



**Vote**

# Vicki Baars

## #1 for NUS National President

Hi, I'm Vicki Baars and I have made the decision to run to be your next NUS President because I know we have a huge battle on our hands to defend what remains of the current education system, as well as looking to the future and demanding an education system fit to deliver a free education to all for the good of our society.

Now is the time to put differences aside in order to achieve the demands of the student movement; to fight for education not just for ourselves but for the students of tomorrow.

I believe that I have what it takes to lead NUS at this time and I hope that after reading this manifesto you will too.

**"Vicki is rare in that she has all the visionary radicalism of a leader from the Liberation campaigns and all the reliability and patience of a Vice-President for Union Development. In these chaotic times these virtues make her the only person that can be trusted to ensure the stable change that the NUS desperately needs"**

**Abdi Sulieman**  
**Sheffield SU President**  
**NUS Soc & Cit Zone Committee**

### Fighting now!

This movement is ready to apply the necessary pressure to those in power in order to turn the tide on changes to the education system that are currently selling our students, lecturers and institutions down the river. We are seeing further education face a newly-introduced market for fees, international students scapegoated in the name of racist government agendas against immigrants, universities attempting to expand their presences at the expense of local communities, college budgets in Scotland being cut by up to £34 million, departmental cuts hitting institutions of all sizes and levels, and students' unions and trade unions under threat from institutional management.

These are just some of the many present problems, which bring with them fears of a removal of the already drastically high cap on fees, an influx of private providers undercutting public provision and furthering of unsustainable loans and repayment systems in both FE and HE sectors. The battles will be hard and many but we are a movement equipped to win this war.

#### Elect me and I will:

- Ensure every member has access to the skills and tools necessary not just to take on each battle they face but to win them
- Support grass roots anti-cuts campaigns locally as well as being a national anti-austerity voice for the student movement
- Campaign against increased fees, student debt and privatisation
- Fight against study leaver and youth unemployment



### Winning for the future

One thing that truly liberates people is education. We've spent the last year at NUS developing a powerful new narrative about the future of education - taking the current system as we know it, breaking it apart and envisioning the post-16 education that we want to see and believe is possible. With the 2015 general election on the horizon, we have to win the arguments on investment and why education is good for society, inspiring the general public to have the same passion as we do for a future that works, with free education for all at the heart of it. We need to make clear that money spent on education is an investment in people, in their futures and in jobs. I won't claim to be an economist or to have all of the answers, but research, resources and other evidence overwhelmingly supports investment over cuts to create growth and I believe we should use this evidence to its full potential. We have to seriously engage with wider society about how education should be funded - which I believe should be by taxing the richest people and businesses more.

Funding is not the only factor preventing many people accessing education. I personally attribute my chance to go to university to the widening participation agenda, and believe we must continue to pioneer this. But more than that, we need to ensure that students of all backgrounds and ages have a *deepened* experience of education in order to truly benefit from its transformative effects.

#### Elect me and I will:

- Fight for greater investment in education, because it should be free for all
- Continue to champion not just widening but deepening participation in post-16 education
- Establish a coalition for education with trade unions, leading researchers and you, our members, to co-ordinate a winning fight.

# Dependable and honest leadership

NUS as an organisation is going through a lot of changes, and to some extent will always continue to. We are at the whim of annual changes in policy, in the leadership of our member unions and their institutions, in government, in what battles we are fighting and much more. With so much change in play we must remain a flexible organisation with a dependable leadership. I am an agile leader able to thrive during periods of change by adopting a collective approach to leadership.

## Elect me and I will:

- Ensure that I use the talents and passion of the other 18 full time NUS officers to their full potential
- Insist that the breath and depth of our leadership team is understood by the membership and those we seek to influence
- Ask the difficult questions that must be considered in shaping our organisational strategy going forward (in particular, at what point we would, should or could go 'all in', risking the long-term viability of the organisation and the smaller wins that our student activists currently achieve every day in order to win a better education for all)

# Putting our policy into practice

NUS has a huge policy mandate made every year by voting delegates from your unions, associations and guilds at our democratic conferences. We work from 3 years of policy and while this can quickly become out of date the intention of each carefully crafted policy is usually evident. However, we have seen time and time again that policy is intentionally misinterpreted and misrepresented. This national union needs a leader who will be honest about and have the integrity to deliver policy as it was intended to be.

## Elect me and I will:

- Work on policy irrespective of whether or not I supported it at national conference
- Run a national ballot to decide the priority campaign for the year
- Review progress made throughout the year against national conference policies

# Who I am - what I've done...

My journey in the student movement began just before I went to university. I was given a postcard by a family friend that encouraged me to get involved in my students' union. So I did, and have never looked back. I proudly represented the university on the women's rugby team and joined the LGBT society. Little did I know, it would change my life. That postcard took me to NUS liberation and national conferences where I developed my political self and connected the dots between the rights my peers and I deserved and the bigger struggles we face in society. I developed the ability to communicate and to co-ordinate a fightback. My proud queer, feminist and socialist politics are well-known, but I ask that as you read this manifesto you judge me not just on what I believe and have achieved but what we could achieve together if you elect me as your NUS President.

## I have:

- Supported 100s of SUs, Associations and Guilds to be the independent, autonomous and political organisations they need to be to deliver for their students
- Led the campaign for a national demo to keep up the fight against fees, cuts, student debt and privatisation and supported thousands of students to attend
- Trained hundreds of activists across the UK to empower them to make change both on and off their campuses

- Been a challenging voice at a national level against youth and graduate unemployment and against the unethical and outdated practices of graduate recruiters.
- Championed the liberation campaigns, ensuring that they are at the front and centre of NUS and proudly supported the gender balancing of national conference and the NEC
- Supported unions to have a clear, fair and accountable system for dealing with elected officer disciplinaries as well as fighting for better representation for officers within the movement
- Secured an online training program that will allow more activists, officers and staff to access NUS training

## My experience:

- NUS VP Union Development 2012/2013
- NUS Charitable Services (Chair) 2012/2013
- NUS LGBT Officer (Women's Place) 2010/12
- NUS Trustee Board 2011/13
- Love Music Hate Homophobia National Co-Convenor 2010/12
- Leeds Met Associate President Diversity 2009/10
- Leeds Met Associate President Welfare and Campaigns 2008/9
- Unipol Student Homes Trustee 2008/10
- Leeds Met Women's Rugby Co-Captain 2009/10
- NUS LGBT C'ttee (Women's Rep) 2008/10
- Leeds Met LGBT Society Chair 2007/8



**"Vicki has been a constant source of support and inspiration for me. It has been an absolute pleasure working with Vicki this year. she'll make an incredible president"**

**Kelley Temple  
NUS Women's Officer**



This two page manifesto only begins to scratch the surface of the issues that are vital for the movement and how I will lead in each case. I will be producing an extended manifesto in advance of national conference, which will cover additional topics.

**For alternative formats  
or more info:**

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