

# General Meeting

1st February  
5-7pm

C.LTW1 / MS TEAMS

## Agenda

- Welcome and Attendance
- Minutes Ratification
- Challenges to Order Paper
- Dates to Note
- Elections & Resignations
- Reports ([Paper A](#))
  - Union President
  - Sports Union President
  - Vice President Communities
  - Vice President Education
- Motions
  - COVID-19 Justice and Equity Motion ([Paper B](#))
  - Fossil Free Careers ([Paper C](#))
  - NUS UK Conference Policy Submission - Solidarity with the people of Palestine and preserving the student movement ([Paper D](#))
  - NUS Scotland Conference Policy Submission – Support for International Students ([Paper E](#))
- Any Other Business
- Date of Next Meeting: 5-7pm, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024
  - Motion Deadline: 10am, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024
  - Motion Amendment Deadline: 10am, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024
- Date of Annual General Meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (*immediately following the General Meeting*)

## Paper A: Reports

### Union President Sabbatical Report, Leen Ali

Hi Guys, I am Leen Ali and I am the Union President for 2023/24. As President, I am the overall representative, spokesperson and ambassador of the Union. My work also revolves around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, aiming to support equality-related campaigns. I chair the Equalities Zone, a space where all underrepresented voices are uplifted.

- Currently in conversations with the University looking to incorporate some interculturalism awareness strategies. A meeting will be taking place this February where I will learn more about their existence and future plans working towards that goal.
- I am currently reviewing Equalities' Zone as I think it's a great opportunity and platform for students of these groups to collaborate on campaigns and projects. I am still exploring the options and welcome any thoughts on what you guys would want Equalities Zone to be. This includes a review of the election process for Equalities Volunteer officer positions.
- As for my asking, listening and acting objective, I have completed last semester's Go Out And Talk sessions and will soon resume them for this semester. I have gathered valuable feedback, some of which has been raised in recent University meetings. I am also considering alternative methods of gathering feedback to optimise its reliability and facilitate reporting processes.
- I regularly meet with INTO, constantly looking at and reviewing strategies to help integrate their community into the broader campus community.
- Regarding the digital screens, I have reached out and been in some discussions with members of the Communications and Marketing team at the University reviewing policies and procedures to create space for student voice content.

You can contact me at [president.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:president.union@stir.ac.uk) or my official Instagram (@stir\_president).

### Sports Union President Sabbatical Report, Murray Bushell

As Sports President, I look after all 54 of our Sports Clubs.

#### **Club Mark**

- The Club Mark (StirScale) has now been launched and sent to all clubs. The aim of the club mark is to prioritise good club governance and show all clubs what it takes to be a good club. The mark will be split between bronze, silver and gold with benefits of being a gold club hoping to boost engagement.

#### **Varsity**

- Varsity is returning for a third year and planning has begun to make this the biggest one yet. The hope is that we can build on the success of previous years and make this year more of an event that will lead to more people involved throughout the day.

#### **Culture**

- We have recently ran a workshop with some of our clubs around inclusion and creating good club cultures. The pilot session was organised for Men's Hockey, Men's Rugby, Men's Football and Golf. We received good feedback from the session and our thanks to Student Services for their support in putting this on.

## Key Events

- Planning is well underway for key events that will take place throughout the second semester. This will include sports ball, club photos, conference finals, big BUCS Wednesday and Clubs Academy.

You can contact me at [sports.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:sports.union@stir.ac.uk). Make sure to also follow us on Instagram, @stirlingsportsunion, to keep up to date on all things sport!

## Vice President Communities Sabbatical Report, Zoë Crosher

As Vice President Communities, I work on many things including societies, sustainability, volunteering, housing and transport.

