

NUS 100: MANIFESTO FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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Foreword

We are delighted to introduce NUS 100: our manifesto for a just and sustainable future. This strategic framework will drive and guide the work of NUS over the next six years as we lead up to our 100th anniversary.

The student movement has always been at the forefront of change. Over the past 94 years, NUS, students' unions and partners have led and witnessed much change in education and wider society and we will continue to do so in the years to come.

We launch NUS 100 during a period of major change in the post-16 education sector. Led by student representatives across the UK, students' unions and NUS will continue to work with legislators, policymakers and decision makers to get our voices heard.

We look forward to working with you – our allies both inside and outside the student movement – to deliver our goal of improving the lives of all students, and contributing to a just and sustainable future.

Malia Bouattia, National President

Simon Blake, Chief Executive

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Introduction

NUS is – and always will be – the UK's authority on students and students' unions.

We believe in the power of transformative education, and that students' unions and the wider student movement can contribute to a just and sustainable future. As a collective of students' unions, NUS has achieved incredible things over the past 94 years – yet there is more to be done.

Our vision is that everyone has a transformative post-16 educational experience that creates a just and sustainable future.

Our mission is to ensure this by shaping education, empowering individuals and developing, protecting and championing students' unions.

Our achievements show us there is strength in unity. Together we have championed students and worked tirelessly to improve their lives, equipping them to shape the future of education, and to create a just and sustainable world.

We've proved that we can effect change for all students by working together. We've influenced education, our communities and the wider world about the importance of working with students as partners in their education, and as leaders in their students' unions and communities.

We have been at the forefront of education change through campaigns such as the creation of the National Society of Apprentices, and our pioneering work on student partnership for quality. And we have led significant social change: for example, our commitment to building lasting peace in Northern Ireland

through developing an agreement with the Union of Students in Ireland, the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa, and our fight for women, parents and carers, international students, disabled students, students from Black and racialised communities, and those who are LGBT+ have shown how, through education, we can change lives for the better.

At the heart of our movement is our campaign for better education, which prompts a number of questions: what does a post-16 education system look like that is truly fit for purpose and offers equality to all? Is the work and impact of students' unions understood? Is their role in helping all students to access – and to remain and flourish in – education valued? Is their ability to provide opportunities for students understood, appreciated and invested in?

The answers to these questions shape our goals as we head towards our 100th birthday in 2022. Yet while we need to look to our future, we must also understand the challenges that face us right now.

Despite our achievements, we live in a time when our values are being questioned. It is central to our purpose to defend the rights of students and students' unions, to promote our democratic legitimacy, and to strengthen our wider movement.

NUS 100 provides a framework from which we can develop the strategies we need to achieve our goals over the next six years.

■ ■ Together we are an unstoppable and principled movement. Together we can make education transformative and, as a result, make society a better place for everyone. ■ ■

Developing NUS 100

Our consultation

NUS 100 outlines how we can work together to achieve our goals, based on a model we developed with CASS Business School.

The strategy reflects the experience and opinions of over 1,000 people within the student movement and education sector, who were asked “what do we need to do?”, “why do we need to do it?” and “how do we need to do it?”

What are we aiming to achieve?

The student movement is diverse. Students from all backgrounds occupy leadership positions as activists, officers, fundraisers and volunteers. For decades, student leaders have worked with passionate staff to make a significant contribution to education and wider society – and they will continue to do so.

