

CUSU Council (Lent IV)

Monday 2nd March 2020, 7pm

SU Lounge, 17 Mill Lane
Agenda

1. Objections to the order of items on the agenda
2. Matters arising from the minutes of the last Council Meeting
3. Announcements by Committees, Campaign Teams and the Executive
	1. **Officer accountability**
	2. **Updates from Campaigns and the Executive**
4. Election of CUSU Council Chair
5. Ordinary Policy Motions from Previous Council
	1. **Improving International Student Representation\***
	2. **Transparent Scholarship Information\***
6. Proposed Ordinary Action Motions
	1. **Motion to be approved to take to NUS National Conference**
7. Any other business

\*For note, except where these items are unstarred by a vote of Council members, or amendments are submitted.

Supporting Information

1. Objections to the order of items on the agenda
2. Matters arising from the minutes of the last Council meeting
	* Council must approve the minutes of the last meeting.
	* Minutes can be accessed via the CUSU council page at [www.cusu.co.uk](http://www.cusu.co.uk) and in the papers circulated for this meeting.
3. Announcements by Committees, Campaign Teams and the Executive
	* For updates from Sabbatical officers, please see accountability documents.
	* Elections Committee, CUSU Campaigns and Ethical Affairs will update at Council.
4. Election of CUSU Council Chair

The CUSU Council Chair is elected annually at the Lent IV meeting. As CUSU will cease to exist as of July 1st, the Chair being elected will serve for the two Council meetings in Easter, although they may choose to run for Student Council Chair in Cambridge SU if they wish to continue.

Nominations will be taken from the floor.

1. Ordinary Policy Motions from Previous Council

**5A. Improving International Student Representation**

Proposer: Julia Yan (iCUSU)

Seconder: Edward Parker Humphreys (President)

**CUSU notes:**

* + - 1. The majority of CUSU Council voting members are home students, which is highly disproportionate to the percentage of international students within the University;
			2. CUSU Council is a forum to address issues regarding student welfare, among its other purposes;
			3. CUSU Council is a democratic meeting and endeavours to represent and consider the interests of the whole student body;
			4. CUSU is responsible for maintaining the purpose of CUSU Council and ensuring our democratic spaces are inclusive and encouraging of all student groups.

**CUSU believes:**

As a result of different political and cultural backgrounds, international students might not be familiar with the idea of campaigning for issues they concern; such unfamiliarity might act as an obstacle for their participation in CUSU;

Consequently, issues brought to the council for discussion are often British-centric and the environment of discussion is not inclusive of other cultures, leading to a lack of well-represented ranges of perspectives;

Decisions made in the CUSU council hence do not truly reflect the interests of international student body. Meanwhile, issues discussed in the council are often non-relevant to international student body, which further puts off international students’ participation in CUSU, resulting the propagation of such a vicious cycle;

International students should not feel excluded from the main student body.

**CUSU resolves:**

* + - 1. To actively encourage international students to run for positions on JCR/MCR committees (particularly the role of President) and in CUSU’s Lent Elections for Sabbatical Officer roles;
			2. To work with iCUSU on making elections material and material about CUSU more accessible for international students, and produce election materials which explicitly encourage and facilitate international students to run in elections (in particular, emphasising the availability of visa sponsorship);
			3. To work with iCUSU to provide introductory information regarding student politics in Cambridge to international freshers;
			4. To mandate Cambridge SU, upon its formation, to continue work on this policy and consider this issue when forming longer term strategic decisions relating to representation.

**5B. Transparent Scholarship Information**

Proposer: Julia Yan (iCUSU)

Seconder: Edward Parker Humphreys (President)

**CUSU notes:**

Results of iCUSU’s annual University Wide Survey (2019) indicated that the distribution of international scholarship information varied considerably across different colleges;

Out of 212 respondents who participated in the survey, results indicated that a high majority of respondents rated the information on international scholarships provided by their College or the University as ‘inadequate’ and ‘can be improved’. Only 2 respondents rated it as ‘excellent’;

The present situation in many colleges on international scholarships involve the College Tutorial Office directly informing incoming students of scholarships that they can apply for, after issuing the offers to individual prospective students;

Although there is currently a website that summarizes some available scholarship information, the content is both incomplete and inaccessible for both prospective and current students.

**CUSU believes:**

* + - 1. Information on scholarships should not be offer dependant; rather it should be accessible and transparent for all incoming students;
			2. International students will be greatly benefitted by a more transparent provision of scholarship information.