- I'm very excited to have finalised plans for societies ball, and announced the theme at the first Communities Zone of the year!
- I planned Spring Semester events, including more Tackling Students Loneliness craft workshops, the International Festival of Culture, LGBT+ History Month and more!
- I saw students attend Scottish Mental Health First Aid training thanks to the Stirling Fund, officially completing one of my main manifesto points!
- I attended Student Experience Committee and presented my student parents survey report, which I have been working on since October. I had a great response to it, and am very excited to see changes beginning to form thanks to the work I've been doing!
- Enjoyed a successful January Welcome Week societies fayre, with over 60 societies attending, and plenty of students coming along to chat despite the weather!
- I also launched the SV & GBV Awareness Award on the SU website, which now has details on how societies can achieve each level of the award, and celebrates the societies that are already at bronze level.
- Finally, I am working on a transport guide which will be promoted to new students in the hopes of making transport to and from the University more accessible. This guide will include how to access the McGills app, how to get an NEC card, and more

You can contact me at [communities.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:communities.union@stir.ac.uk) or my official social media channels @stir\_communities.

## Vice President Education, Katie Gethings

Hey, I am Katie, your Vice President for Education and I take care of all things academics and education. I chair the Education Zone and take care of the Academic Representatives at the University. I am here to represent and advocate on behalf of anything academic so I am the person to go to if you have any questions or issues regarding your education

## Academic Representatives

- Last semester we gained feedback from the Academic Reps and students on how the Academic Rep system worked as well as their experience of SSFCs.
- New updates for this semester based on feedback:
  - More interactive in-person training sessions.
  - Academic Reps shown on canvas modules for other students to see.

- New SSFC guidance to go out.

### **Life skills workshops**

- Ran Interview skills life skills workshop last semester, however not well attended.
- Planning on rerunning sessions at a better time for students to attend as many reached out to say they wanted to attend but couldn't.
- Developing a Financial Literacy Fair in March with University and External organisations with the aim of providing students with material and worksheets to improve their personal finances.

### **Faculty Officer Support**

- Faculty Officers have been working over the break on their projects.
- Will publish a list of all the Faculty Officer projects that are events for each student to know when to attend.

### **Consent education**

- Speaking to other Unions to see what provisions they have and where Stirling could improve.
- Speaking to University about updates to current training and where it can go – with student-led group, Reclaim Stirling.

You can contact me at [education.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:education.union@stir.ac.uk) or my official social media channel on Instagram @stir\_education.

## Paper B: COVID-19 Justice and Equity Motion

Proposer: Imogen Robertson | Seconder: Chava Baugh

### **Motion Resolves**

1. To introduce and make free, and certified N95, KN95, and 3M AURA respirators (i.e. high-quality masks) available in the Students' Union, with ease of access to all students.
  - a. These masks should be sourced from reputable retailers, who offer clear credentials about the efficacy of their masks/respirators.
2. To introduce and situate certified HEPA air purifiers within the Students' Union.
  - a. This should be done especially in areas where there is a high density of students coming together to socialise.
3. To make sure the Union is making efforts to present clear and medically accurate information about the efficacy of respirators on the Students' Union website.

### **Motion Notes**

The risk and damage of COVID-19 has been demonstrated to be cumulative, which means that the risk of an individual developing long-covid increases with every infection (University of Nebraska Medical Centre). It has also been shown that COVID-19 can sustain long term damage to internal organs, as well as cause nerve damage. COVID-19 is also acknowledged to be a persistent airborne virus by multiple reputable sources (USEPA).

Individuals who are at risk and immunocompromised have had to deal with the systemic failures of our UK government and institutions in correctly identifying the risks associated with COVID-19 transmission and its encroachment on their lives, including precipitating the alienation associated with navigating society during an ongoing pandemic. However, it is not just immunocompromised individuals who are at risk of long-term chronic illness and disability - COVID-19 has been coined a 'mass disabling event' by multiple disability advocates, scholars, medical practitioners and institutions (Global Center for Health Security). Individuals with no history of immune disorders or known disability are also negatively impacted by the cumulative effects of repeated COVID-19 infection.

