

6:00 pm, Ian Gulland Lecture Theatre

All students must bring their student ID in order to enter the meeting

1. Welcome and Introduction

As the position of the Chair had not yet been recruited for, there was an election of the Chair. Howard Littler put himself forward for chair and was elected unanimously.

1. Introduction

Officers Present

Stefanie

Shona

Alissia

Emil and charlotte

JT

5/ 10 Meeting Quorate

The safe space video was played and students were advised of the procedures of the student Assembly

2. Apologies

Lynsay Hodges & Jun Lim

3. Approval of the minutes from the last meeting.

Approved 16
Against 0
Abstain 1

4. Officer report

Presentation of officer reports

Daniel Nasr (President)

Daniel introduced the campaigns by stating that he was going to update on the priority campaigns and what Officers have been working on since the last assembly.

Priority campaign

The priority campaign DN was leading on was Student organising: He highlighted that Goldsmiths Students union has a strong identity as a campaigning union and it was a priority to create accessible democratic structures and to make it easy for students. An idea list area had been developed on the website and there were plans to have a hub for student groups

- Welcome week: DN advised that there have been a varied programme for the Welcome Week that included a presentation on how to take drugs safely.
- DN had also set himself the task of ensuring that ensuring that the Student Union finances were healthy and that there were clear processes and procedures that are understood. He advised that new positions were created including a part time finance director, a full time finance manager and a part time finance administrator.
- Bestival: There was a partnership with Bestival which involved hosting Bestival on the campus as well as officers attending Bestival. Officers

had worked to get students engaged in activism and had seen many positive responses.

- There is ongoing work opposing the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Prevent

Conferences attended

- Conference SU 16
- Lead & Change
- Black Students Network

Eva Crossan Jory (Activities and Engagement Officer)

Priority Campaign Campaign:

- Priority campaign Eva is leading on is Student Living covering such areas as housing, living costs, student services and more.
- Eva has introduced the quiet hour as part of the welcome fair. Eva has also been working on recruitment of the new society new societies coordinator.
- Also currently working with students to get together a University challenge team
- The after years of campaigning, there is now beer available on tap from the SU bar
- There are now more students employed with the SU than ever before.

Conferences attended:

- NUS 16
- Lead and Change
- BUCS conference.

Tara Mariwany (Equality and Diversity Officer)

Priority campaign is community spaces which is about how we can better design and implement more spaces on campus that enable better social learning environments as well as build a stronger student community.

Tara has been working on

- Black history Month with various events taking place in the month of October
- Working with the university to tackle sexual harassment.
- Working with Mollie on rolling out the Disabled departmental coordinators and on the "liberate my degree" campaign.
- Tara has also been working with liberation groups and trying to get centralised support for international students
- Tara is also working on working on students union, physical, brand "your building, your union"

Conferences attended

- NUS 16
- SU16
- Lead and change

Mollie Kneath (Education Officer)

Priority Campaign is Liberate my degree which builds on the momentum of Diversify the Curriculum- looking at ways we can democratise and liberate aspects of your education experience

Mollie has also been working on

1. Rolling out Disabled Department Student Coordinators
2. Campaign against the new Teaching Excellence framework including working with other officers to lobby the government and has visited parliament to raise issues with Jo Johnson .
3. Also promoting the Demonstration in November 19th for accessible education.
4. Working with student services to improve support for disabled students since the cut to DSA

Conferences attended

1. NUS SU16
2. Lead and Change
3. The NUS Demo event

Questions

Student asked whether there were any concerns about the students who are security guards potentially having a negative experience due to having to monitor other students on campus and having to study with them later and also whether these students are safe.

Eva advised that these students are fully trained and licensed to be security guards and go through the training other security guards have. Daniel Nasr also added that in the university people interact outside of the university all the time and this cannot be avoided. Eva also added that these are part time jobs like any other that a student might have outside of university such as bar work which includes interacting with fellow students.

A question was raised in regards to a hashtag #bridgesnotboycotts and what this was about.

Daniel Nasr explained that the union had a mandate from the students to boycott the Israeli products as part of an effort towards Palestinian Liberation . This had been called into question but a former student on social media and the Union had issued a statement on reiterating their commitment to divestment.

One student Wanted clarity on what the TEF was.