**CUSU resolves:**

1. To communicate with college Tutorial Offices regarding updating their online information about scholarships;
2. To lobby the University to require each college to set up a one stop webpage that contain a full list of available scholarships at that college;
3. To lobby the University to set up a website that contains a full list of all available scholarships across the University and individual college, and detailed information on applications which is integrated with CAMSIS as a centralised scholarship portal.
4. Proposed Ordinary Action Motions

**6A. Motion to be approved to take to NUS National Conference**

Proposed by: Stella Swain

Seconded by: Edward Parker Humphreys

**CUSU Resolves:**

1. To submit the following motion for discussion at NUS Conference

**End Harassment, Bullying and Sexual Misconduct**

**Issues/context:**

Experiences of harassment, bullying and sexual misconduct in education are all too common: [24% of LGBT+ students in FE colleges experience biphobic, homophobic or transphobic bullying](https://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/system/files/the_school_report_2017.pdf%2C)[; 56% of university students experience unwanted sexual behaviour](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged); and [1/4 BME students face racist attacks at university](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged). This negatively impacts students’ wellbeing, relationships, self-esteem, academic performance, and feelings of safety, and can take place in person, online, or through systems of power within the college or university.

Harassment includes unwanted conduct which offends, intimidates or humiliates a person if it occurs in connection to any of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.[[1]](#footnote-1) [Harassment further includes incidents of physical violence towards another person on the basis of a protected characteristic, and hate crimes.](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/76f6bdd3-bb14-4956-b089-cd1598323d55/consultation-on-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-in-higher-education.pdf)

Bullying is repetitive behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. This is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups and by actual or perceived differences between students.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Sexual misconduct includes all unwanted conduct of a sexual nature including sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, distribution of private explicit videos or images, grooming, coercion, sexual invitations and demands, verbal and non-verbal communication, creation of atmospheres of discomfort, and promised resources in exchange for sexual access.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Students at the intersection of multiple marginalised groups [are often dissuaded from participating in student life by fear of verbal or physical harassment.](https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/muslim-women-in-education-briefing) Beyond social and teaching spaces, student harassment can take place in work placements, [apprenticeships](https://feweek.co.uk/2020/02/24/ofsted-verdict-hs2-college-left-employers-to-deliver-training-and-failed-to-protect-students-from-harassment/), online or virtual environments, and in the media. Perpetrators of harassment, bullying and sexual misconduct can be students, [staff](https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/nus-staff-student-sexual-misconduct-report)or third parties.

Colleges and universities routinely fail to prevent harassment, bullying and sexual misconduct, and to properly support reporting students. [Some institutions effectively shield perpetrators from accountability by creating opaque disciplinary systems with little to no independent oversight.](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/feb/22/cambridge-university-sexual-misconduct-cases) When colleges and universities prioritise institutional reputation over student welfare by [allowing individual students to be targets of abuse](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/oct/26/cambridge-student-accuses-telegraph-of-inciting-hatred-in-books-row), by [interrogating reporting students](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-47091474/warwick-rape-chat-student-i-felt-like-i-was-on-trial)or using [non-disclosure agreements](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51447615), this normalises a culture of impunity and silence.

**NUS Position:**

NUS should fight to end harassment and bullying in education by proactively opposing all forms of racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

NUS should take a preventative approach in campaigning against harassment, bullying and sexual misconduct and work with SUs to embed active bystander, consent and anti-racist training, curriculum interventions and yearly reviews of policies and practice.

NUS should lobby MPs to ban the use of non-disclosure agreements in relation to student complaints of harassment, bullying and sexual misconduct.

NUS should campaign for transparent, centralised and independent reporting systems within institutions to address student complaints in line with the latest guidance from the 1752 Group.[[4]](#footnote-4)

NUS should work with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator to ensure its guidance on disciplinary procedures meets the needs of students.

NUS should create a vision of tackling student harassment with transformative justice at its heart. A legalistic, carceral approach to tackling harassment has already failed: NUS should push institutions to prioritise prevention of harassment and multiple forms of accountability including transformative justice methods.

NUS should work with SUs to ensure that students who experience harassment, bullying or sexual misconduct can quickly access support regardless of their decision whether or not to make a formal report of the incident.

NUS should work with students’ unions to proactively develop campaigns against the media’s disproportionate intrusion into universities,[[5]](#footnote-5) to train SU, University and FE staff in dealing with online harassment and media attention, and to lobby for institutions [to create policy for dealing with online and media harassment.](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/tackling-online-harassment.pdf)

NUS should work with FE college and HE student unions to end the use of the Prevent duty, especially as a safeguarding tool. NUS should provide training resources about why Prevent is an inappropriate framework for safeguarding, as fear of inclusion on a Prevent database discourages marginalised students from disclosing incidents. NUS should lobby for FE colleges and universities to implement anti-racist training to counter the racist stereotypes that Prevent perpetrates.

1. Any Other Business
1. Equality Act 2010, Section 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://1752group.com/about-sexual-misconduct/>; Sexual Offences Act 2003 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://1752group.files.wordpress.com/2018/09/silencing-students_the-1752-group.pdf> p28. Additional guidance by the 1752 Group to be published March 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. e.g. Conscious Advertising Network, Stop Funding Hate, or similar campaigns [↑](#footnote-ref-5)