### **Motion Beliefs**

As COVID-19 poses an ongoing risk to the health of individuals, immunocompromised and otherwise, there should be measures set in place by Stirling Students' Union in order to facilitate just and equitable access to necessary medical interventions like high-quality respirators, and HEPA purifiers. This will make the Students' Union a more disability-friendly space in turn, and mitigate the harm done by COVID-19.

It is key to clarify that as per this motion, there is no efforts to enforce masking, but rather to make high-quality masks and clean air environments available to students.

## Paper C: Fossil Free Careers

Proposer: Erin Quinney Smith | Seconder: Nia Fehlow

### **Motion Resolves**

1. To publicly support the Fossil Free Careers campaign, and asks that our University Careers Service:
  - a. Refuses all new relationships with fossil fuel companies or companies that engage in energy production in an unethical way including human rights violations and GHG emissions.
  - b. Declines to renew any current relationships with these companies after the contractually obligated period ends.
  - c. Adopts a publicly available Ethical Careers Policy that explicitly excludes these companies from recruitment opportunities.
2. To mandate the relevant full-time and part-time officer(s) to actively work with organisations such as Fossil Free Careers campaign group and People & Planet to ensure that Union work is linked up with grassroots campaigners.
3. To mandate the relevant full-time and part-time officer(s) to help set up meetings relating to the Fossil Free Careers campaign with relevant University staff, and include student campaigners where relevant.
4. To use relevant Students' Union social media channels to amplify petitions, statements and other calls to action from the Fossil Free Careers campaign.
5. To send out a press release and website statement announcing the passing of this motion and the support of the Union for this campaign.
6. To never allow the Students' Union to profit (either through events or promotions) from companies which generate profits from fossil fuels, or companies that engage in energy production in an unethical way including human rights violations and GHG emissions.

### **Motion Notes**

That the operations of the oil, gas and mining industries cause immense environmental harm, by accelerating the climate and ecological crisis, polluting the water and permanently destroying landscapes.

That these extractive operations also cause direct social harm, by displacing people from their homes and lands, destroying livelihoods, demolishing sacred indigenous sites, and leaving workers and communities with severe health problems.

That graduates are increasingly turning away from the oil and gas sector. A 2017 study showed the number of graduates taking jobs in the industry had dropped by 60% in four years.

That young people see oil and gas as the most unappealing sector to work in. They associate it with responsibility for the climate crisis and believe there is no future for jobs in the industry.

Although the Careers Service operates a sustainable approach, they do not have a publicly accessible policy that excludes the promotion of careers in the oil, gas and mining industry through its website, careers fairs, emails to the student body and other recruitment events.

There are now 3 UK universities that have ended oil, gas, and mining industry recruitment on campus, and a further 20% of all UK Universities have made similar exclusions for other industries, including the tobacco, sex, and gambling industries.

The University has made a public ethical and sustainability commitment. This includes a commitment to remove its direct investments in fossil fuel companies.

### **Motion Believes**

Inviting oil, gas, and mining companies to advertise with the Careers Service adds legitimacy to the idea that these companies are an acceptable part of our society and our future.

The University Careers Service should ensure that its recruitment activities and events are in line with the University's publicly stated ethical principles of sustainability.

The University's Careers Service has a responsibility to its students to promote jobs with a future.

Ending this University's complicity in career pipelines into the oil, gas, and mining industry is an effective method of showing solidarity with communities affected by these companies' operations.

# Paper D: NUS UK Conference Policy Submission - Solidarity with the people of Palestine and preserving the student movement

Proposer: Luna Larkin (NUS Delegate) | Seconder: Eliot Wooding-Sherwin (NUS Delegate)

## **Motion Resolves**

1. This motion resolves to submit the following idea for NUS UK Conference Policy consideration on behalf of Stirling Students' Union.

