

Heading: Putting free education back on the agenda

NUS Zone: Education

This union believes:

1. Since 1997 the government have focused on a restructuring of education mirroring a global attack on the right to a free education.
2. Top-up fees and the lifting of the cap are part of a vision of higher education based on creating a handful of top research universities for business and lower level teaching institutions for the bulk of students.
3. The slogan "Free Education" still resonates with students and opens a discussion about the wider changes in education and what education is for.
4. Internationally students have rallied around these slogans to build mass campaigns defeating government education reform.
5. The review of top up fees in 2010 was originally a concession to Labour rebels to discuss reversing the imposition of top-up fees.

This union further believes:

1. The government has made clear its agenda on HE and it is totally incompatible with our vision and principles.
2. NUS must move into clear opposition to the "Westminster consensus" that free education is untenable and challenge the government's priorities of war and privatisation.
3. Senior government officials have suggested that Britain can only fund "half a dozen" world class institutions to meet the research needs of British business. Changes in the relation between RAE ratings and funding are concentrating resources in an ever smaller group of universities, fuelling competition.
4. Government interference in the curriculum is creating a drive towards skills learning. Combined with decreased funding per student the scope of learning offered to students in most "teaching" universities is under severe attack.
5. Course and facility closures are a reality for thousands of students as universities are forced to rationalise spending.
6. Students need to campaign for greater democratic control of their universities and for free education for all to create opposition to the government agenda.
7. We must attempt to build a mass democratic movement to defeat the government following the examples set in Greece, France and Italy.

This union resolves:

1. To raise the slogan of “free education for all”.
2. To call a national first term demonstration and encourage local demos on every campus.
3. To call second-term city-wide “another education is possible” rallies jointly with the UCU.
4. For a second-term “another education is possible” national activist conference with international speakers accompanied by a national tour of universities.
5. To send this motion to NUS Conference 2008 in the Education zone, changing the word “union” to “conference” in each of the three section headings, deleting point 5 in “This union resolves”. The proposer of this motion or their proxy will be sent to NUS compositing.

Words: 377 after deletions (424 before deletions)