




nus *women* **CONFERENCE**

Motions

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Purpose of this document

Key information

The work of the NUS Women’s Campaign is directed by policy passed at Women’s Conference. This documents contains motions that have been submitted by Constituent Members. These motions are subject to compositing and may be moved by the Steering Committee at their discretion.

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Zone: Welfare and Student Rights

Motion 101: Gendered Hate Crime

Submitted by: University of Birmingham Guild of Students

Conference Notes

1. In the last year there has been an increase in racially, and religiously, motivated hate crimes in the UK, particularly online and on social media.
2. There has been a particular rise in online harassment of women of faith, including current Member of Parliament for Liverpool Wavertree, Luciana Berger, who described the messages as “pornographic, sometimes violent, and often very misogynistic.”
3. NUS NEC members have often been the target of anti-Semitic, racist, or Islamophobic online abuse that often has misogynistic elements to it.
4. Tell MAMA outline that anti-Muslim hate is clearly gendered. They state in their 2015 Annual Report that “Muslim women are more likely to be attacked than men in most settings”.
5. The same report recorded 468 victims in 437 incidents. 61% of victims (287) are female. 55% of all victims were visibly Muslim, but 75% of all female victims were visibly Muslim.
6. In their 2015 Annual Report, the Community Security Trust received a description of the gender of the victim or victims in 511 (55%) of the 924 anti-Semitic incidents reported to CST during 2015. Of these, the victims were female in 134 incidents (26%) and groups of males and females together in 48 incidents (9%).

Conference Believes

1. Women of faith encounter specific challenges that are still yet to be addressed. The NUS Women’s Campaign should aim to address these.
2. The barriers that women of faith face are often similar across different faiths.
3. The NUS Women in Leadership Conference, and the work around it, has empowered women from different faiths and backgrounds to become engaged in the work of the NUS Women’s Campaign.
4. Jewish students do not directly identify into any of the NUS Liberation Campaigns and therefore it is important that the NUS Women’s Campaign facilitates discussion around faith and belief.

Conference Resolves

1. To work with Universities UK and faith-based organisations, such as UJS, FOSIS and National Hindu Students Forum, to assess what further work needs to be done in relation to online harassment and hate crime.
2. To work with social media providers, specifically Twitter and Facebook, to look at ways to prevent online harassment against women of faith that is often misogynistic in tone.
3. To produce guidance for Students’ Unions on gendered discrimination in order to support them in tackling it.
4. For the NUS Women’s Campaign to run a ‘Women of Faith’ Campaign that raises awareness of the challenges that face women of faith and celebrates their contributions to their faiths.
5. To increase the number of spaces that women of faith have to discuss the discrimination and the challenges that they face in a safe space.

Motion 102: Student Survivors Deserve Better

Submitted by: NUS Womens Committee



Conference Notes

1. Recent research has highlighted the problem of abuse and harassment by staff towards students, and faced by, particularly junior, women staff¹;
2. Sussex University allowed a senior lecturer to continue working despite allegations of abuse and police investigation². At Goldsmiths, Sara Ahmed, the former head of the Centre for Feminist Research, publicly quit her post, citing ongoing and endemic harassment³.
3. In November Universities UK (UUK) published the findings of its taskforce on campus sexual violence, alongside guidance replacing the outdated Zellick Report;

Conference Believes

1. That we welcome this work and is happy to see that survivors will no longer be forced to report incidents to the police before receiving any support from their universities;
2. However, that the guidance and report did not adequately consider harassment and abuse perpetrated by staff, and indeed, that staff themselves face, is a serious failing;
3. That the abuse and harassment endemic in higher education cannot be understood without seeing it in the context of marketisation and cuts. These make it harder for survivors to speak out, fearing for their future careers;
4. That the NUS Women's Campaign has already begun working with the 1752 Group to launch a research project into student-staff misconduct, but that there is no active policy to mandate the campaign to do so;

Conference Resolves

1. To stand in solidarity with students and staff who have faced harassment and abuse and challenge institutional cultures which enable and mask abuse;
2. To produce resources to support students facing and wanting to campaign against sexual violence perpetrated by staff, and to offer our support to existing campus campaigns;
3. To demand that universities record and make public their data on sexual violence, including that faced by staff;
4. To work closely with the 1752 Group to carry out research into experiences of student-staff misconduct and produce a report at the end of the research.