By the end of 2022, we want to be valued as authorities on students and students’ unions, and recognised as:

- Key players in shaping education provision both locally and nationally
- Working to improve the lives of all students and apprentices
- Providing help, support and opportunities that help students access, and remain in, education
- Developing the confidence and leadership skills of students through a range of activities
- Encouraging students to be politically engaged and have an understanding of democracy
- Contributors to our local communities, wider society and the international community
- Passionate pioneers and advocates for social justice
- Strong proponents of internationalism

We will be a stronger movement because we will:

- Develop and implement ways to work together effectively
- Work to achieve excellence through the Quality Students’ Unions framework

- Create a more effective and democratic way of working with students and students’ unions
- Develop locally driven, evidence-based campaigns that make a difference
- Use data and evidence to shape our activity and meet students’ needs
- Use digital channels more effectively
- Have a diverse workforce and a systematic approach to learning and development
- Be innovative and nimble so we can generate resources and deliver our mission

We strive to be:

- Values driven
- Led by students, students’ unions and their elected representatives
- Excellent in our models of democracy
- Leaders in liberation and social justice
- Transparent
- Collaborative in our work with specialist partners
- Focused on impact
- Nimble with our resources

Developing NUS 100

Developing NUS 100

NUS 100 builds on *Surfing the Wave*, our 2010 strategy. Both strategies focus on maximising the impact of collective insight, intelligence and resource to make students' unions the best they can be, and on our continued work with – and for – students in the rapidly changing education landscape. Both recognise the vast differences between students' unions, the diversity of students and students' experiences, and the importance of data and digital in achieving our goals.

The pace of digital change continues to accelerate. It's changed the way we understand ourselves, the way we learn, and the way we connect with each other and the world around us. It's changed students' perceptions of NUS,

the way we communicate with our members, and the success of our campaigns.

NUS 100 is published at a time when two things we hold dear – collective action, and quality education that is accessible for all – are being challenged. Students' unions give students the chance to counter that threat and maximise the chances to get the best possible deal for current and future learners.

By harnessing our diversity and working together we will secure transformative education that is accessible for all. Only once we have achieved this goal can we start to build a new, modern model of collaborative working that gets the results we want for students, students' unions and wider society.

Implementing NUS 100

NUS 100 outlines how we will work together to achieve our goals over the next six years, and ensure that democratically decided policy drives everything we do.

We will adopt a programmatic approach to delivery, having carried out detailed planning to ensure our work has significant benefit for our members. A programme group will drive the implementation of the strategy, working closely with boards and their committees to ensure we achieve our goals.

We will develop a business plan for each of the six years ahead, based on data and learning that enables us to understand the trends and issues for students and students' unions.

We know that students' unions are already working on many of the issues outlined in NUS 100, and we encourage them to consider how their plans and activities can contribute to achieving our shared goals.

The strategy that follows is divided into two sections. **Section one** outlines our plans, while **section two** focuses on how we work together to achieve them.

Section 1

Shaping education and empowering individuals

To create the best possible education system, and to empower those within it, we've identified the following key themes that we believe will help us create the change we seek:

1. Everyone can access – and excel in – post-16 education
2. The learner voice creates change in education
3. Wellbeing and welfare are central to the student experience
4. Students have the confidence to engage in civic life

1 Everyone can access – and excel in – post-16 education

This is important because our digital world has changed the way we access learning and build knowledge, yet the education system remains rigidly traditional.

We start and finish education at different times and in different ways, we live longer, we switch careers and we retrain. The delivery of higher education (HE) provision is being expanded and diversified, while traditional further education is being dramatically contracted – and the apprenticeship levy is leading to the development of new employer-led apprenticeship routes.

Post-16 education needs to change so that it reflects the needs of all students, and so every learner can get the most out of their experience.

Whatever education pathway a learner chooses, their experience must be equally transformative and valuable. We need to break down the barriers that drastically reduce access, including the varying quality of information, advice and guidance; rising access and course costs and fees; perception of choices; visa requirements for international students; and lack of flexibility for learners with additional responsibilities.

Of those who enter post-16 education, we see persistent attainment and participation gaps on the basis of class, disability, gender, race, and country of origin. There is also a sharp drop in part-time study. We must fight to ensure our education system gives every learner the chance to reach their full potential, and tackle these challenges in the process

We want to achieve a post-16 education system that works for all students now, while securing political, professional and public support for transformative education in the future.

How will we achieve it?

i) By creating a vision for the post-16 education system we want

Having a clear vision helps to influence real change in education policy and practice. We know this from our work on projects such as Imagine Education in Wales, the Student Engagement Project in England, and the Student Partnership for Quality in Scotland.