Molly replied that this is the Teaching Excellence Framework introduced by the government as a way of measuring the quality of teaching. However it used the national Student Survey as a matrix and this is not representative. This only covers 10% of the students but also does not consider our postgraduate students. it also uses the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education DLHE as another matrix. This is information about the nature of jobs students are in 6 months after leaving university.

Mollie advised that there is a brief that NUS has done but also that she is doing a brief at the next drop in Thursday 6th October at NUS regional networking event.

5. Motions

4.1 Motion to support an MA Social Work Fee Strike

Proposer: Daniel Dawson

Secunder: Joss Bromley

Daniel introduced the motion. He advised that students on the course had been through a rigorous process in order to be considered for the attendance of the course. He also added that the course was designed to get students to reflect on how they have been oppressed and how they will respond to the oppression of others.

Daniel also added that if the motion passed, it would make this the first of the fees strikes in Higher Education. He added that new tactics were required and withholding capital was the only way. He also advised that if the whole cohort were not able to graduate the university may not be able to hold on to the reputation of being a Centre for Excellent for social work.

Daniel also added that the cohort is made of of mainly women, people of colour, students from low income families, some are queer or trans, and most students had to leave their homes and relocate to London before they had security of funds. Some students have struggled to pay or to come to the university. With this course, students have no access to PG loans, some left their jobs as social workers in order to upskill and be more useful to their clients.

Daniel also added that the students had the utmost respect for the staff and this was not a reflection on them, rather it was a challenge to an institution that markets itself on the word "radical" but does not respond to the students with this spirit. Daniel added that supporting this motion is also supporting the people that the students were later going to help.

4.1 Motion to support an MA Social Work Fee Strike

Proposer: Daniel Dawson Seconder; Joss Bromley

This Union Notes:

The Department for Social Work at Goldsmiths University has raised tuition fees by 86.5% to £7,660 per annum for domestic students since the last academic year.

£4052 is covered by the bursary which before last year would have been the full amount of Tuition Fees.

Tuition fees for Social Work used to be capped at the amount paid for by the bursary.

The University has said that the 'fees are subject to change and may fluctuate year to year'.

The Department for Social Work notes on the official website that "Goldsmiths is committed in its policy and practice to equal treatment of applicants and students irrespective of their race, culture, religion, gender, disability, health, age or sexual orientation. [They] particularly welcome applications from members of minority groups."

MA Social Work students are in lectures and seminars every day of the week, with contact time upwards of 30 hours. Because of this Social Work students are advised by their teaching staff that even working part-time is incompatible with the course. While expecting MA Social Work students not to work to support themselves, the university also expects them to have near perfect attendance, to work a 70 day and 100 day placement respectively over two years without pay while paying rent and bills and all other living costs through a bursary that amounts to less than £8,000 per annum.

There are 5 out of 23 colleagues on the MA1 Social Work course that have dependants. Additional support is offered to some of these students at a weekly contribution of £155.24 for 1 child, £266.15 for 2 or more children. This money can only be used to reimburse the student with a dependant/dependants for registered childcare expenses incurred within the

course's duration. Given the nature of this payment, it could not be used to pay fees.

Last year, fees were capped at the amount paid by the bursary due to an administration error and subsequent protest by current MA2 Social Work students.

Goldsmiths has been labelled a 'Centre for Excellence for Social Work' and has been awarded funding upwards of £1.7 million by the Government in order to provide new approaches in teaching Social Work through the Teaching and Learning Partnership which aims to get more social workers into statutory settings by having workers from local authorities to teach us alongside academic staff. The figure of £1.7 million has been confirmed by Joan Fletcher, the Head of Social Work at Goldsmiths, during a departmental address, though it is important to note that official figures for funding this year are hard to find.

The Social Work bursary is itself in a precarious position and is likely to be stopped in the same way that the NHS Bursary for Nursing has been.

Social Work students are taught that Social Work fundamentally has to be based on principles of anti-oppression and anti-discriminatory practice.

It is a requirement that Social Work students have over one years experience working in a social care environment. In order to attend the course many students have left secure employment and now rely on the bursary as their only source of income.

