformational power of education to individuals and communities around the world.
2. The public role of higher education is important, but more important still is to understand what higher education needs to be like in order to have public value.
3. Higher education may well increase productivity in those who benefit from it and a well-educated workforce may be good for the economy, but the value of higher education should never just be measured in those terms.
4. Markets can be measured, economies graded and qualifications assessed, but the real value of education is less tangible intangible.
5. Institutions have a role in society as the stewards of knowledge and must always be committed to pursuit of knowledge, wherever that may lead. Public value happens through wide and fair access to education opportunities, in a collaborative sector with institutions rooted in a community whether local or global, that strives to serve that community.
6. A system built around private benefit leads to restricted access, unhealthy competition, commodification of knowledge and education for profit.
7. Widening participation programmes that target young people are a useful start to improving access, but higher education should be accessible across a lifetime.
8. Access agreements are important documents and, at their best, they are owned by the whole institutional community. Although there should be long term access strategies, it is important that the whole community can feed in to the development and review of access agreements: they should be considered living documents, reflecting a community-wide collaborative approach to improving access.
9. Access will be most effective when combined with the recognition of the different learner pathways through secondary education and the need for robust and meaningful information, advice and guidance throughout the educational system.
10. Application and admissions systems should support students' strengths, not shape their decisions. Entry requirements that support mixed sets of qualifications, both liberal and vocational, should become more prevalent.
11. Higher education providers should be seen as integral parts of their communities, not isolated and exclusive. Institutions and students' unions should be proactive in demonstrating the value they have to the area around them.
12. It may be challenging, but institutions should make their facilities, people and research available for the benefit of the public.
13. The different missions of institutions should be

respected and celebrated. The higher education sector should be diverse, meeting the needs of diverse communities and different groups of students.

Conference Resolves:

1. Support students' unions to articulate the public value of themselves and their institutions, identify and campaign on ways of extending public value and in particular holding MPs and local authorities to account on realising this.
2. Campaign for access agreements to take a life cycle approach and include retention and success targets.
3. Campaign for integrated access agreements and widening participation strategies that create meaningful, regional strategies for participation, including progress agreements between HE and FE and community-based targets and robust student engagement.
4. Work with students' unions to help them campaign on the inclusion of meaningful evidence-based targets in access agreements, that take into account the full diversity of students' needs and experiences. This should include specific targets for mature, disabled, and BME students' access and success.
5. To work with students' unions to develop collaborative work on widening participation programmes.
6. To initiate a programme of research on the UK research environment in light on the forthcoming REF, with particular attention to the position of postgraduate research students within it.
7. To conduct research on how impact frameworks such as the REF are affecting higher education, particularly for postgraduate research students.
8. To support students' unions to champion and defend community-facing and continuing education courses.
9. To campaign for more widespread recognition of alternative sets of qualifications for higher education access.
10. To campaign with students' unions to improve the way institutions work in partnership with their communities and serve the needs of those communities, for example public access to library resource, public lectures and community projects.

Students are Partners (302)

The student engagement agenda is broadly positive, but there is lots of scope for it to be turned to consumerist ends. Students as partners enables us to address the ways that students can be full participants in their academic communities.

Conference Believes:

1. Higher education institutions are communities. Academics, professional staff, students and representative bodies are all integral to those communities.
2. At their best, these communities are home to debate and collaboration, with students feeling like engaged members of their departments, as well as their students' union.

3. Changes to the fee system and the marketisation of education can encourage consumer-like behaviour. However, we believe students have far more to contribute to their communities than simply a list of wants. A higher education system where some only demand, rather than contribute, is a tragic waste of talent.
4. Students should not be seen as consumers, but as partners in their academic communities. Not only should students be co-creators of their education, they should be co-creators of their institution as every policy in an institution affects students in that community.
5. The student engagement agenda has taken root in large parts of the higher education sector. Many students' unions are committing more resource than ever before on supporting course representatives, developing representation and activism at the heart of students' academic activity.
6. Students' unions are the legitimate representative voice of students in their institutions. All representation, no matter how decentralised, should run through the students' union. Where institutions seek to listen to the student voice, this should only ever be accomplished in partnership with students' unions.
7. Partnership is much more than the sum total of student engagement or consultation projects. Changes to institutional plans, policies and strategies should be developed with students' unions.
8. If we contend that students should be partners in decision making at all levels in an institution, we need to make sure that these processes are inclusive to our whole student body and not just to the traditional, full time, undergraduate student. Students particularly likely to be excluded are those who study at partner institutions.
9. This vision of democratic education is threatened by privatisation, both of student services and for-profit education providers, as the interests of profit-makers and students and our communities can never be aligned.

Conference Resolves:

1. To provide tailored support students' unions in building a culture of partnership in their institutions, recognising that relationships between students and the students' union, staff and management will differ across the sector.
2. To work to develop an evidence base of the educational benefits of a partnership approach and the impact student representatives have on higher education.
3. To ensure that students' unions are supported and engaged in local quality assurance and enhancement activities, such as periodic review, curriculum development, annual monitoring and annual quality reports.
4. To commit to understanding what barriers,

Students thriving not surviving (303)

Access is only the first hurdle for students in higher education, retention and success are just as important. Institutions can no longer be passive; they should actively provide support, in order to enable all students to succeed.

whether structural, cultural or financial, exist to the development of partnership approaches, both for specific students and for students' unions. There should be a particular focus on specialist institutions and students studying in partner institutions.

5. To work with trade unions to campaign against outsourcing and privatisation in the higher education sector.

Conference Believes:

1. When students access higher education, their institution has a responsibility to provide active support for that student to achieve their aspirations for their higher education learning experience.
2. Provision of opportunities that a student may access if s/he chooses to do so is insufficient; students need support to access and make the most of the learning environment and be successful in it.
3. Where there is evidence that one specific group of students is less able to succeed in the higher education environment due to structural or cultural barriers, institutions have a responsibility to act swiftly to ensure students have an equal chance to achieve their goals.
4. Students unions have a role to play in developing peer support structures and enabling students likely to be excluded to gain better access to social capital within their institutional community.

Conference Resolves:

1. Help students' unions to work with their institutions to develop retention and success strategies, taking a life cycle approach.
2. Support students' unions to campaign for fees to be fixed over the course of study for part-time and international students, ending the unjustifiable practice of mid-course fee hikes.
3. Carry out research into the experiences of distance learners recognising that this is a vital mechanism to enable expansion of educational opportunities for students from wide-ranging backgrounds.
4. Build on the research carried out this year on induction to support students' unions to lobby their institutions to deliver appropriate and effective induction that supports the diverse student body to be oriented, integrated and academically engaged.
5. Develop a better understanding of the valuable impact of peer support and peer mentoring between students, particularly between students at different academic stages such as postgraduate and undergraduate, and where unions wish to develop their peer support structures, offer support to do this.
6. Recognise the importance of students' academic engagement to their retention and success and work to develop the way that

Higher Education: Funding, Markets and A Policy Platform for 2013 (304)

Each year NUS debates policy on Higher Education Funding. In the run up to 2015 NUS will need a sophisticated position.

teaching qualifications and professional development support positive discussion, engagement and accountability between students and teachers in higher education rather than tick-box feedback.

7. Support students' unions to engage with postgraduates who have teaching responsibilities to ensure they are paid a fair wage for the hours they work and given the support and development they need to be successful in their teaching and research.
8. Research the specific induction, support and re-integration needs of students on sandwich years or years abroad and work with students' unions to ensure these needs are met.

Conference Believes:

1. The next General Election will be held on 7th May 2015. Between now and then the Coalition Government will have made huge changes at all levels of education and society, the state of the economy will look very different and the labor market will have completely different demands.
2. In the 2010 General Elections NUS campaigned for a new system of graduate contributions, linked to earnings post-graduation and not to the cost of provision pre-graduation, with public funding remaining a fundamental part and business also contributing their share. Although we secured a much better deal for part-time students and improved loan repayment conditions, identifiable fees on entry remained creating a sticker price attitude to choice, the government have forced a market in HE to prevail and public spending on teaching was drastically cut.
3. Market principles are now used to reduce cost to the exchequer while reducing support for students and funding into teaching and research. An 'inverse pupil premium' has been created where by the institutions that have the most disadvantaged students spend the least on teaching.
4. Students were betrayed by politicians who signed the pledge to vote for an alternative to top up fees and we will not let them do this again.

Conference Resolves:

1. The balance of funding to higher education between the individual, society and business laid out in the NUS Blue Print was a sound approach but we may need new progressive policies at the next election.
2. While only half of society has access to higher education opportunities it is only reasonable that well off graduates should be asked to make a contribution. Once we have won the fight for universal access to tertiary education as a right, we should seek to revise this position.
3. There should never be an identifiable fee influencing choice of course, institution or whether to go to university at all. Student debt is damaging

access, and could have disastrous consequences on how graduates access credit and mortgages.

