

QTIPOC Engagement: Initial Findings

At the end of 2016 NUS held a series of roundtables across the UK with QTIPOC students to discuss their experiences of engaging with their LGBT+ societies, students' unions and NUS. These initial findings, along with the results from an online survey, will form the basis of a new resource for students' unions, LGBT+ societies and QTIPOC students to use to challenge existing barriers to engagement.

LGBT+ Societies

- Students were generally aware of their LGBT+ societies and how to contact them.
- Social events, particularly around fresher's week, were seen to be predominantly white spaces which can be too focused around being out publically rather than being a space to offer peer support.
- Students frequently identified the need for there to be closer relationships between LGBT+ societies and religious groups. This would not only act as a much needed support network for students facing challenges to do with their sexuality and their faith but could help to diversify the types of support and social opportunities in offer.
- Few QTIPOC students reported being members of their LGBT+ society committees and as such, felt the work of the committee often fails to be representative and intersectional.
- Some QTIPOC students who were society committee members report feeling tokenized.
- Suggestions for how LGBT+ societies can be made more accessible include having a QTIPOC rep on the committee, having QTIPOC safe spaces, having opportunities for peer support and training for committee members.

NUS

- QTIPOC students reported facing various challenges to keeping up with the work of NUS and engaging in campaigns. This in part comes from feeling isolated and concerns that people make judgements on you based on your identity.
- Some students felt the NUS LGBT+ campaign could be improved by working with more intersectionally with other campaigns.
- Students were generally interested in becoming more involved in the work of NUS. This could be done by having clearer communication channels between NUS and students.
- Students felt that NUS could play a bigger role in educating people on issues such as race, marginalisation and colonisation.

Students' Unions

- Those students who had run in their students' union elections reported experiencing racism from what was a predominantly white space.
- It was generally felt that students' union staff were willing to offer support but didn't understand how to. Training could be offered to improve this.
- A wider demographic of students should be encouraged to engage in the students' union. This would not only

make election results more representative but would also be encouraging for QTIPOC students wanting to stand for officer positions.

- QTIPOC spaces and events need to exist and be protected. These spaces play an important role as both a place for discussion and for peer support.
- QTIPOC students should be supported to run for any officer roles. Those who had run in their students' union elections reported feeling under pressure to run for welfare or diversity roles.

If you have any questions about the upcoming QTIPOC toolkit or would like to feed in your thoughts, please email holly.staynor@nus.org.uk.