Students expected to find out whether they were eligible to receive the NHS Social Work Bursary, and also how much they were entitled to, by the end of May 2016. They were not notified until midway through August 2016 (less than a month before the September 2016 start date for Social Work students), by which point many had already made irreversible arrangements in order to attend the university. This included but is not limited to handing in notice for employment and ending tenancy agreements.

Students in receipt of the bursary are not eligible to receive the Post-Graduate Student Loan.

The majority of students on the MA1 Social Work course cohort have expressed very real concerns that they a) do not know how they can pay for tuition fees that are not already covered by the bursary provided and b) will not be able to support themselves or their dependants if they have to pay top up fees out of said bursary.

That in light of all of the above facts related to the MA Social Work course at Goldsmiths, the majority of students on the MA1 course have chosen to withhold any fees not paid for by the bursary. Those who have already paid or are international students agree that this is the right action to take and show and express their solidarity.

This Union Believes:

That education should be free and accessible to people from all backgrounds.

That raising tuition fees by 86.5% in one year both makes university education inaccessible to people from marginalised backgrounds and reneges on Goldsmiths' commitment to welcoming people from minority groups.

That many students on the MA Social Work course have been made precarious in their living arrangements, their finances and their ability to perform the tasks expected of them on their course. This has been exacerbated by the lack of support to contend with the raising of tuition fees above the levels provided by the bursary.

That the Department for Social Work is itself refusing to act upon its own mandate of antidiscriminatory and anti-oppressive practice by marginalising its students more through an unnecessary raising of tuition fees above the level provided by the bursary.

That it is disingenuous of the Department for Social Work to raise the fees so heavily in the same year that they receive substantial funding from Government for the Teaching and Learning Partnership.

That a fee strike (withholding fees that do not include the £4,052 paid for by the bursary) is the only effective method to a) protest the raising of tuition fees above the levels of the bursary provided and b) provide for themselves and those who are dependant upon them.

The Union resolves:

That the Fee Strike for Social Work students (or any other students who might choose to strike on any course at the university) should be supported by the Campaigns Officer.

To provide funds and access to printed materials for the duration of the proposed Fee Strike.

To advise Social Work students on any matter regarding negotiations, threats or offers with or from the university.

To provide advocates during negotiations if or when necessary.

To publicly display support and solidarity for Fee Strikers.

Chair asked for comments against the motion: No one was against the motion.

Questions

Student asked what more the students could do in support.

Daniel responded that standing in solidarity and voting for the motion was the best response.

Another student asked what the envisioned outcome was.

Deniel Dawson responded that Ideally that the staff will support on this motion as well as students, and that the fees are reversed.

Daniel Nasr congratulated Daniel on a powerful speech. Danny also proposed that for the purpose of accuracy an amendment is made to state that the 1.7 Million fund was shared between 4 organisations Goldsmiths, Greenwich, Southwark and Lewisham.

Old reading: Goldsmiths has been labelled a 'Centre for Excellence for Social Work' and has been awarded funding upwards of £1.7 million by the Government in order to provide new approaches in teaching Social Work through the Teaching and Learning Partnership which aims to get more social

workers into statutory settings by having workers from local authorities to teach us alongside academic staff.

New reading: Goldsmiths has been labelled a 'Centre for Excellence for Social Work' and has been awarded funding by the Government in order to provide new approaches in teaching Social Work through the Teaching and Learning Partnership which aims to get more social workers into statutory settings by having workers from local authorities to teach us alongside academic staff. This £1.7million is shared between Goldsmiths, Greenwich, Southwark and Lewisham.

"Union notes: 1.7 mil, to be factually, this has been amended to state that there have been to 4 universities

Provide funds budget allocation, up to 150 to renegotiate

Accepted the amendment

Voting:

For 72

Against 0

Abstain 0

Motion passes

4.2 Schools Against Borders

Mollie presented the motion.

Mollie advised that the government seeks to use schools to get information about students between ages of 2 to 17. This is optional for parents and the action from the union is to stand with local schools and to promote knowledge to parents that they do not need this.

4.2 Schools Against Borders

Proposer: Tiia Meuronen

Seconder: Mollie Kneath (Education Officer)

The Union Notes

The Department of Education (DfE) has a policy, effective from September 2016, to collect country of birth and nationality information on 8 million children in England. While the DfE has not explicitly stated what this information is for, it has conducted inquiries into what it terms “Education Tourism”, ie migration to the United Kingdom for the express purpose of accessing free public education. This new surveillance is also being implemented in the context of PM Theresa May’s pledge to create a “hostile environment” for undocumented migrants.