4. To begin research, consult on and create new policy on education funding so that we are ready with fully costed alternatives come the 2015 General Election.
5. To commit to a long term, ring-fenced campaigns fund that grows over the next three years so that we can afford hugely increased campaigning activity in the year of the 2015 General Election.
6. Our General Election strategy should seek to build a strong defence of the public value of higher education in cities, campuses and communities around the UK, so that public value forms the cornerstone of the campaign to mobilising the student vote.

Society & Citizenship Zone: Policy Recommendations

This section outlines the recommendations from the Society and Citizenship Zone Committee to National Conference which you can submit amendments to. If you want to discuss an issue that has not been covered in these recommendations you can submit an ordinary motion.

The S&C Zone has live policy on the following issues which are available to read in full at www.nusconnect.org.uk/about/policy

Society and Citizenship 2010– due to lapse this Conference

Votes at 16
Electoral Reform
Neighbourhood
Local Citizens
Safe and Cohesive Communities
Students in Burma
Anti-racism, Anti Fascism (first passed in 2007)

Society and Citizenship 2011

Protecting the student voice
Drugs Patents
Education for All
Toxic fuels and ethical investment
Uprisings
Freedom for Palestine
Local Action First
Don't Attack Iran
Trade unionisation internationally

Society and Citizenship 2012

Access and Citizenship in the Community
Defend the Right to Protest
Living Wage
Eden Springs
Gap Years
Fight the far right
A Generation Lost
Opposing Unpaid Internships in the Creative Arts
Citizenship
Move Your Money
Peace One Day
Solidarity with Syria
Student Fuel Poverty
Don't Attack Iran – Fund Education Not War
Defend the Welfare State
International student activism
Twin with Egyptian Universities
Tarsands
University of Sanctuary

Organising for now and for 2015 (401)

Through this zone we have the power to support the development of student leaders, winning on campaigns like the Living Wage. Activist development should be geared to the needs of students' unions locally, but it can also be a platform for students to engage on the issues in the run-up to 2015. The upcoming General Election brings both challenges and opportunities for NUS, but through community organising and voter registration we can show the true power of students when it comes to us facing our politicians, while continuing to win for our students' locally, before and beyond that.

Conference believes:

1. One of the roles of the Soc-Cit zone is to champion the politics that is at the heart of students' unions and the student movement.
2. Students' unions have a role to inspire their students on the relevance of social issues to students.
3. Issues within this zone's remit are often those that get many students involved in their union, particularly through single issue student activity campaigning groups.

Conference further believes:

1. That the Society and Citizenship Zone needs to have a debate about how we support students to organise on Society and Citizenship campaigns.
2. We have much more to do to get NUS and students' unions to genuinely and meaningfully engage their members on Society and Citizenship issues.
3. NUS rightly campaigns from the centre on national issues, but we must up our game on empowering students to win locally.
4. We need more debate on how we support unions to reach out to their members, balancing attending college/ university meetings with building relationships with students.
5. NUS should continue to develop its activist development work to skill students in a range of methods of campaigning and community organising.
6. We need to win for students locally in run up to general election so politicians can sense the power of students.
7. That small and specialist unions face different challenges to bigger and better resourced unions.

Conference resolves:

1. For the zone to use the activist development programme to support its efforts to build campaigners for specific campaigns (eg living wage, transport costs, etc)
2. To develop student organisers in the run up to 2015 to mobilise students and influence politicians locally ahead of the general election.
3. Seek partnerships with those seeking to empower citizens to build a roadmap for students' unions for 2015.

Votes at 16 (402)

The right to vote is key to an individual being seen as a full, equal and valuable citizen of society, and enables meaningful participation in democratic processes. Younger voters can have a different perspective on social issues and on public services but at present 16 and 17 year olds currently have to rely on older voters to represent their concerns. Lowering the voting age would allow these voters to represent their own issues and would mean politicians would have to listen to voters coming from a different perspective.

As part of the terms of the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 younger voters aged 16 and 17 will be allowed to vote on Scotland's constitutional future. This was a seminal moment for Scottish democracy and will act as a litmus test for the implementation of Votes at 16 UK wide. The campaign for Votes at 16 in UK is also endorsed by our European counterparts who are seeking parity of the voting age across Europe.

4. To focus on voter registration to maximise the power of the student vote in the run up to Election 2015.

Conference believes

1. Over 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds are currently denied the vote in the UK.
2. At 16, people become adults and take on a number of responsibilities.
3. The promise of the vote at 16 in the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 has added momentum for the campaign for Votes at 16 nationwide.

Conference further believes

1. Lowering the voting age has the power to reinvigorate young people, captivating those that feel disempowered and excluded from the political process.
2. At a time when people feel that politics isn't relevant to them, young people need to be encouraged to take part in democracy, not kept out from it.
3. Stopping 16 and 17 year olds from voting and having the chance to be heard sends a signal to them and to society, especially politicians, that their views aren't valid and that they aren't full citizens.
4. If 16 year olds can leave school, work full time, pay taxes, get married, and join the armed forces then they should be able to take decisions on their future.
5. That engaging younger people in democracy creates more politically engaged citizens who are more likely to develop a lifetime habit of voting.
6. The scrapping of Citizenship Education contributes to a disengagement and lack of awareness amongst young people of our political system and social issues.

Conference resolves

1. Lobby political parties to get Votes at 16 on the agenda in the run up to the 2015 General Election.
2. Gain support from MPs on the campaign and propose a Private Members Bill or a parliamentary debate on the subject.
3. To encourage other influential organisations to join the Votes at 16 coalition.
4. To gather support from trade unions on the campaign.
5. Highlight the campaign in the media and demonstrate the case for Votes at 16.
6. Call for radical changes to the way in which citizenship education is taught within the national curriculum, by commissioning an investigation into the experiences of students

Ethical sourcing/Ethical investment (403)

Ethical sourcing means sourcing products that have taken into consideration working conditions, human rights concerns and environmental matters throughout their supply chain. This includes from the production of the raw material all the way to the point of being purchased by the consumer.

Ethical investment is the proactive decision to put money into something where the environmental, social, governance and ethical principles of the investors influence their investors' decisions. This can include small, specialist providers as well as ethical funds of larger companies.

Students, students' unions, NUS, and tertiary educational institutions are all consumers and so have power to influence the ethical standards of the companies they buy products and services from. Promoting ethical sourcing and investment from these consumers is essential if the tertiary education sector is to help shape society for the better, not only the experience of individual students.

Tax avoidance (404)

Amidst the deepest recession since 1930's and austerity measures, there has been significant public focus on corporate tax avoidance as an emblem of inequality in our society. There has been widespread public outcry at the existence of legal loopholes that actually enables tax avoidance, and the unethical practices of those that choose to exploit those loopholes for personal and/or corporate gain.

Students and students' unions can play a key role in

studying citizenship today.

7. Develop campaign materials in conjunction with other organisations to support students' unions campaigns.
8. To work with the Further Education Zone in supporting Students Unions to campaign on the issue.
9. To link with organisations looking at citizenship issues in schools.
10. Support students' unions to lobby local councils to give 16 and 17 year olds voting rights in local elections, and additional local decisions.
11. Work with NUS Wales to lobby for reduction in voting age in the devolved nations.

Conference believes:

1. NUS has a proud history of using our sourcing and supply chain to promote more ethical practices amongst suppliers and some of the biggest corporations in the world
2. We have lobbied for years on issues such as the environment, workers' rights, equality and Fair Trade

Conference further believes:

1. Investment should mean "putting money to work" to create something of greater value. me institutions provide funding for unethical companies and political regimes.
2. NUS and students unions have great potential to use our collective buying power to lobby suppliers on issues wider than just ethics- eg employment creation.
3. It is often a prerequisite in the private outsourcing contracts between FE colleges and their suppliers that apprenticeships are created for students at the college.
4. That ethically sourced products can be financially viable for students unions.

Conference resolves:

1. To provide guidance on how to conduct FOI (Freedom of Information) requests.
2. To offer guidance on the supply chain through institutions and students unions
3. To collaborate with other organisations working on ethical sourcing issues.
4. To provide training on how to campaign on ethical sourcing issues.
5. To provide guidance on balancing ethical and financial matters for students unions.
6. To explore work conducted by student bodies in other countries on ethical sourcing.
7. To actively use NUS procurement in political campaigns.

