

Motion to continue to oppose Discriminatory attacks on students

Proposer: Camilla Royle

Seconders: Leron Borsten, Hannah Heyenne

This Union Notes that:

- 1) A dress code banning the full Muslim veil was introduced to College last year “in the light of security concerns”. This decision was supported by Bill Rammell, the higher education minister.
- 2) The decision was opposed by the Students’ Union and Council resolved to campaign against it.
- 3) Imperial College was named in last year’s Glees report. This report released late last year suggested that universities are likely recruitment centres for Islamic extremists, supported college’s clothing policy and suggested limiting applications by black and Asian students to 8%. It was dismissed by many people including members of the security services as racist.
- 4) The Department of Education has circulated a document to be sent to university staff and lecturers by the end of the year suggesting proposals whereby British universities record information about students’ background, race, religion and society involvement and forward it to Special Branch. The document focuses on Muslim and “Asian looking” individuals. This was brought to the attention of the media on the 16th October.
- 5) The Universities and Colleges union (UCU), National union of students (NUS) and Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) have all opposed these proposals.
- 6) The Union Equal Opportunities policy, written three years ago and due to expire at the end of July this year, states that no group of students should be discriminated against on grounds of race or religion.

This Union Believes that:

- 1) These measures disproportionately affect Asian and Muslim students
- 2) All students have a fundamental right to debate and discuss ideas and to organize in societies. Informing the government of the background, race, religion and interests of individuals is unfair and against the concept of privacy and the right to free speech.
- 3) Racist attacks on members of the student body are more likely to occur if certain groups are victimized by the authorities.
- 4) College has a responsibility to make its students feel safe and welcome on its campuses- spying on them will not do this and will only increase sectarianism.
- 5) The issue of Islamophobia is a serious one that is becoming increasingly familiar to us as students and as part of a wider community. It is something that could potentially disrupt the welfare of students throughout Britain and swift action is required from student unions in order to curb it.

This Union Resolves to:

- 1) Continue its opposition to discrimination on campus and inform its students of the issues where appropriate by means such as a poster campaign.
- 2) Mandate the president to discuss the government's proposals with the rector, find out whether he intends to send our details to special branch and if not, to lobby him to act against the proposal.
- 3) Send out a statement to other Students' Unions explaining the situation in full, confirming that Imperial union opposed the dress code, Bill Rammell's comments and the education ministry's proposals and that the Union will work with other Unions to oppose the government's schemes.
- 4) Draw attention to the existence of the IAC (Information and Advice Centre) by college wide advertising and by making it more prominent on the Union website.