We will develop a think tank model to generate knowledge, ideas and solutions that help us define a clear long-term vision for a post-16 education system that works for **all** students – whatever their background and aspirations.

■■ **Post-16 education must reflect the needs of all students, so every learner can get the most out of their experience.** ■■

NUS will support and champion the opportunities offered by all providers of high quality education, while protecting students from the damaging effects of a system that prioritises profit over partnership. We will work to ensure **all** students have access to a high quality, engaging education and never bear the brunt of failed provision, no matter where they study.

We will build ideas and solutions – and lobby and influence sector partners, governments and institutions – to ensure education is built around the needs of **all** students including those who choose to live at home, lifelong learners with caring responsibilities, part-time, mature and postgraduate students, students with work placements, and international students.

This vision will be the basis of our campaign leading up to the UK parliamentary elections. Working hand-in-hand with students' unions, sector organisations, trade unions and think tanks, we will use it to build sector, political and public support.

ii) By ensuring cost is not a barrier

Though the introduction of fees and rising costs associated with studying affects **all** students, it has a disproportionate impact on certain groups. Our work to protect access to education for all – by ensuring tuition fees, repayments and living costs while studying are not a barrier – is vital.

We will protect free education where it exists in the UK, and campaign where it does not. We will oppose rising tuition fees, and challenge detrimental government policies, such as the abolition of bursaries for nurses, midwives and other health-related courses, as they arise. We will act to make the everyday costs of studying more manageable

through partnerships and discounts, and campaign to make education affordable at all levels, ensuring students from working class backgrounds are not priced out of the learning process.

We will act on the findings of our *Pound in Your Pocket* research to build a knowledge base by looking to places across the world where education is funded using different models, and where state, institutions or unions use innovative ways to ensure cost is not a barrier.

iii) By working with partners to eradicate attainment gaps

We will campaign for equal opportunities for **all** students, working with partners to highlight and address the persistent attainment gaps listed above, and to tackle the root causes of inequality.

We will focus on the importance of a liberated and sustainable curriculum, through initiatives such as Why is My Curriculum White? and the provision of quality support for disabled students.

We will work to ensure the attainment gaps are a key focus for everyone involved in post-16 education, and will share innovative practice so **all** students can participate and achieve in education.

iv) By securing quality careers advice

We will work to ensure a quality education service that can provide reliable, effective information, advice and guidance about skills and careers to students leaving compulsory education and those returning to post-16 education.

2 The learner voice creates change in education

This is important because learner voice and partnership with students drives positive change and innovation in teaching and learning.

Our work centres on the importance of student engagement in driving quality and improvement. We recognise that the marketisation of education and a quality system that is increasingly based on metrics and fees risks the learner voice being sidelined at the least, ignored at the worst.

Traditional learner voice seeks views on experience and makes changes in response to student feedback. Done well, it produces student-led innovation in teaching and learning, and influences changes to the curriculum, quality, learning environments and the community in and outside institutions. Partnership goes beyond this, asking learners to co-design, co-produce and co-evaluate their environment, moving beyond learning and teaching to encompass the whole institution.

In a changing HE landscape, and with increasingly diverse providers of post-16 education, we must create and drive the development of new models of learner voice that deliver quality, underpinned by principles of partnership and collectivism.

We want to achieve a culture shift that puts learners at the heart of teaching and learning.

How will we achieve it?

i) By demonstrating the value and impact of learner voice and student engagement across further and higher education

We will work to build an evidence-base about the impact of learner voice and partnership with students on education processes and outcomes.

ii) By helping all post-16 education providers to have an infrastructure for learner voice

We will work with further and higher education providers to demonstrate the positive value of an infrastructure that enables student views to drive quality improvements and student-led innovation in teaching and learning.

iii) By changing the discourse on the role and value of learner voice in education

We will support the development of effective approaches to learner and student involvement in curriculum co-design and enhancing teaching.

iv) By focusing on the importance of sustainability and liberation

We will raise awareness of how students, lecturers and students' unions can work together to embed liberation and education for sustainability within the curriculum.