Conference believes:

pushing for a more robust legal system and changes in both corporate and consumer behaviour relating to tax avoidance. There is particular potential to investigate the links between tax avoiding companies and the tertiary education sector, an area that has not yet been explored in detail.

Child Poverty (405)

Children and young people have been amongst the worst affected by the economic downturn and cuts to public services. The resultant increase in child poverty has an immediate effect upon individuals' educational chances and achievements, and subsequently a negative impact upon their long term employment and life chances.

1. There is widespread concern and public outcry of the tax evasion of Starbucks, Amazon, Vodafone and Google amongst other large corporations.
2. Lots of organisations campaign for stronger legal enforcement on tax avoidance, but few talking about the complicity of the tertiary education sector in this, or the impact upon students and young people.

Conference further believes:

1. Tax avoidance is an ethical as well as fiscal issue.
2. Money lost to tax avoidance should be reinvested in education and other public goods.
3. The issue of reinvesting money lost to tax avoidance can shed light on exploring how education is a public good.
4. Some organisations have used tax avoidance to shed light on global access to education.
5. Tax avoidance by major corporations and very wealthy individuals is many times more costly to the public than benefit fraud, but the picture portrayed by the government and much mainstream media does not highlight this.
6. False benefit-claimants are often portrayed in the media as the very worst kind of criminal, while tax dodgers get plenty of airtime to explain themselves.
7. Improvements are required to address loop holes within the legal system
8. Stronger legal action should be taken on tax avoiders.
9. The tertiary education sector should lead a good example by ensuring its financial affairs are guided by ethics as well as enterprise.

Conference resolves:

1. To conduct research with partners and how tax avoidance links to education.
2. To work with the Education campaigns to show how tax funds can be reinvested back into education.
3. For NUS to work with partners to look at the education sector's investment and tax portfolios.
4. To offer guidance to students unions and students on how tax avoidance relates to and impacts upon their unions and educational institutions; including throughout the supply chains of their unions and institutions.
5. To deliver shareholder activism to students and support students and SUs to hold their suppliers to account on tax justice.
6. To promote alternatives to SUs to working with tax avoiding companies, through case studies, financial impact assessments and alternative commercial activity.
7. To work with other organisations to campaign for the legal loop holes that permit tax avoidance to be closed.
8. To support direct action against tax avoidance and tax evasion.

Consequently, there is a real risk that rising child poverty now will have a lasting and detrimental impact upon society as whole.

If we are committed to improving access to education and participation within it, an understanding of the influence of child poverty is essential. In particular, that child poverty not only affects individual's participation and attainment once in education, but that it can stop them undertaking it at all.

Conference believes:

1. One in three children are currently living in poverty in the UK, equating to 3.8 million children.
2. That under the Coalition Government, changes to the tax-benefit system and cuts to public services has led to a rise in child poverty.
3. Children from minority ethnic groups are overrepresented among poor children.
4. Threats to housing benefit removal for under 25s highlights the Government's lack of commitment to supporting the most vulnerable.
5. High rates of unemployment throughout the recession have exacerbated the issue of child poverty.
6. The Living Wage campaign has already lifted thousands of families out of poverty.
7. The Living Wage campaign has potential to lift millions of families out of poverty.

Conference further believes:

1. That the level and nature of child poverty in the UK is often underestimated and misunderstood.
2. Child poverty acts as a major barrier to education and employment.
3. Child poverty and its relationship with education has a major bearing on people's long term life chances.
4. That child and adult poverty are inextricably linked. Child poverty is an inevitable consequence of adult poverty and that child poverty creates adult poverty in later life.
5. That child poverty in an industrialised nation like UK is avoidable and is a poor reflection on the current economic model and government policy.
6. The recession and the government's austerity agenda has affected women, children and those from minority ethnic backgrounds the worst.
7. Proposals to increase an individual's personal tax allowance to £12,500 instead of promoting the Living Wage would fail to provide targeted poverty alleviation to the financially worst off. Such a measure would see two-thirds of the financial gain going to households in the top half of the income distribution.
8. Many working class people want to contribute to the state and would prefer to receive a Living Wage and still pay their taxes.
9. That the responsibility of paying the Living Wage rests with private companies as well as the state.
10. That the £24 billion expected loss in revenue by this proposed scheme would place unnecessary strain on government resources.

Conference resolves:

1. To conduct research with partner organisations on the relationship between child poverty, education and employment; to include educational attainment and the educational and employment choices people make.
2. To identify the impact of the austerity agenda on child poverty and long term life chances.

3. To work with partner organisations to identify the link between payment of the Living Wage and alleviating child poverty.
4. To work with the Welfare Zone to support students unions' on the application of the findings of the research.

UD Zone: Policy Recommendations

This section outlines the recommendations from the Union Development Zone Committee to National Conference which you can submit amendments to. If you want to discuss an issue that has not been covered in these recommendations you can submit an ordinary motion.

The UD Zone has live policy on the following issues which are available to read in full at www.nusconnect.org.uk/about/policy

Union Development Policy 2010 – due to lapse this year

- Campaigning and Activism
- Student Activities
- Participation and Engagement
- Changing membership
- Finance and Governance
- Communications
- Conference, RAG and Alumni funding
- Engage Postgraduate students in student activities
- Supporting Council Chairs
- FE Union Development
- Globalise all students' experience in the UK
- Engaging Part Time Students
- Bilingual Unions
- Getting Involved in NUS
- NUS Access for Ordinary Students
- Enhance Diverse Students' Groups Representation Locally and Nationally

Union Development Policy 2011

- Creating a generation of change makers
- The Future of Students' Unions; surviving and thriving
- Finding the voices of the unrepresented millions
- Student Activities; improving the students experience, improving unions, improving NUS
- Finance, New Income & Fundraising
- For Campaigning and Inclusive Unions
- The Constitution, it's certainly not for dummies
- Mission Groups
- Wednesday Afternoons
- Engage the alumni
- National Nursing Campaign

Union Development Policy 2012

- Don't Just Widen Participation – Deepen Participation
- Students' Union Development; More Important Now Than Ever
- NUS; Developing Students as well as Unions
- Building a Generation Ready to Shout 'I AM THE CHANGE!'
- Supporting Small and Specialist Unions
- Democratic Students' Unions
- Prioritise Further Education Students Unions
- Right to Protest on Campus
- Membership data
- FE Students affiliation strategy
- Global union development
- 433,000 Students
- Transnational education

Reinventing the Study Leaver Employment Landscape (501)

One of the most important issues facing our students across the UK today is that of their future beyond education. Research findings constantly tell us that this is one of the biggest pressures facing our members, however, NUS has little policy held in one motion giving an organisational stance on what we as a National Union think of employment and entrepreneurialism.

For these reasons the Committee have submitted the beginning of a plan to reinvent the study-leaver employment landscape to put the debate up-front and centre. Based in fact and clear on organisational belief, we want students' unions to add their own thoughts to these proposals, taking into account conference policy from previous years. We are making excellent progress on volunteer accreditation and other current policy, but now we want to think bigger. So, it's over to you.

Conference Believes:

1. UK Youth unemployment, as reported in December, is almost at one million.
2. That according to the International Labour Organisation, 12.6% of 15 – 24 year olds across the world are unemployed.
3. 25% of graduates begin work in London, yet only 3.8% are in the North East, 4.7% in Wales and 3% in Northern Ireland.
4. There has been a 0.6% decrease in graduate jobs this year according to the Association of Graduate Recruiters.
5. 7 in 10 people get jobs through people they know according to the UK Commission on Employment and Skills.
6. Fewer than 6% of graduates leave university and become self-employed.
7. According to Futuretrack, graduates are largely satisfied with most aspects of their post-study jobs, however, the Institute of Leadership and Management report that most graduates have unrealistic expectations of progression post-study.
8. That according to the further education data organisation 'the data service', there is little data kept and analysed in comparison to data in higher education on employment rates in FE.
9. That there are many organisations involved in the field of employment and entrepreneurialism to encourage growth, investment, partnership and ultimately increase the number of people employed.
10. That throughout history trade unions have improved the rights of all workers.
11. The third sector and public sector, where many graduates might want to start their careers, is shrinking due to government cuts

Conference Further Believes:

1. An approach to resolving the employment crisis should be a focus of the Union Development zone on behalf of the seven million members of NUS.
2. That study beyond primary and secondary education in colleges and university should make you more employable, without the purpose of that education being solely to make you more employable.
3. That references to employability imply study leavers entering jobs that exist already, whereas entrepreneurialism is about helping study leavers create their own jobs and futures.
4. That study leavers need reduced risk support in creating their own employment opportunities.
5. That large graduate recruiters who receive tens of thousands of applications and recruit few without providing feedback are machines built for rejection, not recruitment.
6. The focus on largest graduate recruiters has been unhealthy as it distorts the graduate view of the workplace in terms of geography and

- economics of opportunity beyond study.
7. That the focus of largest graduate recruiters on certain institutions means that many students with the talent and inclination to join these organisations do not even get the opportunity to apply.
 8. That in a global economy, we should think globally and act locally to rise to the challenges we face.
 9. That many recruiters resort to hidden methods of 'sifting' often based around cultural or social competencies in order to recruit and that this is wholly unfair.
 10. Universities, colleges and students' unions have an important role in setting realistic expectations of students, prior to leaving study, whilst working in the long term to challenge the employment landscape and help raise expectations of all stakeholders.
 11. Many argue these cuts are unnecessary.
 12. The small and medium sized enterprise sector is growing and we have an opportunity to shape these businesses for our students.
 13. That in further education, there is little data collected as compared to higher education and it is left unanalysed and unable to be interpreted. Therefore, attempting to comment on study-leaver employment rates in a meaningful way from further education is problematic.
 14. That it is important to remember that hand-in-hand with a growth in employment, must come a greater understanding of the role, purpose and relevancy of trade unions.