Motion 103: Solidarity with Northern Ireland's Abortion Crisis

Submitted by: NUS Womens Committee


Conference Notes

1. The Abortion Act 1967 has never been extended to Northern Ireland;
2. The foundation of NI abortion law remains the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 which makes it a criminal offence to have an abortion or perform one on another person. The 1861 Act is still in effect in England and Wales;
3. The introduction of the Abortion Act 1967 did not decriminalise abortion in England and Wales: it allowed exceptions to the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act under which the obtaining or performing an abortion would be lawful;
4. An abortion will be lawful in NI if performed:
 - a. To save the life of the pregnant person; or
 - b. Where continuing the pregnancy would risk permanent and serious damage to the physical or mental health of the pregnant person;

¹ www.theguardian.com/education/2016/aug/26/sexual-harassment-of-students-by-university-staff-hidden-bynon-disclosure-agreements and <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/oct/07/scale-of-sexual-abuse-in-uk-universities-likened-to-savile-and-catholic-scandals>

² <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/sussex-university-lecturer-student-girlfriend-criminal-conviction-beat-up-assault-lee-salter-a7183391.html>

³ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/london-university-goldsmiths-professor-quits-sexual-harassment-female-students-staff-a7072131.html>

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5. In the past, people have been arrested for trying to procure an abortion (be it through a GP, travelling to England to obtain an abortion or through backstreet/ self-induced abortions)
 6. On 4 April 2016, a 21-year-old woman was given a three month suspended sentence for procuring an abortion with pills purchased online. She had been reported to the PSNI by her housemates;
 7. International students and students from elsewhere in the UK may understandably arrive in Northern Ireland under the false impression that because Northern Ireland is part of the UK, abortion will be legal and accessible on the local NHS;
 8. However, this is not true when registered with a GP in Northern Ireland, you no longer have access to abortion;

Conference Believes

1. Access to reproductive healthcare is a student welfare issue: students do face crisis pregnancies which have an adverse effect on their university lives;
2. The unavailability of safe and legal abortion in Northern Ireland places an undue burden on these students in an already distressing situation;
3. If an international student falls pregnant unexpectedly while living in Northern Ireland, they will likely not be able to extend their study visa to accommodate their pregnancy or maternity, nor can they access abortion services in Northern Ireland unless they meet the very strict criteria;

Conference Resolves

1. This motion is in itself a statement of solidarity with those for access to free, safe and legal abortion in Northern Ireland;
2. For the NUS Women's Campaign to release a formal statement of solidarity with those in Northern Ireland;
3. That the incoming Women's Officer and NUS Women's Campaign continue to support pro-choice activists and pro-choice resistance in Northern Ireland

Motion 104: The Price of a Period

Submitted by: Edge Hill Students Union

Conference Notes

1. Sanitary products control and manage menstruation
2. Sanitary products are currently subject to 5% VAT

Conference Believes

1. Sanitary items are not a luxury.
2. Sanitary products are expensive, and when living on a tight budget they can be difficult to access.
3. That students are facing a cost of living crisis.
4. Most homeless shelters can't provide sanitary products, so for homeless people with periods accessing these essential items is even harder.
5. Although some food banks have begun distributing sanitary items, many still do not.
6. Homelessness is a hidden problem among students

Conference Resolves


1. To work with NUSSL (National Union of Students Services Limited) to encourage them to get tax free sanitary products available for Students' Unions, and to reduce the overall cost of sanitary items.
2. To create a toolkit on running tampon drives, creating period packages, and linking up with local organisations, charities, etc.
3. Work, where possible, to support Students' Unions to get free sanitary products available for students.

Motion 105: Reproductive Justice

Submitted by: NUS Womens Campaign

Conference Notes

1. Reproductive rights activism, like the feminist movement, has often been exclusive and focused on white, cisgender, able-bodied, middle-class women.

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2. People of colour often face abusive and coercive reproductive medical practices, such as: forced sterilisation of women of colour across the globe; the use of experimental and dangerous contraception like Norplant, etc.
 3. Disabled people also face risk of sterilisation due to ableist beliefs about their ability and a faux concern for their welfare or children's welfare.
 4. Many people cannot access adequate reproductive healthcare due to cost, cuts to their healthcare services, or geographical location.
 5. Reproductive rights activism has focused on contraception and abortion, but ignored other barriers to people's reproductive capacities such as access to welfare, healthcare, childcare, poverty, and many other factors.
 6. Women of colour in America developed the theory of Reproductive Justice to challenge the dominant narrative and make reproductive rights campaigning inclusive.

Conference Believes

1. Whilst the NUS supports and promotes Pro-Choice activism, it must be recognised that the ability to have choice is a privilege. Someone people do not have choice or their choice is taken away from them due to their circumstances and oppressions.
2. The framework of Reproductive Justice promotes this idea and a comprehensive and inclusive approach to reproductive rights.