3 Wellbeing and welfare are central to the student experience

This is important because evidence shows that individuals must feel safe and well before they can learn. Our own research has shown that 78 per cent of further and higher education students experience mental health difficulties. Rising levels of student debt and poor housing are key issues we know exacerbate stress, while cuts to mental health services are another reason this has to be a priority area.

We know mental health is a key concern for students' unions around the UK. Think Positive, a mental health programme run by NUS Scotland, has already demonstrated the benefits of promoting positive mental health.

Bullying and harassment on social media and the internet threaten students' and student leaders' mental health and wellbeing, and put open debate at risk. We must ensure that our campuses, buildings and online spaces are both compassionate and inclusive.

We want to achieve an understanding that welfare and wellbeing enables students to enter, remain in and flourish in education, and that providing help, advice and support is therefore a core part of our work.

How will we achieve it?

i) By putting a spotlight on mental health and wellbeing

We will partner with Mind, Student Minds and others to combine our expert knowledge of students with their expert knowledge of mental health. Working

Listening and responding to students' views drives positive change and innovation in teaching and learning.

together, we will build an evidence base showing how we can best help students manage their health and wellbeing, and best support those experiencing mental distress and ill health.

We will use their expertise – and that of NUS Scotland, which has pioneered work in this area – to understand, build new knowledge, and support students' unions and service providers to supply advice, support and services.

ii) By understanding the manifold impact of social media on students' wellbeing and welfare

We will improve our knowledge of the impact digital technologies and social media can have on emotions and self-esteem, and strive to ensure social media is a force for good. We will work to limit its negative impact on welfare, wellbeing and mental health; on our ability to debate, discuss and learn; and on our local and national democracies.

We will seek to redefine the social norm of the internet by building a campaign that clearly shows what is – and what is not – acceptable behaviour. And we will demonstrate emphatically that it can, and must, be done differently.

iii) By addressing systemic financial issues

We know financial insecurity can impact on wellbeing, and that students need help managing their money. Our *Pound in Your Pocket* research showed us that both systemic and practical problems increase the financial pressure on students.

We will build knowledge and understanding of the issues and how they manifest themselves, and work with students' unions and partners to understand how these issues can be tackled. We will share best practice through advice, briefings and training.

Evidence shows that individuals must feel safe and well before they can learn.

iv) By supporting students' unions on relevant issues

We will work with sector experts to continue to provide students' unions with evidence-based advice and support, and to share examples of excellent practice on welfare and wellbeing issues, including housing, faith and belief, alcohol and other drugs, mental health, finance, sexual harassment and sexual health.

v) By establishing cohesive and safe communities

We will build on our successful initiatives – such as *Lad Culture* and *Out in Sport* – which identified the ways in which sexist, misogynist and homophobic behaviour can exist on our campuses and in our institutions. We will continue to work with students' unions to develop and share best practice to eradicate all forms of bullying, oppression and harassment, and we will create cohesive communities on campus. We will use debate, discussion, protest and No Platform to achieve this goal.

4 Students have the confidence to engage in civic life

This is important because equipping individuals with positive values, skills and knowledge enables them to develop leadership skills, participate in their communities and create social change. The role of students' unions in empowering and developing these individuals can't be undervalued.

Quality student opportunities – societies, sports, media, fundraising and volunteering are a vital part of the educational experience: they broaden skills and instill confidence. However, we don't currently capture data to evaluate the impact of these opportunities on individuals or their communities.

The opportunities available vary widely among students' unions and educational pathways. We also recognise barriers that stop our learners participating in civic life – most pressingly in Wales, England and Northern Ireland, where 16 and 17-year-olds don't have the right to vote. The student movement has a key role to play in ensuring young people are given a voice in society.