Conference Resolves:

1. That NUS should carry out research into the issues surrounding unemployment, especially regarding access to the professions, further education study leavers, apprentices, cultural practices in recruitment and issues faced by liberation and section groups.
2. That this research should have clear actions for the government and others to create change.
3. To call on the government to establish a programme of infrastructure support for students to provide free space and reduced rates to encourage and support growth.
4. To create a seal of approval with which employers can be recognised for their positive recruitment practices where they fall in-line with NUS' guidelines.
5. To create a graduate careers service charter outlining what the services should look like across the UK to meet the changing needs of students, society and the economy.
6. NUS should work with UUK to promote opportunities for employment in small and medium sized enterprises and ensuring accurate information is published in institutions about options beyond study.
7. That NUS should encourage students' unions, employers, local councils and universities to host regional careers fairs opening up

Deepening Participation in Student Opportunities (502)

Thousands of our members engage in students' unions and probably don't even know it. 'Student opportunities', intended to be a title that covers everything from media, volunteering, clubs, societies, fundraising and more, is something that NUS needs to have a clear strategic vision for. After months of consultation at training events and different conferences, and, after the release of the Deepening Participation report, these proposals are intended to give clarity on how we now move ahead and truly deepen participation for our members.

opportunities to new students.

8. That NUS should ensure that universities and colleges are preparing their students to enter a global society not just a local society.
9. That NUS should investigate a new model of study leaver and broader graduate recruitment, employment and economy, in order to eradicate the systemic unfairness that exists currently.
10. That NUS should lobby for greater clarity of information on employment and study leavers from further education, including longitudinal destination of leavers, as in higher education.
11. That NUS should form a coalition of partners who are campaigning for job creation, growth and on the importance of entrepreneurial mind-set in order to establish joint campaigns which have maximum impact in these areas.
12. That as part of educating study-leavers about the employment landscape, NUS should work with trade union partners to increase awareness and encourage membership to protect study-leavers.

Conference Believes:

1. NUS released a report into deepening participation in 2012.
2. The report concluded that in order to have a truly deep experience in further or higher education three conditions need to be satisfied.
3. The conditions were:
 - a. Increased access to opportunities of interest to individuals to be involved;
 - b. Increased access to different communities of others; and,
 - c. Increased access to resources including money and time.
4. That as a result of these three conditions being satisfied, students would increase both their bonding and bridging social capital, meeting new people and as a result have deeper, more fulfilling experiences.
5. That in the majority of students' unions, more students will participate in student opportunities than vote in sabbatical officer elections, referendums or other democratic processes.

Conference Further Believes:

1. That opportunities are our movements greatest strength.
2. That the language around student development is often confusing. Development, activities, societies, clubs, volunteering, fundraising, media and sport are all terms which can be understood singularly, however there needs to be an over-arching way to describe them all.
3. That the previous ten years has seen rising engagement in students' unions with a focus

on engaging students in academic representation but that the next decade will see a revolution in student opportunities.

4. Students' unions should respond to rising demand with rising opportunities and reducing barriers to participation.
5. That it is of paramount importance in democratic organisations such as students' unions that our members understand the link between student opportunities and democratic participation. Wherever students do not or cannot participate in their structures, they are far less likely to have an impact on those opportunities they love.

Conference Resolves:

1. That 'student opportunities' should become the overarching way to describe this area of work in future within NUS.
2. That NUS should support a set of students' unions who satisfy the three conditions in the deepening participation report to publish a guide to realising the three conditions in other students' unions, using examples of best practice and individual testimonies to achieve those ends.
3. That NUS should seek to draw together the leaders and representatives of all student organisations and umbrella organisations for a one day conference with the aim of establishing an annual event to meet, discuss shared priorities and create a network of organisations wishing to achieve the same goals.
4. That NUS should build a student opportunities barometer, which helps those areas which are covered by the term student opportunities. It should allow them to benchmark themselves and figure out what they can do to progress, giving them the tools to do it for themselves.
5. That NUS should develop a Leadership Academy for those students beneath the layer of sabbatical officers to train them to be leaders in their own unions.
6. That NUS should look to develop National Volunteering Week to help recognise the impact that students have on their local, national and international communities.
7. That NUS should run a student opportunities conference, where all strands of students can come together to learn, develop and network with people from within and without the student movement.
8. That NUS should convene a College of Editors of Student Publications, who should meet annually to determine what best practice across student media in newspapers, radio and television might look like.
9. That NUS should publish the findings of the College of Editors where consensus can be reached.
10. That NUS should build into its publications an emphasis on the importance of democratic participation in order to affect desired outcomes on student opportunities.

Deepening Democracy: Defending Autonomy, Independence and Deepening Student-Led Democracy (503)

It is the role of the National Union to propose new ideas and lead the debate in many fields, not least, democracy. As we move ahead with plans to help deepen participation of students in their opportunities, we must also move ahead with plans to deepen participation in democracy.

Looking across the globe for different and effective models of working, this motion aims to introduce the concept of participatory democracy and begin a discussion on how we might implement this in our unions, with the view to empowering students in their organisations to own the debate and actions for change.

11. That NUS should develop an "NUS giving" award to encourage student involvement with ethical pursuits, whilst increasing student personal development and employability.
12. That NUS should encourage Student's Unions to self-actualise within their charity fundraising potential and should continue to offer an increasing level of support the National Student Fundraising Association (NaSFA) and its constituent members
13. That NUS should offer support to more umbrella student opportunities groups and work with them more closely.

Conference Believes:

1. That the national average election turnout in students' unions has remained broadly static over the past few years at 14%, with variations as high as 30% in some institutions and as low as 5% in others.
2. That the key factor in increasing election turnout is the number of candidates in any given election.
3. That as the student movement has become more diverse, our elected representatives have not.
4. That processes for mass participation in decision making processes around the world have seen greater engagement in civic institutions.

Conference Further Believes:

5. That students' unions' independence and ability to act with autonomy are two core principles that can never be compromised.
6. That throughout any governance changes that have occurred, the principle of remaining student-led has been central to reform.
7. That a system of 'participatory democracy', as seen in Porto Alegre in Brazil where budgets are set by the people, can have a profound effect in democratizing the every-day lives of people. Spending up to 20% of the city's budget, citizens debate collectively on the priorities and agree outcomes together. This has reduced the individual mentality and brought a new collectivist approach.
8. That many students' unions allocate funding to societies in a student-led approach.
9. That a robust process for discussion and allocation of ring-fenced funds would be necessary to ensure a fair and accessible format that allows the maximum number of students to engage.

Conference Resolves:

1. That following the principles of independence, autonomy and being student-led, NUS should issue a plan to achieve this for all students' unions who have any of these three core principles compromised, especially focussing

Cultivating Our Activists and Organisers in Our Unions (504)

Across the movement our members engage in many different activities and don't realise that they are learning how to be activists and organisers. It is true that we need to train the people who can go out and be activists, just as much as we need to train those who can organise them. By working to develop our activists and organisers in many different fields of opportunity, we will be able to make the most of the unique moment where NUS can reach far beyond the sabbatical officers of the nations, but to individual members everywhere.

Through empowering students now, we can sow the seed of change within them, helping them to know that beyond education, power belongs to the people.

on Further Education.