## **NUS Idea Submission**

### **What's the issue and how does it affect students?**

This policy addresses the escalating pressure and censorship faced by students and Students' Unions involved in pro-Palestinian activities post the October 7th attacks. Many students observe a lack of condemnation from political leaders and academic institutions concerning atrocities and human rights violations, contradicting earlier stances on international humanitarian crises. This incongruity deeply unsettles students, especially those linked to the region and individuals from marginalised communities. The policy urges NUS to reaffirm campus free speech and empower students and Students' Unions to maintain their proud tradition of advocating for global human rights as well as to ensure all students' perspectives are represented by their Students' Unions and Universities.

### **What changes would we like to see in society to change this?**

Fighting injustice is fundamental to the student movement, and NUS, as the representative body, must uphold this commitment. This policy aims to empower activists, students, and Students' Unions to protest ongoing violence in Gaza, treating it with the same seriousness as any other atrocity. Criticising the Israeli state for violating Palestinian rights should not be equated with antisemitism. NUS must protect students' rights, recognizing the interconnectedness of all forms of racism and oppression. Additionally, the policy aims to prevent the racialized weaponization of antisemitism and Jewish identity to shield the Israeli state from criticism. Upholding these principles ensures NUS's dedication to combating injustice remains steadfast.

### **What action could NUS, students and Students' Unions take to work on this?**

NUS must provide resources for student and SU empowerment and education against injustice, ensuring compliance with legal frameworks. This entails training, resource packs, political organising, and parliamentary advocacy to support students advocating for global human rights. NUS should counter the suppression of lawful political actions within the student movement by universities, media, and government.

### **How does it impact Further Education students/apprentices?**

Apprentices entering the workforce face an unsettling crackdown on pro-Palestinian activity, echoing an authoritarian trend seen in workplaces across the UK. Colleges where students are studying further education qualifications have been subject to similar pressures.

**How does it impact on black\*, disabled, LGBT+, trans and women students? *\*The NUS definition of the Black Students Campaign represents all students of African, Arab, Asian and Caribbean heritage.***



Censorship and institutional silence on Gaza impacts marginalised communities, recognising the interconnectedness with their oppression. Universities' failure to condemn the war contradicts anti-racist commitments while the conflict has fueled alarming rises in anti-Black, anti-Arab, and anti-Jewish racism. Islamophobia is exacerbated through PREVENT, with Muslim students disproportionately targeted in censorship incidents.

### **How does it impact on International Students, Postgraduate Students, Part Time and Mature Students?**

International students engaging in pro-Palestinian organizing face increased pressure, risking visa removal from universities and the government. Many have personal ties to the region. Mature students, active in organising and local politics, bear a heavier censorship burden. Part-time and postgraduate students, including internationals, grapple with unique challenges, juggling academics amid heightened censorship. Addressing these multifaceted impacts is crucial.

### **Is there a particular impact or response for small and specialist institutions?**

Small student unions with limited resources may need additional support from NUS both to provide resources to guide students on organising pro-Palestine activities within legal boundaries as well as to emotionally support students with friends and families in the region.

### **Extra Information**

NUS National Conference recognises that the historic and current occupation of the Palestinian territories, and the ongoing crisis in the region, is of great significance to the student movement.

Many of NUS' member organisations have passed motions affirming solidarity with the Palestinian people, and ongoing violence in Gaza is demonstrably of huge importance to the student movement.

Many thousands of students continue to engage on this issue with local and national politicians, attend demonstrations, and attempt to organise on their campuses to promote safety and prosperity for people everywhere. Many students - of differing opinions - are facing unacceptable resistance to exercising their lawful rights to campaign, protest, and speak out. It would be wholly inappropriate for NUS National Conference to ignore this issue.

NUS National Conference recognises that discussion of Israel-Palestine within the student movement has historically been loaded with toxicity, and all too often, racism. This is a highly emotive subject, particularly for those with personal and familial connections to the region.

Through the 'Independent Investigation into Antisemitism,' including the 'Tuck Report,' NUS has repeatedly laid out commitments such as to 'minimise harm' and 'facilitate and support debates and campaigns regarding Israel and Palestine' (NUS Antisemitism Action Plan). The goal of this motion is to support and strengthen that work.

