

Heading: Save NUS democracy
NUS Zone: Strong and Active Unions

This union believes:

1. Every movement that has won change has combined popular action with grass roots democracy, from the struggle for the vote to the US Civil rights movement
2. That since the early 90s the NUS leadership has been gradually eroding its democratic structures, centralising power and cutting back on grassroots involvement – moving away from being a campaigning movement on the ground.
3. The democratic structures that remain are under resourced, under prioritised. As a result they often seem complicated and disempowering to new students
4. At last years annual conference a “far ranging review of NUS’ governance” was proposed to solve these problems and present to annual conference.
5. The steering group selected by the national president to conduct the review was not particularly politically broad or diverse.
6. The consultation process itself found it difficult to incorporate a wide range of opinion.
7. The resulting “NUS white paper on NUS governance” was presented to the NUS national executive in two emergency meetings in October reflecting the views of the leading NUS factions.
8. The NUS leadership have included a call for students’ unions to request an undemocratic emergency conference.
9. Many Unions and student organisations have called a united campaign meeting on the 4th of November under the headings. Defend NUS democracy. Defeat the Governance Review and For a democratic campaigning NUS. A united campaign will be vital if we are to defend a democratic NUS.

This union further believes:

1. That the moves to restrict democracy are an accommodation to the declining democratic involvement in society. With the government pursuing an ideological offensive against the public services, trade unionism and social education we need to expand our grassroots base or face incorporation into the narrow bubble of Westminster debate.
2. The proposed changes will in turn the NUS into a professional Labour lobby group and completely break our link with student activists.

3. The leadership's vision of NUS is one of highly paid professionals that are part of the policy debate within government and operating within the limits of "mainstream" Westminster opinion.
4. The idea that this can win real change is refuted by the struggle for the vote, the civil rights movement, trade union struggle and every movement through out history that has changed society.
5. That scrapping conference, an elected NEC and a part time exec is scrapping the concept of NUS as a democratic campaigning organisation.
6. The debate around external trustee boards, "best practice" and liability are dishonest and a smoke screen for destroying democratic accountability within the student movement.

This union resolves:

1. To reject the conclusions of the NUS governance review as a dangerous attack on democracy and student rights.
2. To oppose all proposals coming out of the governance review and defend the existing structures.
3. To oppose calls for an undemocratic emergency conference.
4. To mandate our delegation to vote according to this policy at all NUS events.
5. To support the Defend NUS democracy meeting on the 4th of November.
6. To send this motion to NUS Conference 2008 in the Strong and Active Unions zone and to any emergency conferences where appropriate, changing the word "union" to "conference" in each of the three section headings, deleting point 8 and 9 in "this union believes" and points 3, 4, 5 and 6 in "This union resolves". The proposer of this motion or their proxy will be sent to NUS compositing.

Words: 394 after deletions (560 before deletions)