

# Choose **SOPHIE** RICHARDSON

## #1 NUS Vice President Higher Education

Every day, across the country, HE is helping us realise our aspirations; for ourselves, our families and our communities. If supported, these aspirations have the power to transform the world we live in. Education allows us to determine our own futures, breaking down archaic social barriers.

My mum experienced this first hand, going back to university as a mature student to realise her dream of becoming a teacher, and she now takes enormous pride in helping young people start their own journeys through education. This is the real essence of HE, this is why it must never be about markets, it always has, and always should be, a gateway to a better future and one which is never shut to anyone. That's why education has to be the national priority and I am the person to make these aspirations a reality.

### Getting In and Staying In

#### Access and Admissions

The admissions system is long outdated. Students should not be forced to make decisions based on predicted grades or, for those like my Mum, grades that they achieved years ago. NUS must demonstrate the merit of the Post Qualification Admissions system and contextual data.

Furthermore, as the Government trebles fees, slashes teaching grants and drastically cuts EMA, it only becomes more vital that NUS is the leading voice in advocating access.

#### Hidden and Additional Course Costs

Regardless of the fee level, hidden course costs are an unacceptable barrier to full engagement in the learning experience. NUS can make progress on this very real issue, using our national influence whilst supporting our Unions in your own local campaigns.

#### Learning from Experience

When investing your hopes for the future into a HE course the last thing you imagine doing is exiting early. However, we still do not hear enough of a discussion about improving retention rates. We must lobby for exit interviews and pastoral support as a minimum standard, and learn from past mistakes.

### Settling In

#### Transition and Induction into the HE partnership

The transition and induction process should be more than receiving a letter from the institution and more than being forced to sit in a lecture theatre for a whole day listening to talk after talk. NUS must take a lead in developing and promoting effective ways of inducting students into institutions and supporting their transition into HE. NUS can also work with other sector organisations to do this for all students, including those from non-traditional backgrounds.

I have never met an officer in the student movement who is as principled as Sophie. I have been impressed with her commitment to delivering for students.

USMAN ALI  
NUS Vice President Higher Education (2010-12)



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Facebook: Sophie Richardson #1 for NUS VP Higher Education

Sophie is one of the most inspiring people I have met during my time as an officer at Brighton.

AMY RUTLAND  
Vice President Academic Affairs  
Brighton Students' Union



If you need this this document in a different format please contact me.

## Engaging In

### Engaging as a Course Rep

We have to continue to build on the good work whilst thinking outside the box. I will ensure NUS works more closely with WIDAR to support staff and officers locally in creating and delivering Course Rep training programmes. A closer partnership would also allow us to provide regional events that facilitate innovative developments in representational work.

### Engaging in Quality

Having been up against the challenges of manoeuvring quality assurance and seeing many of our fellow students face them too, I'm perfectly placed to lead NUS in breaking down the barriers. NUS needs to give Unions the confidence to challenge their institutions on quality issues and, when necessary, to trigger an audit and bring QAA onto their campus.

### Having skilled lecturers and rewarding them

Many of our lecturers have a huge passion to teach and disseminate knowledge. Both the Government and our institutions have a duty to give our lecturers the skills they need to offer a quality teaching experience. We need to be bold and call for HE teaching to be professionalised.

## Using It In

### Employability & Skills in the Curriculum

Working with the UD Zone, I would like to build on existing extra-curricular focused work and make sure courses are effective in preparing students for the world of work. We need to take a much broader view on employability and ensure skills needed for the workplace and life after the degree are being learnt in the classroom, as well as outside of it.

### Postgraduates

We need to ensure all Zones, Sections and Campaigns engage with the Postgraduate Campaign, particularly as they are often left without the support to shape their future. We need to fight to maintain the teaching grant for practical postgraduate subject groups and to extend the funding to humanities subjects. This funding stream would protect the huge range of specialist subjects and help protect our lecturers' jobs. Remembering that our current undergraduate members are our future postgraduate members too, the Postgraduate Campaign has to be a bigger priority for NUS.

Her commitment to students is second to none. Great knowledge of the sector, movement and education makes Sophie the only choice for VP HE.

ROB SCULLY  
President | City University Students' Union



## Experience

President Queen Mary Students' Union (2011-12)  
NEC NUS Higher Education Zone 2nd place (2011-12)  
Higher Education Zone Committee Member (2010-12)  
Unions 94 Chair (2011-12)  
QAA Student Sounding Board Member (2010-12)  
Vice President Education & Welfare Queen Mary Students' Union (2011-12)  
UpRising Member (2010-11)  
QAA External Examining Code of Practice Group Member (2011)  
Student Rep Queen Mary Students' Union (2009-10)  
ReachOut! Volunteer (2007-08)  
Course Rep (2006-10)  
FE Student Governor (2005-06)

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