

Amendment to motion 622 (“Higher Education Funding”) as it appeared in the original CD4 motions document (December 2006)

This union believes:

1. The neo-liberal restructuring of higher education goes beyond top-up fees.
2. New Labour’s concept of a “knowledge economy” has made them detail how “elite” universities must pick up the research bill corporations are unwilling to fund.
3. The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and prioritisation of industry related research is driving the market in education just as much as variable fees and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

This union believes:

1. The campaign for a free and fair education must take on all aspects of the attacks and make the link between research, fees and the market.
2. This must include organising resistance to corporations setting the agenda in our universities and the restrictions on academic freedom they bring.
3. That the market based principles behind the RAE and the QAA must be opposed as well as any reforms to make them worse.
4. That we can start to mobilise students around these issues if we frame our opposition around political campaigns and slogans.

This union resolves:

1. To educate officers and activists on the effects of neo-liberalism in education.
2. To organise a second term activist conference in conjunction with the UCU lecturers’ union on “Another education is possible” to increase the political understanding of student activists.
3. To base our education funding campaign on slogans relating to free education and against marketisation, rather than Admission: Impossible’s narrow focus on top-up fees.
4. To send this motion to NUS Conference 2007 as an “add” amendment to motion 622 (“Higher Education Funding”) as it appeared in the original CD4 motions document (December 2006), changing the word “union” to “conference” in each of the three section headings, and deleting point 4 in “This union resolves”. The proposer of this motion or their proxy will be sent to NUS compositing.

Current motion to NUS conference from current version CD4B as at 16.02.07

MOTION: 622

Heading: Higher Education Funding

Submitted by: National Executive Committee (not CB6) and Lancaster University

Conference Believes:

1. This year, top-up fees of up to £3,000 have been introduced across England and Northern Ireland, introducing a damaging and potentially destructive market in fees and bursaries for the first time.
2. Applications and admissions have fallen across England for the first time in eight years; notably, where institutions have charged less than £3,000 this has not been the case and in Scotland, where top-up fees have not been introduced, the Scottish Government has responded by increasing fees for students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
3. The re-introduction of the grant represented a success for NUS' campaigning, but it is too small and does not benefit enough students.
4. Before the full effects of the market have been felt, vice-chancellors and principals are already lobbying heavily to lift the cap on fees.
5. That it is a fundamental principal of NUS to campaign to ensure that education is open and accessible to all

Conference Further Believes:

1. That this year saw the first major education funding campaign in NUS for over two years – this is a long overdue development and must be continued.
2. The introduction of top-up fees in England is having a destructive effect elsewhere in the UK; Wales are set to follow and Scotland has introduced variable fees for medical courses. In spite of the opposition of all parties in Northern Ireland, the suspension of the Stormont Assembly has seen the imposition of top-up fees there, too.
3. Top-up fees are neither inevitable nor desirable, but a successful campaign for a Free, Fair and Funded education requires an active, visible and vibrant campaign to oppose the marketisation of education, soaring levels of student debt and any attempts to lift the cap.
4. In spite of changes to fees for full-time students, part-time, postgraduate and international students still face upfront, unregulated fees. This is unacceptable and is having a detrimental effect on mature students.
5. International students are being used as 'cash cows' by universities to plug budget gap

Conference Resolves:

1. To make education funding the priority campaign issue for NUS for 2006/7.
2. To build on the successes of the Admission: Impossible priority campaign and actively involve students' unions in campaign planning

Council
19th February 2007

Agenda item 16

To ensure that alongside the priority campaign, NUS is focussing strongly on widening access to education and defeating the inequalities and injustices faced by mature, part-time, postgraduate and international students' fees and funding arrangements.