We want to achieve better quality student opportunities for all students; public and political support for votes at 16 across the UK; and for NUS to be widely regarded as the leaders in political education.

How will we achieve it?

i) By building civic engagement through political education

Students' unions and NUS must be recognised as leaders in building civic engagement through political education. We will ensure students have quality experiences of democratic debate and elections, as well as the knowledge and skills to participate in key national and regional debates and be active/activists on the social issues that interest them.

We will help students' unions run effective voter registration campaigns as we lead up to parliamentary and assembly elections and referendums.

ii) By securing the vote for 16-year-olds across the UK

We will work with partners to demand that all 16 and 17-year-olds in the UK have the right to vote, and to close the voting gaps that currently exist.

iii) By building partnerships and capacity to strengthen student opportunities

We will promote, nurture, support and celebrate quality, inclusive student opportunities as a vital part of the student experience.

We will collaborate with national student opportunities bodies, such as British Universities & Colleges Sport, National Student Fundraising Association, and student media organisations. We

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will support their engagement with our members to build excellence in inclusive student opportunities.

We recognise that volunteers are the lifeblood of the student movement, and we will support and share best practice in volunteer management, building capacity, expertise, and reward and recognition.

We will develop knowledge and understanding about how the shared use of facilities can be beneficial for learners in neighbouring locations, and we will work with students' unions around the UK to gather data that shows the impact of student opportunities on both communities and individuals.

iv) By fighting oppression in all its forms

We will continue the student movement's proud tradition of leading campaigns on liberation issues and social justice, on fighting oppression, harassment and prejudice, and on raising awareness of all issues affecting Black, disabled, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students. We will draw on our understanding of structural inequality to combat its negative effect on education and access.

Section 2

Being an outstanding student-led campaigning and membership organisation

Based on our values and our consultation, we have identified the key themes that will help us become an outstanding student-led campaigning and membership organisation:

1. Supporting excellence in students' unions
2. Developing a strong and influential collective voice
3. Putting data, evidence and digital at the heart of our work
4. Attracting and retaining outstanding people

1 Supporting excellence in students' unions

This is important because only excellent students' unions can provide the best possible representation – and the best chance to influence education and wider society – for all students.

The student movement is a huge force for positive change in education and across communities. NUS will help students' unions be the best they can be in a changing educational environment, and champion all their work – from student representation to campaigns to enterprise activity.

Students are increasingly choosing to learn outside the traditional providers, and often in those that are at odds with our vision for education – where student representation, student voice and student engagement can be poor and patchy. We want to make sure all students are represented – wherever they study – and have access to excellent students' unions.

We will continue to build on our regional membership engagement approach, to ensure every students' union receives the support it needs.

We want to achieve excellent governance within NUS and students' unions. We will provide tailored

and relevant support so we can continue to represent, organise, innovate and generate income for the movement.

How will we achieve it?

i) By using the Quality Students' Unions (QSU) framework to achieve excellence by 2022

Using the standards outlined in the QSU framework as our benchmark, we will focus on outcomes and impacts, establishing what excellence looks like, and demonstrating this to institutions and other partners.

Our work on Green Impact and sustainability created significant change across the student movement. We will review how to ensure this work is best delivered in the future.

ii) By tailoring membership support

NUS will work with individual students' unions around the UK based on their need, tailoring ongoing support accordingly through our membership engagement function.

We will work with students' unions to create a framework for monitoring our shared impact. This will help to guide and shape our future work, and to celebrate what we've already achieved.

iii) By tailoring commercial support

We will help students' unions develop an ethical commercial enterprise with clear and traceable supply chains.

NUS and students' unions will continue to set the bar for the way business should be done, and we will continue our proud tradition of engaging constructively with partner brands to help them improve and constantly strive for better outcomes.

iv) By strengthening our governance

We will continue to focus on excellent governance, which is key to successful students' unions. We will provide advice and training that address all aspects of legislation, policy, and guidance on charity law as it applies to students' unions, within the framework of Quality Students' Unions.

v) By developing a collaborative approach

We will develop a methodology for collaborative working across the movement – between NUS and students' unions, including those in HE and FE, and organisations outside the student movement, such as those working on social justice and liberation issues. This work will enable us to understand how we can best work together to maximise impact and unite students' unions that have shared priorities.