Stigmatising pro-Palestinian activism, and driving it underground, risks creating an environment where antisemitism thrives unchallenged. NUS has a responsibility to step up and continue to lead, and all students have a responsibility to listen to each other and learn, so that oppression can continue to be challenged without recreating division and hatred.

NUS National Conference believes:

None of our Palestinian, Israeli, Jewish, Muslim, or other student communities are responsible for the actions of the Israeli state or of Hamas and racial discrimination should be fought against and rejected.

It is indisputable that when violence escalates in the Middle East, incidents of both antisemitism and islamophobia on UK campuses and in wider society increase dramatically.

Conflating entirely legitimate criticism of the Israeli state with anti-Jewish racism undermines the possibility of demonstrating solidarity with the Palestinian struggle against oppression, undermines freedom of speech and academic freedom, and undermines efforts to tackle antisemitism.

‘When passionate advocacy and campaigning for Palestinian rights and condemnation of the policies or acts of the state of Israel are in issue, there has been considerable alienation of Jewish students’ (NUS Independent Investigation into allegations of antisemitism within NUS, page 105).

‘It will be important, when ensuring that NUS is a welcoming environment for Jews, to ensure that other student groups are not alienated’ (NUS Independent Investigation into allegations of antisemitism within NUS, page 107). Tackling antisemitism is vital, but NUS risks alienating a large portion of its membership, including supporters of the Palestinian people (many of whom are Jewish), if advocating for the rights of the Palestinian people is not accommodated (as seen by the significant number of disaffiliation campaigns that have taken place over the last 18 months).

NUS’ mission to ‘bring about a new culture around this topic in all corners of student politics’ (NUS Antisemitism Action Plan) cannot be achieved if NUS is not clear about its stance as a democratic political organisation.

‘Legitimate discussions about Israel and Palestine do not need to be discriminatory. Campaigning on Palestinian causes is not inherently antisemitic. Defending the right of the state of Israel to exist is not inherently discriminatory.’ (NUS Antisemitism Action Plan)

NUS holds responsibility to educate and empower students to lawfully protest atrocities in Palestine, and to equip Students’ Unions to do the same.

Universities need to be consistent in their condemnation of oppression. It is a double standard for them to take a stance on Russia-Ukraine while staying silent on Israel-Palestine.

Silence regarding ongoing violence in Palestine contradicts university anti-racism commitments.

The PREVENT programme and PREVENT referrals are weaponised to suppress legitimate support for Palestine.

The purpose of universities is to broaden the minds of their students, working to produce knowledge that improves health, wellbeing and security around the world. It is therefore legitimate for students to campaign to get UK universities to divest from the military and defence sector, and to end shares in arms companies.

Universities and Students’ Unions have a duty to promote freedom of speech and academic freedom, including expressions of support for Palestine.

# Paper E: NUS Scotland Conference Policy Submission – Support for International Students

Proposer: Adewale Sadiq (NUS Delegate) | Seconder: Kingsley Ezeugo

## **Motion Resolves**

1. This motion resolves to submit the following idea for NUS Scotland Conference Policy consideration on behalf of Stirling Students' Union.
2. This idea submission would include support for easier access to accommodation, improved support for International Students in finding accommodation, and lobbying for more affordable accommodation.

## **NUS Idea Submission**

### **What is the issue and how does it affect Students?**

Settling down in the UK can be really difficult for international students, so appropriate support and guidance is essential.

### **What changes would we like to see in society change this?**

Easier access to accommodation, improved support for International Students in finding accommodation and lobbying for more affordable options.

### **What action could NUS, students and SUs take to work on this?**

Support easier access to accommodation, improved support for International Students in finding accommodation, and lobbying for more affordable options.

### **How does it impact FE students / Apprentices?**

Improve concentration on studies.

### **How does it impact on International Students, Postgraduate Students, Part Time and Mature Students?**

International students currently find it difficult to settle down, especially with family and the current regulations.