Conference Resolves

1. To mandate the NUS Women's Campaign to create a toolkit on Reproductive Justice to allow a narrative on reproductive rights that ensures campaigning is inclusive of ALL - not just cisgender, straight, white, able-bodied, middle-class women.



Zone: Society and Citizenship

Motion 201: Securing an Institutional Wide Approach to tackling Sexual Violence through prevention and support

Submitted by: Keele University Students' Union

Conference Notes

1. NUS and the Women's Campaign has focused on tackling Sexual Harassment and Violence for a number of years. Collecting data, publishing reports and creating toolkits which have been a great resource for Student Unions.
2. One in seven women experience sexual violence or harassment at University as outlined by the Hidden Marks campaign and reiterated in a recent study⁴.
3. Consent workshops have been delivered by Students Unions during this time.
4. Films and documentaries such as "The Hunting Ground" have brought to light these kinds of behaviours in American institutions and therefore, these concerns are more prevalent in society across the US, Australia and the UK⁵.
5. "High rates of unreported sexual violence, along with the serious harms caused is of fundamental importance in contributing to the argument for the need for university communities to enact their civic duties in both improving the prevention of sexual violence and also ensuring that those reporting sexual violence get the appropriate support along with respondents." - Graham Towl (Tackling sexual violence at UK universities: a case study)⁶.
6. NUS Women's Campaign are currently working towards developing bystander programmes and training.

Conference Believes

1. Bystander intervention programmes have been identified as a key area in the protection of female students at University
2. Unions are not currently adequately supported to deliver bystander intervention campaigns; institutional partnership should be encouraged and supported in order to aid the delivery of such campaigns - such as the current proposed partnership between Keele SU and Bradford College. For information about the city wide work currently taking place at Keele and Staffordshire University⁷
3. Research undertaken by Public Health England and Universities UK states that more support is needed in getting Sexual Violence Policy embedded in Unions and Institutions and that this must be institution wide.
4. It is important and imperative that NUS continues to work to tackle sexual violence in both FE and HE institutions and that Students' Unions and Union Officers are empowered and equipped with knowledge and support to drive change in their institutions.
5. The University of West England has had major success in embedding this into their curriculum demonstrated through the research commissioned by Public Health England.

Conference Resolves


1. NUS will help Students' Unions and Officers establish Institutional Wide Approaches to tackling Sexual Violence through prevention and support.

⁴ www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/Spotted_-_Obligations_to_Protect_Women_Students_Safety__Equality.pdf

⁵ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hunting_Ground

⁶ www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21582041.2016.1260764?journalCode=rsoc21

⁷ www.keele.ac.uk/activebystanders/

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2. NUS Women's Campaign will produce guidance alongside relevant organisations on how Students' Unions can get training and support on dealing with Sexual Violence cases. This guidance will be to benefit Student Union Advice Centres, Officers, staff and internal structures.
 3. NUS will launch a campaign on Bystander Intervention including aims that encourage HE institutions to partner with FE institutions to target behaviours and share resources in a community wide approach.
 4. NUS Women's Campaign will launch a toolkit on Bystander Intervention to include campaigning, training and partnership
 5. NUS will work and lobby to secure Bystander Intervention Programmes in FE and HE Institutions.

Motion 202: Raising Awareness of Gendered Islamophobia

Submitted by: NUS Women's Campaign

Conference Notes

1. In August 2016, the government released a report into the Employment Opportunities for Muslims in the UK (following an enquiry)⁸
2. Muslim women face the greatest pay gap of 22.4 per cent (the greatest pay gap in the whole of the UK);
3. The report also concluded that Muslim women face a "triple penalty": being women, being BME and being Muslim
4. Unemployment rates for Muslims are more than twice that of the general population (12.8% compared to 5.4%).
5. 41% of the Muslim population in the UK are economically inactive, compared to 21.8% of the general population. The disadvantage is greater still for Muslim women: 65% of economically inactive Muslims are women;
6. Incidents of anti-Muslim abuse (Islamophobia) rose by 326% in 2015;
7. The vast majority of Islamophobic incidents that occur in the UK are directed at those perceived to be "visibly Muslim": Muslim wearing the hijab, niqab, abaya and so forth;
8. According to research Islamophobia is causing a "chill factor", whereby the perception and fear of discrimination or even hostility of colleagues is putting Muslim women off applying for certain jobs.