2. That NUS should release guidance on how to increase levels of engagement for small, specialist and further education unions.
3. That an historical analysis should be undertaken into the relationship between effective students' unions and block grant size with a view to publish guidance to universities making appropriate recommendations on the findings.
4. That as part of the historical analysis students' unions should be given guidance on how the findings relate to them directly.
5. That NUS draw down examples of effective membership engagement in decision making processes from around the world both within and outwith students' unions and publish them with practical methods of application to the student movement.
6. That the concept of participatory democracy and participatory budgeting be trialled in volunteer students' unions to demonstrate the effects of empowering students.
7. That NUS should look for innovative ways to increase participation in elections in students' unions.
8. That NUS should research the demographic diversity of participation in elections to ensure that those running and participating in elections are far more representative of local student populations.

Conference Believes:

1. That between 2011-12 NUS trained at least 2,500 activists around the UK on the activist academy programme

Conference Further Believes:

1. Whether as grass-roots activists or local organisers, whether campaigning on a specific issue or facilitating others to create change, we, as students' unions have a duty to empower our members to be the change they wish to see in the world.
2. That the 'I am the Change' campaign and associated activist development work has been an outstanding success, inspiring a new generation of activists and organisers.
3. That in order to progress our agenda further, we need to extend opportunities to discover the activist and organisers within ourselves by making students' unions the beacons of activity within their communities.
4. The issues with which students choose to connect are various from political activities to charitable work but nonetheless, the skills needed to become activists and organisers are within all students, they just need to be set free.
5. That the best way to encourage activism and organising is to adopt a cultivational model, whereby students focus on the issues that affect them in their communities and we cultivate them and allow them the room to

grow at their own pace.

6. That in order to win national campaigns, NUS needs to cultivate local activists, so that when issues arise of national importance which NUS will duly take a lead there exists a core of organisers and activists are ready to join the movement.
7. That NUS will never achieve the level of change we wish for our members working in isolation, but that a partnership approach should underpin all of our activities.
8. That in order to reach our aspirations, we must empower those who are skilled organisers as well as those passionate activists.

Conference Resolves:

1. That NUS roll-out a programme of regional Organiser and Activist Academies, where we train students' union staff and others to be able to develop and deliver training to others to build the activist and organiser base around the UK.
2. That the training developed should empower others to deliver it locally.
3. As part of educating study-leavers about the employment landscape, NUS should work with trade unions to promote the role of trade unions in protecting study-leavers; to raise awareness of their role generally; and to encourage trade union membership.
4. That NUS should look into certifying and accrediting organisers and activists for their achievements.

Welfare Zone: Policy Recommendations

This section outlines the recommendations from the Welfare Zone Committee to National Conference which you can submit amendments to. If you want to discuss an issue that has not been covered in these recommendations you can submit an ordinary motion.

The Welfare Zone has live policy on the following issues which are available to read in full at www.nusconnect.org.uk/about/policy

Welfare 2010– due to lapse this conference

Accommodation

Housing: Private Rented Sector, Tenancy Deposit Schemes and Accreditation

Neighbourhood and community

Crime- not on our watch

Health Services and Costs

Sexual Health

Mental Health

Pastoral Care

Money, Finance, Debt, Benefits and Banking

Transport

Students as Workers

Student Parents

Faith and Safety

Part-time Student Inequalities

Welfare 2011

Shifting the focus

Getting to the Heart of Student Health

Help! We can't afford our education! Protecting students' financial support in a time of cuts

Championing the diversity of our movement

Looking out for our students

Protecting internationalisation in our education system, fighting visa changes

Students with dependents

Defend the welfare state

Money

Self Harm

Loud Noise and Hearing

Schedule 7

Mature Students' Rights

Students with children and caring responsibilities

Challenging Racism on campus and in our communities

Spying on Campus

Welfare 2012

The Pound in Your Pocket

Localism

Faith and sexuality

Stop and Search

Support for students' taking a year from study

Cyber Bullying

Nations

Retention

Against discriminatory immigration

Motion 1: Making the case for welfare (601)

Welfare impacts on all students and can profoundly affect their academic and broader experience of studying. Institutions and students' unions both have a role to play in ensuring that adequate support is provided to all students.

NUS' recent *The Pound in Your Pocket* research found that 39 per cent of students have considered leaving their course at some point. There can be no doubt that welfare services can play a critical role in ensuring that so many students are able to continue with their studies rather than dropping out. For example, recent research by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy demonstrated that a majority of students who access counselling services consider them to have played a critical role in keeping them on their course.

With recent funding cuts in education, we are seeing cuts to vital services such as these, with many institutions having reduced the number of appointments available to students. Welfare services cannot be viewed as peripheral or 'added extras,' but as a core part of the activity of both institutions and students' unions and their obligations to their students

Conference believes:

- 1) According to Mind, every year, one in four people will experience a mental health problem.
- 2) Students often face specific challenges which may have an impact on mental health, including the challenge of adapting to a new environment, academic demands, detachment from usual support networks, as well as financial pressures.
- 3) According to NUS' *The Pound in Your Pocket* research, 39 per cent of students have seriously considered leaving their course at some point.
- 4) This proportion is higher for particular groups of students, with 55 per cent of disabled students, 51 per cent of LGB students, 51 per cent of student parents and 58 per cent of those with an adult dependent reporting having seriously considered leaving.
- 5) According to research by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, 81 per cent of students who accessed counselling services in the 2011/12 academic year reported that it had helped them stay at university or college.
- 6) Approximately four per cent of university students access counselling services each year.
- 7) In these times of change, service level agreements are often under discussion.
- 8) In a climate of uncertain funding across many institutions and students' unions, welfare services can be seen as a place to make savings.
- 9) In some instances, welfare services offered by students' unions are being reacquired by the institution.
- 10) In various students' unions, welfare officer positions have been cut or merged with other positions.
- 11) In addition to this, enrichment budgets in FE have been cut and this will have a significant impact on the services that students can access.

Conference further believes:

- 1) Welfare provision is critical to ensuring that education is accessible, inclusive and supportive of the diverse student community and the range of needs within it.
- 2) Many of the issues cited by students as causes for considering leaving their course could be mitigated against through improved access to welfare services.
- 3) An integral part of the role of a students' union is to offer independent welfare services and representation.
- 4) Institutions should recognise their duty of care towards their students, as well as the value of embedding vital welfare services within the

educational setting.

- 5) It is the government's responsibility to ensure that students in further education have access to pastoral care, information, advice and guidance, citizenship education as well as activities and sporting facilities.

Conference resolves:

- 1) To support students' unions fighting cuts to welfare services on their campuses.
- 2) To continue to develop an evidence base to support students' unions in demonstrating the impact and value of these services.
- 3) To lobby government for enrichment budgets in FE to be restored.
- 4) To recognise that student welfare is an essential part of student representation within students' unions and should be represented as such.
- 5) To provide a comprehensive summary of what students' unions can achieve in relation to welfare, particularly considering what the role of welfare officer brings to students' unions.
- 6) To undertake research on the role peer mentoring schemes can play in supporting positive outcomes for students.
- 7) To work with other sector bodies to establish best practice in developing support mechanisms for vulnerable students.

Motion 2: The Pound in Your Pocket (602)

Student financial support is a key area of concern for the student movement. This year, NUS has conducted a major programme of research called *The Pound in Your Pocket* which examines the way in which the current system works. This research is broad-ranging and spans further education through to postgraduate level study, providing a robust evidence base which sheds a light on the key financial issues facing students, as well as those groups who find themselves particularly under strain. These include adults (19+) in further education, older students (21+) in higher education, NHS supported students, student parents and disabled students.

NUS should use the findings of *The Pound in Your Pocket* research as a basis for policy development and campaigning on student financial support.

During January and February we will be consulting on potential policy proposals to address the findings in the research. These will be submitted to National Conference in the form of an amendment to this motion. As a result the submission at this stage does not include any resolves.

Conference Believes:

- 1) Student financial support has not received the same attention as university or college funding over the past five years; despite this, it is a critically important issue and should have a higher profile.
- 2) NUS has completed a major programme of research into student financial support called *The Pound in Your Pocket*. On the basis of the evidence gathered through this research:-
- 3) Many students are struggling to make ends meet, concentrate on their studies and stay the course, because financial support is systemically inadequate across both further and higher education.
- 4) There are clear associations between financial support policy and practice, student wellbeing, socio-economic background and retention.
- 5) Financial difficulties are pushing many students to the brink of 'dropping out'.
- 6) Around a third of students across all groups report negatively on their wellbeing, on key indicators such as 'ability to meet the cost of basic expenses like rent and bills' and 'ability to concentrate on studies without worrying about finances'.
- 7) Even relatively small levels of debt (over £1000) in the form of bank loans, credit cards, or high risk borrowing like 'pay-day lenders'

and 'cheque cashers' are strongly associated with poor student wellbeing.