We will review our business processes and ensure all our activities are planned coherently throughout the year. This will enable us to understand the relationships between our actions, and maximise their impact.

2 Developing a strong and influential collective voice

This is important because the collective power of the student movement is enormous. We harness this power to strengthen students' unions, and to influence education and social change. We develop research that influences decision-makers, national campaigns and policy. At our best we are informed and inspiring. Given our geographical reach, and the diversity of students' unions and resources we have access to, we are – and will continue to be – hugely influential in education and wider society.

We must ensure our direction and decision-making processes represent a diversity of views, while

remaining student-led. This requires insight into future, current and past students. We must always be inclusive in the way we operate, using accessible language all students can relate to.

We want to achieve influence in the context of increasingly devolved decision making; campaigns that cut through the noise to defend students' unions and improve students' lives throughout the UK.

How will we achieve it?

i) By concentrating on strong, sustained, inclusive communications and campaigns

We will demonstrate a clear, coordinated and courageous approach to lobbying and campaigning. We will run effective, well-evidenced campaigns with the emphasis on achieving change through quality, not quantity.

Our campaigns will be underpinned by the theory of change to ensure maximum impact. We will map decision-makers locally, regionally and nationally, so we can learn from, and contribute to, student movements around the world. We will differentiate campaign goals and processes in each of the four nations, ensuring all materials and communications are provided in English and Welsh as required.

We will ensure our campaigns are relevant and coordinated – locally driven and nationally led as appropriate. We will use the full range of channels and approaches, including digital, community organising, and building coalitions with sector partners and parliamentarians (such as our All-Party Parliamentary Group on Students).

We will constructively engage and we will protest. We will negotiate and we will boycott. We will use the approach that best equips us to achieve our objectives – amplifying the voice of students, protecting the autonomy of students' unions, and ensuring we are a movement too powerful to ignore.

We will use our events to become more effective and influential, drawing on the expertise of officers and staff, external speakers and experts within NUS and across the student movement to achieve our goals.

We will adopt a proactive approach to good news, celebrating success and shouting about the positive impact of our work.

We will develop our archive so we can build our future on lessons from our past, and develop our alumni

programme so important players in our history can help us lobby and influence.

ii) By demonstrating accessible, representative and transparent decision making

We will use our movement-wide review to ensure our democratic and corporate governance processes operate effectively, so that everyone feels involved and listened to, and is encouraged to engage.

We will combine the Quality Students' Unions framework with evidence from students' unions and advances in technology to ensure our democratic decision-making processes are modern, creative, dynamic and exciting to participate in, that our structures are representative, and that our culture is inclusive.

We will be driven and guided by our democratically developed policy, and clear about what our achievements mean to both students' unions and individual students.

We will ensure we continue to understand what students need from an organisation they want their students' union to be part of.

iii) By generating income for the movement

We will ensure our activities support our campaigning goals and our work for social justice, and that they generate the resources needed to achieve them. We will grow and develop NUS Extra and NUS Apprentice Card.

We will establish a process that enables us to develop new ideas, products and services, and to generate the income we need to be self-sufficient. We will seek to fundraise collaboratively for our big ideas, to invent new ways of working, to develop best practice, and to build new knowledge to change the way we – and ultimately wider society – do things.

3 Putting data, evidence and digital at the heart of our work

This is important because driving digital engagement enables us to reach more diverse groups of students.

Most students are digital natives. They spend an average of three hours a day, and rising, on their smartphones. Technology is rapidly changing the way

we live, and digital must be core to everything we do – from communicating and campaigning to supporting the commercial operations of our members.

We have the chance to fully understand our students – their habits, their needs, and their wants. By using digital technologies effectively we can represent our members in a way that would make any membership organisation envious.

