

Imperial College Union

NUS Higher Education Funding amendment

Proposed by the President. Seconded by the Deputy President (Education and Welfare)

Why we are proposing this amendment

Preliminary results of the Higher Education Funding Survey (available as an appendix to this paper) indicate that students at Imperial College strongly believe that individual Universities are better placed to set appropriate bursary packages than the government. This is illustrated by the fact that attempts to get realistic London weighting have fallen on deaf ears and it is the view of the DPEW and I that attempts to widen participation at Imperial College will be hindered if the ability of the College to determine its own bursary levels is removed.

The motion we would like to amend

Motion: 602

Heading: Higher Education Funding – Building for the 2009 Review

Submitted by: NUS NEC, University of Leicester, Royal Holloway University, University of Bradford, University of Plymouth, Leeds Metropolitan University

Conference Believes:

1. That full-time undergraduate students across England and Northern Ireland are forced to pay up to £3,000 per year in variable top-up fees after graduation on an income contingent basis. There will be a review in 2009.
2. That Secretary of State for DIUS, John Denham, has called for a wide ranging debate about the size, purpose and structure of the higher education system before the 2009 review of fees.
3. That this year, the government announced an expansion to the grants system, which means that two thirds of all full-time students in higher education will be entitled to a full grant and a further third of all full-time students will be entitled to a partial grant.
 1. That universities also offer a confusing array of different bursaries.
 2. That part-time students are still required to pay unregulated fees up front.
 3. That tuition fees paid by international students continue to rise without any real explanation or justification and are also unregulated.
 4. That some politicians and academics on the right have called for commercial interest to be charged on some or all student loans and fee loans.
 5. That different student funding systems now exist in Scotland and Wales following decisions taken by the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly.

Conference Further Believes:

1. Higher education across the UK remains significantly under funded.
2. That the expansion of higher education is an economic necessity and essential to the pursuit of social justice.
3. That while NUS should retain a principled commitment to the notion of free education, the focus for the 2009 review must be to secure a fairer funding system for all students, to defeat any attempts to lift the cap and further the destructive marketisation of HE.
4. That NUS' must combat the inequalities faced by part-time students as well as the unregulated fees paid by international and postgraduate students.
5. That the current system of bursaries is complex and deeply inequitable; student support should be based on what you need, not where you study.
6. That any attempts to charge commercial interest on student loans would be disastrous and must be opposed.

Conference Resolves:

1. For building for the 2009 review to be NUS' priority campaign, focussing on defeating any attempt to lift the cap, opposing the marketisation of education and campaigning for a fairer funding system for all students.
2. To campaign for a national bursary scheme.

What we are proposing

Amendment to Motion 602 – Higher Education Funding – Building for the 2009 Review

Council
18th February 2008

Motion deletes CB 5, CFB 5, CR2

Motion adds

Conference Believes

- 1.) Institutional autonomy over student bursaries works at a diverse range of Universities.
- 2.) Attempts to lobby the government for realistic regional weighting have been unsuccessful.

Conference Further Believes

- 1.) Institutions failing to allocate their bursary money can learn from those who have.
- 2.) Student support packages will be more responsive to student needs if decided locally.
- 3.) The governments failure to support students in expensive regions emphasises the importance of protecting student support arrangements from the vagaries of public spending decisions.

Conference Resolves

- 1.) To defend Universities right to determine their own bursary packages and to work with OFFA to ensure that Universities failing to meet their commitments improve their performance in future years.

Imperial College Union Resolves

1. To adopt the above text as Union policy substituting the relevant section headings as appropriate.
2. To submit the above text as an amendment to Motion 602 at NUS Conference.