- 8) Excessive working hours are associated with poor wellbeing and with origination in areas with low higher education participation rates.
- 9) Access to financial support from the family has a significant association with both wellbeing and progression to further study.
- 10) Students across all groups want more cash support such as loans, grants and bursaries, with a high frequency of payments, either weekly or monthly depending on the level of study.
- 11) Course related costs are prevalent, expensive, and often concealed; there is a clear association between high course costs and low wellbeing.
- 12) High levels of accommodation and transport costs are associated with reduced wellbeing.
- 13) Adults (19+) in further education, older students (21+) in higher education, NHS supported students, student parents and disabled students appear to be under particular financial strain.

Conference Further Believes:

- 1) NUS should devise policy proposals that aim to tackle these problems and should lobby and campaign for their implementation.

Motion 3: Holding landlords and agents to account: Housing standards in private accommodation (603)

Standards in student housing have seen vast improvement in recent years, with accreditation, particularly in purpose-built accommodation having played a key role in bringing about this change. However, in many areas, particularly where there is strain on housing supply, standards are still far below what students should be able to expect. This is likely to be exacerbated in areas where Article 4 Directions have been implemented, strangling new supply of shared housing.

Recent research at the University of Birmingham shed light on these problems, with 50 per cent of (largely student) shared households surveyed experiencing problems with mould and condensation. These issues are likely to have a severe impact on health and wellbeing, and therefore students' studies.

In the context of the unequal relationship between landlords and letting agents, student tenants have difficulty in holding landlords and letting agents to account. It is time that students were empowered to demand the quality of accommodation they have a right to expect.

Conference believes:

- 1) There is limited understanding of how housing can impact on students' health and academic achievement.
- 2) This is particularly the case for students in further education.
- 3) Research has suggested that many students live in fuel poverty, but are often not visible in research statistics and are therefore overlooked by policy-makers.
- 4) Students are often targeted by commercial companies seeking to make profit without regard to student welfare or property standards.
- 5) The governments in Wales and Scotland have taken steps to improve standards in the private rented sector. Scotland has introduced compulsory landlord registration schemes and eliminated unfair fees and charges by letting agents, and the Welsh government has recently consulted on a mandatory register and code of conduct for both landlords and letting agents.

Conference further believes:

- 1) All students have a right to safe, warm, good

quality housing which provides a strong foundation for their studies.

- 2) Accreditation can play an important role in driving up standards and influencing student choice.

- 3) Letting agents are currently a largely unregulated sector in much of the UK and this has a detrimental impact on housing standards.
- 4) Benefit cuts combined with the shortfall in social housing supply leave young people, disabled students and those with caring responsibilities increasingly vulnerable in the housing market.
- 5) In addition to this, the implementation of Article 4 Directions by many local authorities not only limits the supply of affordable rented housing available to students, but may have a detrimental impact on property standards due to decreased competition in some areas.
- 6) Changes to education funding and rapidly increasing living costs mean that many students feel forced to live at home due to inability to access a decent standard of housing elsewhere.

Conference resolves:

- 1) To examine issues students face in relation to quality of accommodation, and particularly how this impacts on health, academic attainment and social inclusion.
- 2) To develop a UK wide, robust evidence base on students' experience of housing, either by undertaking research or by working with other bodies in the housing sector.
- 3) To support students' unions in ensuring students are well-informed and empowered to make good housing choices and encouraged not to rush into renting.
- 4) To ensure that housing research is inclusive of FE students and their living situations.
- 5) To develop an understanding of the scale of the problem of fuel poverty among students.
- 6) To lobby for students to be included in work undertaken to alleviate fuel poverty.
- 7) To provide guidance to students' unions on how to deal with commercial companies and websites targeting their students.
- 8) To work with Shelter on improving housing standards, particularly through the *Evict Rogue Landlords* campaign.
- 9) To work with organisations such as Centrepoint, Crisis and Shelter to lobby the government on the issue of homelessness and young people's vulnerability in the housing market.
- 10) To lobby government to commit more resource to local accreditation schemes.
- 11) To work with other organisations to lobby government to regulate letting agents so that they are less able to exploit student tenants

Motion 4: Transparency and fairness in student finance (604)

Over recent years, students have been expected to meet increasing costs in all areas of expenditure, without a parallel increase in income. For example, the recent *NUS/Unipol Accommodation Costs Survey* found that between the 2006/07 and 2012/13 academic years, the annual cost of a room in purpose-built student accommodation increased by 63 per cent while the basic level of maintenance loan for an English domiciled student increased by just 25 per cent in the same period.

Students have a right to expect a fair and transparent approach to cost and finance on the part of institutions, in all areas from accommodation, to debt, to catering services. NUS should lobby nationally and support students' unions locally to achieve this to ensure that all students are equipped to make informed financial decisions.

and provide substandard properties.

- 12) To lobby the government to increase provision of affordable, good quality housing.
- 13) To investigate the viability of more innovative types of housing provision, such as co-operative models, as potential solutions to student housing problems.

Conference believes:

- 1) With education funding changes, the budgets of many institutions are under review.
- 2) This year's *NUS/Unipol Accommodation Costs Survey* has shown that institutionally owned accommodation has drastically increased in cost, with the average weekly rent of a room in halls doubling in the last ten years.
- 3) 55 per cent of bed spaces in purpose-built student accommodation are now ensuite and therefore generally at a higher cost level.
- 4) The Access to Learning Fund has been subject to consistent cuts in recent years and has seen a total 44 per cent reduction between the 2005-06 and 2012-13 academic years.
- 5) The Financial Contingency Fund in Wales is currently under review.
- 6) Students from disadvantaged backgrounds in further education colleges do not currently receive free meals where sixth form students do.

Conference further believes:

- 1) With changes to education funding, many institutions are increasingly looking to students to finance their services and operations.
- 2) Students can therefore be subject to unexpectedly high costs in relation to their accommodation, courses of study, extra-curricular activities and catering services.
- 3) Some institutions also implement unfair and unclear approaches to students who owe money to the institution, particularly with regard to how they recover debt.
- 4) Some institutions do not advertise financial support adequately and this means that students are often not aware of what is available to them.
- 5) Institutions play a role in shaping student expectations and influencing choice, particularly in relation to accommodation.
- 6) In recent years, many institutions have developed predominantly high-end accommodation provision and marketing materials often present more affordable options as undesirable.
- 7) Emergency financial support such as the Access to Learning Fund in England and the Financial Contingency Fund in Wales provide a vital safety net for students in financial hardship.
- 8) Emergency financial support is coming under increasing strain due to rising living costs, inadequate statutory support and the choice of many institutions to offer fee waivers as

opposed to bursaries.

Conference resolves:

- 1) To provide support to students' unions on how to lobby for a fair and transparent approach to student debt in their institutions.
- 2) To support the *No Free Lunch?* campaign to equalise access to subsidised meals for students in FE colleges.
- 3) To lobby the Codes of Standards for purpose-built student accommodation to include rules on responsible marketing to ensure that all information provided to prospective student tenants encourages students to consider their budgets when choosing accommodation.
- 4) To support students' unions in lobbying their institution to provide a significant proportion of genuinely affordable accommodation within their portfolio.
- 5) To provide materials aimed at local authorities relating to the cost of student accommodation to encourage better decision-making in planning decisions where private providers are often encouraged to develop with no restraint on cost level.
- 6) To lobby government to maintain and expand the provision of emergency financial support, which should be accompanied by adequate statutory support.
- 7) To lobby Universities UK and the Association of Colleges to set out parameters for how financial support should be advertised by institutions, and to work with organisations such as the National Association of Student Money Advisors to do this.
- 8) To lobby the government to increase the levels of statutory financial support to reflect the rise in living costs.
- 9) To further examine the links between student finance, health and mental wellbeing.

Conference believes:

- 1) Police and Crime Commissioners were recently introduced in England and Wales and these newly elected individuals have vast powers over local crime strategies and the commissioning of services.
- 2) Turnout for PCC elections was the lowest in peacetime history, ranging from 13 per cent to 20 per cent.
- 3) Health and wellbeing boards are being introduced into the NHS. These groups will be responsible for commissioning local health services.

Conference further believes:

- 1) It can be challenging for students and

Motion 5: Students and community cohesion (605)

The coalition government's localism agenda brings with it sweeping change to the way in which local service provision is determined. In recent months, we have seen Police and Crime Commissioners being handed vast powers and wide-ranging remits on the basis of a questionable electoral mandate. Responsibilities for public health have been handed to local authorities with little clarity on how this will work and how decision-making is to be truly accountable.