By collecting data from multiple sources we can build the richest picture of student life ever. This information can influence how students' unions run their campaigns, their services, their clubs and societies, and how they engage with their members.

Such a huge transformation brings opportunities and challenges. We've learnt a great deal over the past five years about developing and deploying technology, and now know that, while we must be bold in our ambitions, we must also be realistic in how we achieve them – focusing on developing the skills and confidence of our people, as well as our products.

We want to achieve a transformation in the way we use data and digital to develop our services as well as supporting, connecting and engaging with our members.

How will we achieve it?

i) By building a digital transformation strategy

Digital innovation and transformation relies on people being well trained and skilled, and willing to explore, innovate and take risks. We will focus on training people to use the full range of products available.

ii) By connecting students and students' unions

We will develop our methods, channels, platforms and partnerships to enable students and students' unions to connect and collaborate.

We will continue to build our suite of tools to help our members interact with every aspect of their union and the movement, from societies and events, to elections, volunteering and campaigning.

We will develop our digital assets so we can gather and create quality content, including news, information, offers, discounts, and lifestyle features from sources such as student journalists, union feeds and daily news.

iii) By being the authoritative voice on students and students' unions

We will collect, connect and aggregate the data available from multiple sources to remain the UK's authority on students and students' unions.

We will review and improve our annual survey of students' unions to inform the development of a national data set.

We will produce evidence briefings and an annual review of data on students and students' unions to enable us to become more effective in our communications and the services we provide, and to maximise the options for generating the income we need to achieve our goals.

iv) By building an evidence base on students' unions

We will build a research and evidence base that enables us to understand and demonstrate the impact of student partnership, learner voice and students' unions on education and wider society.

4 Attracting and retaining outstanding people

This is important because a diverse workforce is vital if we are to remain at the cutting edge of service delivery for students. The strength of our movement relies on attracting, developing and retaining outstanding volunteers, staff, elected officers, and trustees from diverse backgrounds.

Though we've done so much to be pioneers in diversity and accessibility, this isn't reflected in the diversity of the people who make up and staff the student movement. This is particularly true in senior roles. *Race Matters* was the first survey to explore the views and experiences of Black staff. This research – coupled with our work on Women in Leadership – has shown us that we need to do much more to build a diverse workforce. The onus lies with us to change what we are doing – not the underrepresented communities.

We can be proud of what we have achieved – and proud of the work we are doing – while recognising there is still a great deal of work to be done. NUS and students' unions must work in partnership over

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the next six years to ensure we are welcoming and inclusive organisations at the forefront of diversity.

We want to achieve a more diverse workforce that will deliver outstanding results and develop a respected learning and development experience within NUS and the wider student movement.

How will we achieve it?

i) By building an employer brand

We will build an employer brand that makes NUS and students' unions organisations capable of attracting and retaining diverse talent from both inside and outside the student movement.

We will develop and implement best practice that promotes diverse and inclusive workplaces, working with students' unions to strengthen recruitment, induction and development practices.

We will set goals to ensure we are recruiting a more diverse workforce, and coordinate an annual census to track our progress.

ii) By strengthening learning and development through a learning academy

We will launch a learning academy to provide a continuous programme of personal and professional development for staff and officers that is available both on and offline. This will include a more formal approach to coordinating communities of practice for staff, building on the approach adopted by the Association of Managers of Students' Unions.

We will ensure that colleagues across our movement can learn from and support one another. From volunteer management membership services, student opportunities and finance, to staff networks such as Women in Leadership, Black Staff Network and Disabled Staff Network, our learning will be shared.

Finally...

At 94, NUS has a huge amount to be proud of. By the time NUS is 100 there will be even more to celebrate. To achieve all we can together we must adapt, develop, grow and be generous with one another. We must live and breathe our values, take on the challenges that are thrown at us, and continue to be the progressive force for change in education and wider society.

■ ■ We must take on the challenges that are thrown at us, and continue to be the progressive force for change in education and wider society. ■ ■



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