Conference Believes

1. The report in question found that reasons behind these discrepancies to be varied and complex;
2. They can include: discrimination and Islamophobia, stereotyping, pressure from traditional families, a lack of tailored advice around higher education choices, and insufficient role models across education and employment;
3. The NUS Women's Campaign has already launched a survey into the experiences of Muslim women on campuses and colleges, but there is no policy mandating the campaign to do so;
4. That gendered islamophobia (and Islamophobia in general) is a student issue because Muslim women are targeted on campuses e.g. at King's College London
5. Prevent is more likely to be targeted to Muslim (or those perceived to be Muslim i.e. those who are visibly Muslim);
6. Far right activity is sweeping across Europe and America, and is likely to have further implications on Muslim women's livelihood;

Conference Resolves

1. To mandate the NUS Women's Campaign to issue a statement of solidarity with Muslim women students;
2. To create a toolkit for Student Unions to challenge gendered Islamophobia on Campus;
3. To work with Black Students' Campaign to campaign against the Prevent legislation

Motion 203: Support Migrant Reproductive Rights!

Submitted by: NUS Womens Campaign

⁸ www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/women-and-equalities-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry/



Conference Notes

1. The government's current policy does not allow International students who may get pregnant while studying the ability to give birth in the UK.
2. They and any dependants will normally need to leave the UK, then apply for new Tier 4 entry clearance in order to return to the UK and resume their studies.
3. In the event that they do give birth in the country, if they then leave they are not allowed to return with their dependents.
4. Migrant women may also be subject to show their passports at maternity wards before giving birth.

Conference Believes

1. All of these policies are deeply xenophobic and racist, and promote a worrying culture of nationalism, individualism and disregard human rights.
2. At a time of increased racism and fascism where migrants are facing attacks upon their civil liberties, we should ensure that they have access to adequate reproductive healthcare.

Conference Resolves

1. To mandate the NUS Women's Campaign and Officer to work alongside the NUS International Students Officer to actively campaign against this regressive policy.
2. To mandate both the NUS International Students Officer and Women's Officer to create a toolkit on Reproductive Rights that is inclusive of International students and migrants.
3. That both the NUS International Students Officer and Women's Officer should campaign for the right for all international students, regardless of nationality to be able to either give birth or get an abortion in the UK
4. That the NUS International Students Officer and Women's Officer should lobby the government to reexamine the current policy and adopt a new one that will allow international students to either give birth or get an abortion in the UK



Zone: Education

Motion 401: Campaign on Sexual Assault as Mitigating Circumstance

Submitted by: Leeds Beckett Students' Union

Conference Notes

1. That the NUS Hidden Marks survey/report conducted in 2011 found that 16% of respondents had experienced unwanted kissing, touching or groping during their time at university.
2. That 7% of respondents to this survey had been subjected to a serious sexual assault during their time at university⁹
3. That 4/10 of the survivors of serious sexual assault surveyed had told nobody about the assault
4. That one in four victims of serious sexual assault that responded to the Hidden Marks survey said that their studies had been affected
5. That 49% of respondents that had suffered serious sexual assaults reported issues with their mental health
6. That 13% of respondents that had suffered serious sexual assaults had contemplated leaving their course
7. That the US organisation RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) found that 33% of women who are raped contemplate or have contemplated suicide¹⁰.
8. That 13% of women who have been raped had attempted suicide.
9. That 40% of a survey of women surveyed with severe mental health issues had suffered rape or attempted rape in adulthood.
10. That transgender students are at higher risk of sexual violence (21% of transgender, genderqueer, nonconforming (TGQN)) have experienced some form of sexual violence while studying compared to 18% non-TGQN females and 4% non-TGQN males).
11. That Sisters Uncut found that 4 in 5 BME women are turned away from domestic violence services¹¹.

Conference Believes

1. That Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence are serious issues affecting students.
2. That these issues have a detrimental impact on students' lives and studies.
3. That more needs to be done to support victims of sexual assault and domestic throughout their academic studies.
4. That in many cases the conditions for mitigation fail to fully take into account serious issues such as sexual assault and domestic violence.
5. That a national campaign that includes Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence as mitigating circumstances is necessary.
6. That any campaign conducting around the issue of sexual assault and domestic violence needs to be inclusive of the diverse demographic of students affected.

Conference Resolves

1. To launch a national campaign for the inclusion of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence as mitigating circumstances.
2. To support unions that are running similar campaigns or have already implemented this into their academic procedures.
3. To ensure that any campaign ran will be fully inclusive of all students, including but not limited to: Women of Colour, disabled women, queer women, trans women, non-binary people and people of faith.
4. To conduct research on the impact of suffering from domestic violence whilst at university.

⁹ www.nus.org.uk/global/nus_hidden_marks_report_2nd_edition_web.pdf

¹⁰ www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence

¹¹ www.sistersuncut.org/press/