It is vital that students' unions are informed and equipped to have input into local decision-making processes with regard to the provision of services which have a direct impact on student welfare. In a time of significant change and uncertainty, NUS should

monitor the impact of these reforms and ensure that students' unions are able to make the case for students' welfare.

students' unions to make the case for local service provision which suits the needs of students, due to the negative perceptions of students which can be prevalent.

- 2) The introduction of localised police and crime, as well as health commissioning, represents a significant challenge for students, particularly when coinciding with simultaneous budget cuts.
- 3) Students should have access to a wide range of local services which are appropriate to their needs and the diverse nature of the student community.
- 4) Students' unions should be equipped to have input into local decision-making processes which have an impact on student welfare.
- 5) The activities of companies aimed at students can have a detrimental impact on community perceptions of students. This is particularly the case with operators of large-scale events and bar crawls, which are often poorly managed and can be offensively themed.

Conference resolves:

- 1) To identify best practice for students' unions and institutions in work around students living off campus, including through participation in residents' associations, community warden schemes and proactive work with the local authority.
- 2) To provide guidance to students' unions on how to engage with Police and Crime Commissioners and how to ensure that they acknowledge the high rate of crime committed against students.
- 3) To undertake a review of hate crime reporting systems to establish models of best practice.
- 4) To monitor the impact of public health reforms and changes to police and crime commissioning.
- 5) To support students' unions to engage with local authorities and local Healthwatch on issues around student health.
- 6) To support students' unions in making the case for student representation on local health and wellbeing boards.
- 7) To support students' unions to work with local authorities to develop codes of conduct for promoters in order to manage the impact of large-scale events.
- 8) To support students' unions in making the case for their students to have access to appropriate prayer facilities.

DPC: Policy Recommendations

The Democratic Procedures Committee (DPC) has the ability to submit motions relating to the running of Conference, the policy processes and other items relating to the administration of the National Union. It also submits text on behalf of the Chief Returning Officer relating to elections.

The current overall Governance structure for NUS was created around three years ago following a lengthy and detailed review. The Constitution requires a review of the rules of NUS every 3 years. Whilst there is no general sense that the Governance of NUS requires major overhaul, as part of NUS' commitment to continuous improvement we are now reviewing the structures and rules to see where improvements can be made to the culture or structures of Governance inside NUS.

The full process and findings of the NUS Rules Review can be found in appendix A. Proposed changes to the rules are listed below.

Zones (701)

Conference Believes:

1. Zones were introduced to make interaction with NUS easier; to improve involvement and accountability of Full Time Officers; and to improve policy developing, allowing less formal involvement and research to feature in the development process.
2. In the rules review most respondents were broadly positive about the role of Zones, recognizing that whilst there could be some cross over between roles of respective Zones, having different areas with different Vice Presidents and committees has made it easier to interact with NUS and has ensured that NUS covers a broad span of work each year.
3. However a number of incremental changes were suggested that are of consensus.

Conference Further Believes:

1. A number of respondents bemoan the relative lack of women elected to Zone Committees and there is a clear consensus in support of gender balancing them.
2. Many other responses suggested that Zone Committees could be expanded to involve more people.
3. Many regard the title "Society & Citizenship" as off putting or confusing.
4. That whilst Zone committees are charged with developing policy for their Zone throughout the year, they are not consistently consulting with members and stakeholders, or obtaining or commissioning research pertaining to their zone.
5. Many respondents debate the costs and logistics of Zone Conferences- some arguing that they should be cheaper to improve participation, some arguing that NUS' money should be spent on campaigning rather than subsidizing participation.
6. That more can be done to give the NEC influence over the work of the NUS Charity

Conference Resolves

1. That the size of each Zone Committee be expanded; to amend rule 801c from "Five individual members elected by and at the Zone Conference" to "Eight individual members elected by and at the Zone Conference"
2. To achieve gender balancing on each committee; add at the end of 801c "and when the block is counted the RO will cause, if sufficient candidates have stood, at least 50% of the places (rounded down) to be allocated to women"
3. That the National President be mandated to review the content of, definition of and responsibilities of each Zone.
4. That the "Society and Citizenship" Zone and its VP should operate under the title "Citizenship". That the DPC work with an NEC special committee to drive up research, consultation and digital engagement in the formative Policy Development process, setting out standards or guidelines which it expects to be met by each Zone. This should include methods for appropriately engaging with Nations.
6. That the NEC should consider carefully the extent to which it intends to subsidise participation in Zone Conferences when setting the NUS Estimates for approval by National Conference.
7. Insert rule 177 "The Vice President Union Development will annually present a Charitable Services remit and activity statement is developed that describes work that has been suggested to be carried out by the Charity under article 9.17 and in pursuit of NUS' aims that is being funded by NUSUK by donation"
8. Insert rule 704 "A Charitable Services remit and activity statement will be presented and developed annually describes work that has been suggested to be carried out by the Charity by the NEC under article 9.17 and in pursuit of NUS' aims that is being funded by NUSUK by donation"

The size, structure of the National Executive Council and Trustee Board (702)

Conference Believes:

1. In the last Governance review, NUS successfully adopted a “balance of power” model in its central Governance arrangements, creating a National Executive Council to be the political leadership of NUS and a Trustee Board to hold legal and financial responsibility, with each body having powers over the other.
2. This has improved political leadership, scrutiny and performance of NUS as a whole

Conference Further Believes:

1. There are widespread views and some misunderstanding surrounding the Block of Fifteen on the executive.
2. That whilst the split in role between the NEC and Trustee Board has worked well, there needs to be more focus on the interaction between the two bodies. This includes the cycle of business, reporting backwards and forwards and training for individuals.
3. There is a groundswell of support for taking steps to gender balance the NEC.
4. The current method for electing Student Trustees maximizes participation in the election by delegates at Conference, but a number of respondents suggested that the way in which the student Trustee elections are treated should change to improve the quality of candidates and scrutiny of them by delegates.
5. The current rules allow for (non-voting) membership of the NEC for nationally recognised student organisations. These provisions have never been fully enacted. There is some debate about how and when these provisions will be enacted to recognise and involve national faith, profession or political groups.

Conference Resolves:

1. Insert new rule 164 and renumber as appropriate: “Each member of the Block of 15 will be allocated a principal scrutiny duty relating to a Zone of the National Union”
2. That a special committee of the NEC is formed to review support for and communication around the NEC Block of 15. This should include the appropriateness of current budgeting and expenses arrangements.
3. That a small committee of one Student Officer trustee, one Student trustee and one Block member is formed to review the communication relationship between the NEC and Trustee Board.
4. Delete rule 104 and replace with “Each of the five zones shall elect one member of the National Executive Council, and in the event that the previously elected Vice President is not a woman this position shall be reserved for a woman”
5. Insert at end of rule 105 “save that said procedure will ensure that at least one of the members of the NEC is a woman”
6. Delete rule 103 and replace with “The fifteen individual members shall be elected in a block STV ballot at National Conference, at least five of whom must be members designated as further education members and at least seven of which must be women, counted in accordance with regulations set from time to time by the Chief Returning Officer”
7. Delete rule 670
8. The CRO should consider changes to the election of Student Trustees to improve quality and scrutiny of candidates.
9. The DPC should develop regulations for the operation of Organisations in association to be presented to the NEC.
10. The NEC clerks should review NEC communications arrangements to improve transparency before, during and after meetings. The DPC should take steps to better promote National Ballots.
12. Insert the following rules: Insert Rule 169 “Group Committees, which shall be established and dissolved by the National Executive Council, shall be responsible coordinating matters of concern across NUS and those bodies established under Article 9.17
13. Insert Rule 170 “The membership shall be determined in terms of reference approved by the NEC, save that at least a third will be drawn from the National Executive Council”
14. Insert Rule 171 “There shall be the following permanently established Group Committees:
 - a. Communications
 - b. Ethical and Environmental”
15. Renumber subsequent rules as appropriate

The size, structure and rules governing of NUS Conference (703)

Conference Believes:

1. There is widespread support for both the idea of and practice of NUS National Conference
2. Its size and role in summative policy making is celebrated by most respondents
3. The size and length of NUS national Conference is determined by the budget set by the NEC and National Conference- if it was to get bigger or longer something else would have to be cut
4. However there is clear concern surrounding the use of time at National Conference that we can work on
5. The delegate entitlement to National Conference is proposed by the DPC in response to the budget allocation proposed by the NEC to National Conference.

6. Any delegate can currently challenge the proposed delegate entitlement as part of that approval process. As such changes to delegate entitlements per se and the budget allocated to Conference already have a process and do not require rule changes.

