

## **Motion to Boycott the NSS**

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### Union Notes:

- 1) The National Student Survey, (NSS) is a survey that is used by the government as a marker for 'student satisfaction' at universities, taking feedback exclusively from third year undergraduates to compile its results.
- 2) The Royal Statistical Society has discredited the NSS as a good measure for teaching excellence. It can no longer be taken seriously.
- 3) TEF (which NSS is linked to) has caused for hundreds of job losses in universities across the country; for example in Manchester, where over 100 redundancies have been announced, explicitly citing changes to HE policy as a reason.
- 4) The survey reinforces racism and sexism through gender and racial bias.
- 5) Goldsmiths University unfairly uses NSS results to make assumptions on behalf of the entire student population -- the survey only collects data from third year undergraduates.
- 6) The NSS has a negative impact on students' unions -- it only surveys students on how their union or guild is representing academic interests. Whilst this is important to a union culture, the survey leaves out the value of other vital services that a students' union offers.
- 7) In 2017 NUS and UCU (the lecturers trade union) supported a nationwide NSS Boycott. As a result, twelve universities including Cambridge, Manchester, Oxford and Sheffield were omitted from the final release of NSS data, meaning that the institution couldn't use it. For other institutions that took part in the boycott, it meant that the NSS data lacked the reliability that the institutions would need to use it properly.
- 8) This year, NUS is mandated to support another NSS Boycott.

### Union Believes:

- 1) The NSS feeds into the Teaching For Excellence Framework (TEF) which uses the survey -- along with other problematic data, such as graduate outcomes -- to pit universities against each other in league tables, rating institutions at bronze, silver or gold; a metric that is too reductionary to show the value of academic institutions.
- 2) The NSS is an inadequate way of surveying student satisfaction. Instead, it feeds into the marketisation of higher education (through TEF), and treats students as passive consumers.
- 3) A better way of collecting data on the student experience at Goldsmiths is through the Goldsmiths Students' Union Student Rep system and research projects -- this data is local, student led, feeds directly to the university and starts a conversation whilst problems are in existence, rather than waiting until a student is leaving.
- 4) The NSS provides a false sense of empowerment.
- 5) The NSS's link to league tables encourages universities to spend money on competing against other institutions with marketing and recruitment, rather than impactful and meaningful investment in learning or teaching.

- 6) That it is important for Goldsmiths students join the national movement in boycotting the NSS -- a powerful impact on this government agenda is more likely when we are united.

Union Resolves:

- 1) To promote a boycott of NSS 2018. This may include:
  - 1) Refusing to promote the NSS or have any pro-NSS material with the SU logo on;
  - 2) Working with UCU to discourage NSS promotion by academics and encourage academics to actively provide information about the boycott to students; Promoting the boycott through posters, leafleting, door-knocking and social media, before the survey is released and throughout the time when it's open;
  - 3) Taking part in national and local actions and demonstrations linked to the NSS boycott and the campaign against TEF, the Tory HE reforms and marketisation
- 2) To call on other students' unions to join the boycott – the bigger it grows, the stronger we are.
- 3) To object the university using its student money and resources to promote the NSS. The money is better spent elsewhere.
- 4) To campaign against any link between NSS and SU block grants and actively support any union which receives threats from its university due to participation in the boycott.