Conference Further Believes:

1. An analysis of the use of Conference time reveals that the key “time thief” from debating time is the time spent on procedural motions, the parts procedure and delegates asking for “standing orders to be suspended” to make a statement.
2. The last of these has been discovered to be beyond the powers of National Conference (rule 104.1) and thus will not be allowed in the future. As a result time should be allocated on the order paper for statements to allow people to have their say without disrupting the flow of Conference.
3. If we want a large Conference we have to accept that we need to balance the size and efficiency of the event with the need to restrict an individual’s opportunity to slow or disrupt it, however well intentioned.
4. There is a groundswell of support for gender balancing amongst delegations.
5. Too many motions are presented in the “Final Proposals” document in relation to the amount of time allocated for the event.
6. As a result the question arises as to which motions or Zones should be allocated the most time, and how.
7. Often the debates about multiple challenges to the guillotine end up using more time than is being proposed a Zone is extended by.
8. That whilst the AGM is effective in “basketing” internally focused motions, it is poor at doing its job of scrutinizing reports, finances and appointments.
9. Many contributors discuss the extent to which Conference is accessible.
10. The DPC has worked hard in recent years to take on board feedback about accessibility but there is always further to go. Under Article 61.2 it already has a clear duty to carry out its work in such a way as to secure accessibility for delegates; it reports on the steps it has taken to secure feedback to this end and act on it each year at rule 505.

Conference Resolves

1. To introduce rule or regulation changes that raise the bar on procedural and parts matters.
2. Add rule 362c (Types of Conference Business) “Statements from delegates and observers”
3. To ask DPC to develop regulations for the allocation of statements to delegates
4. Change rule 381 from “All procedural motions will require the support of 100 delegates before being discussed” to “All procedural motions will require the support of a third of delegates present before being discussed”
5. Change wording in rule 369 from “if it then has the support of 100 delegates” to “if it then has the support of a third of delegates present”
6. To develop new parts procedures that ensure that proposals to discuss motions in parts have wide support from delegates before being discussed
7. To review the definition of Part Time Student in use by the DPC when calculating delegate entitlement.
8. Insert rule 333 “All delegations to National Conference must include at least 50% women, rounded down. Where a union is only entitled to send one delegate and this not delegate is not a woman, the union’s free observer place must be taken by a woman”
9. Revise rule 369 to read “An objection to the Guillotine will be moved formally; if it then has the support of a third of delegates on the floor, there will be one speech in favour of the objection and one speech against the objection. The objection will be sustained if it receives the support of a two-thirds majority of the National Conference and will result in the addition of 30 minutes of Conference time. The Guillotine may only be objected to once in any session. Objections to the falling of the Guillotine shall not allow any subsequent zone policy debate to be reduced to below 30 minutes”
10. DPC will not publish those ordinary motions which it does not believe there will be the time to discuss
11. To restrict the number of ordinary motions that can be submitted by a CM by amending rule 407 to read “All constituent members and the National Executive Council may submit up to 1,000 words of policy motions under no more than 3 titles, or amendments, into the National Conference by a deadline set annually by the Democratic Procedures Committee”
12. To reduce the number of Policy Recommendation motions that the Zones can submit by amending rule 397b “Policy Recommendations about which it has consulted with students and students’ unions to a maximum of 1,500 words under a maximum of three headings”
13. Insert at end of 412 “If at the close of the submission deadline the DPC believe that Zone Policy Recommendations are not a matter of broad consensus it may at its sole discretion move these proposals to the Ordinary Motions section of that Zone”
14. That a formative NUS Group “strategy and scrutiny” event be established in February to allow for closer formative scrutiny of NUS Estimates and Strategy. This should include the attendance of proposed lay trustees.
15. Add rule 358h “A report on the activity of any bodies established under Article 9.17

The Future of London- How can students in the capital be best represented to the Mayor and GLA? (704)

Conference Believes:

1. A number of mandates exist relating to the creation of bespoke NUS structures and services for unions in London.
2. In part these respond to the existence of wider political structures of concern to students.
3. In addition this year a review is taking place of ULU.

Conference Further Believes:

1. Being able to influence the agenda of the Mayor of London (MoL) should be central to whatever is proposed
2. There should be advice and support available to allow Unions to engage with and influence their local councils in a more strategic way
3. There should be one annual encounter to set high level strategic direction for work
4. We should seek to capture a wide range of student voices whether through focus groups, market research or polling
5. Important to cover key issues such as travel, housing, policing, recycling, and employment that the MoL/GLA has control over
6. We should also seek to influence and recognise areas that the MoL can assert themselves such as young people's education and skills, emergency planning and a desire to have greater influence over schools.
7. There should be a focus on the 'London Student Community/Communities' and how reflect students as citizens of London
8. It should exist inside NUS structures but should retain the ability to separately influence the MoL on London specific issues that might not impact on others in the UK in the same way
9. It should focus on influencing MoL elections
10. It should be able to influence the MoL from the perspective of students who are women, black students, international students, students in FE and the structure should ensure that we can capture the voices of students in these and other categories
11. Any infrastructure put in place needs to be able to measure its impact on:
 - Influencing the Mayor of London's agenda
 - Securing a better London for students
 - Shaping the political parties manifesto's and public debate around Greater London Authority (GLA)/Mayoral Elections

Conference Resolves:

1. To consult on the creation of a structure in London to capture, synthesise and amplify the voices of London students to the regional authority to include:
 - An Annual Assembly of students' unions
 - MoL Student Question Time
 - London Wide Student Panel and Focus Groups
 - Research Hub
 - Figure Head
 - London Sabb "Meet your Neighbours" events
2. To ensure that this is as flexible as possible and brought to the NEC for approval within rules 2000 "NUS Areas"

Student Sections (705)

Conference Believes

1. Too often National Conference does not discuss matters of importance to student sections
2. As they are not liberation campaigns it is critical that these issues are presented for adoption to National Conference in good time

Conference Resolves

1. Sections conferences will be timed to fall before National Conference
2. Save for the International Students' Officer, conferences should elect their NEC members and the committees should be elected at a scheduled training event in the autumn, bringing Sections closer to Zones.
3. Amend rule 911 to read "There shall be two Conferences annually for each of the Student Sections, one of which shall elect the Committee and the other of which will resolve matters of concern to that section of students, and in the case of International Students will elect the International Students Officer"
4. Amend 912 to read "The Conference shall be open to that section's students and those student officers with responsibility for concerns of those students, save that only that section's students shall be eligible for participation as voting delegates to the conference"
5. Insert 917b "Student officers from CMs with responsibility for concerns of those students"

6. Sections committees should be able to co-opt a willing students' union staff member to support their work if they would like to.
7. Change 914 "decide" to "approve"
8. Insert rule 927 "The committee shall also co-opt up to two students' union staff members or lay members with expertise"

NUS Group inter-relationships and ownership (706)

NUS Believes

1. That there have been great strides forward in NUS' overall corporate governance structure in recent years
2. These have included forming an NUS Group, merger with AMSU a new arm's length charity and closer collaboration with NUS Services

NUS Further Believes

1. That the NUS strategy, accounts and budgets usually receive little detailed scrutiny during the AGM of this conference
2. That we can do more to ensure that all parts of the NUS group involve and support our members
3. Because power in NUSSL is based on shares owned, some unions have disproportionate amounts of power in proportion to their purchasing or commercial activity

NUS Resolves

1. To pursue changes inside NUSSL, moving towards a fairer distribution of power amongst unions;
2. To pursue changes to the NUS Group Structure to align and devolve decision making closer to participants in activity;
3. To pursue a group Strategy and Scrutiny event in February to allow a detailed formative examination of budgets and strategic plans

Motions and Legal Risk (707)

NUS Believes

1. That some legal risk is attached to the publication, debate and resolution of motions mentioning individuals and companies
2. Students should be free in our structures to debate issues and DPC and its delegated bodies must protect this
3. We also have a duty to protect NUS from legal challenge

NUS Resolves

1. To require in regulations surrounding motion submission that any motion submitted to a democratic body that that
 - a. Makes a judgment about or includes a view on an individual, or
 - b. Makes a judgment about or includes a view on an external organization or company
 - c. includes robust evidence, contains verifiable quotes and is not defamatory.
2. If in the view of the DPC any text breaches this requirement in the first instance it will work with the submitter to reword the motion to meet the requirement
3. In the event that agreement cannot be reached the DPC will reserve the right to rule the text out of order in line with rule 414
4. Any body with powers devolved to it by the DPC is required to operate procedures to this end
5. To continue to explore the way in which legal protections may be developed for NUS and students' unions to allow free debate on matters of common concerns without fear of or reducing legal risk

Tidy Up (708)

Conference Believes

1. National Conference Rule 389 contains reference to a Card Vote, which no longer exists

Conference Resolves

1. To delete the words "card vote" from rule 389

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