This new immigration data will be collected through the Early Years Census and School Census and then permanently stored on the National Pupil Database. These censuses happen every year and every academic term respectively. The first of the 2016/17 academic year will take place on 6th October.

Parents are not obliged to provide this information, which means that parents and schools can legally work together to withhold this information from the DfE. Work to raise awareness of this right is currently being undertaken by, amongst others, campaign groups Schools Against Borders and London Campaign Against Police and State Violence and supported by professional educators’ publications such as Schools Weekly.

The Union Believes

The reasons for people’s decisions to migrate to the UK are complex. Terms such as “education tourism” “benefits tourism” “healthcare tourism” etc are inflammatory terms which serve to stigmatise migration. The infiltration of border controls into ever more spheres of daily life, from immigration raids on workplaces to coopting healthcare services and educational institutions, exacerbates this by victimising individuals and creating a climate of suspicion and mistrust.

It is not the responsibility educational workers to enforce border controls. Access to these education is a right regardless of immigration status. Weaponising children’s education as a means to deport families is unjust and unacceptable.

An injury to one is an injury to all: this latest move by the DfE is part of a wave of repressive legislation targeting young people and children in education, from Prevent to the clampdown on international students in HE.

The Union Resolves

To stand in solidarity with education workers and campaign groups working against this legislation, and work to raise awareness of parents' right to withhold immigration status. The Union urges all parents, and its parent members in particular, to sabotage this effort by refusing to give the relevant information regardless of immigration status.

The Union Mandates

Officers and other elected representatives of the Union to sign public condemnations of the DfE's policy and declarations of support for groups campaigning against it wherever possible.

Officers to write to Vicky Foxcroft MP announcing the Union's opposition to the DfE's policy and urging her to do the same.

Where possible, officers to encourage other Students' Unions and the National Union of Students to adopt analogous positions and campaign to raise awareness locally.

Pass on information to and work with the Nursery so that parents are fully aware of the change in policy and the action that they can take against it.

No motion against this motion

Comments

There was a comment that this information may not be secure and parents would not have control of what information about their children could be used for.

Vote was taken

For: 63

Against 0

Abstain 1

Motion passes

4.3 Motion to financially support Valentina A. Lopez from Academics for Peace Goldsmiths

Neda presented the motion and advised that Valentina A. Lopez was a member of Academics for peace and was also our student. Neda also advised that Valentina was working with networks to support 4 academics who were on trial

4.3 Motion to financially support Valentina A. Lopez from Academics for Peace Goldsmiths

Proposer: Neda Genova Seconder: Su-Ann Goh

The Union notes

This Union notes that Valentina Alvarez Lopez, a PhD student and member of the group

Academics for Peace Goldsmiths will attend two trials against members of the Turkish group 'Academics for Peace' (BAK) on 27.09.2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. The role of foreign observers at these trials is to demonstrate solidarity with the persecuted people but also to make the Turkish administration aware of the international concern that their actions against dissident civilians have provoked.

Academics for Peace Goldsmiths has been formed last term as a project which seeks to provide practical support and offer solidarity to our persecuted colleagues. The attendance of the trial in Turkey is the second action, after the organisation of a solidarity conference in June, that we are undertaking. In May, the Student Assembly voted that Academics for Peace Goldsmiths becomes an official SU campaign.

The Union Believes

This Union believes that as member of a SU-backed campaign, it is necessary to provide support for Valentina who is for now single-handedly paying her flight to Istanbul and covering her stay there.

The Union resolves

This Union resolves to cover her flight costs (approx. 180,-) from its campaign budget.

No one spoke against the motion

Daniel Nasr proposed amendment to the motion in the resolution

Union resolves to fund the academics campaigns to the sum of up to £150

For 59

Against 1

Abstain 3

Motion Passes

4.4 Motion regarding lack of heat during winter in halls

Chair advised that this has been postponed till the next assembly for important reasons.

4.5 Motion to oppose all fee increases past £9000 mark (Emergency Motion)

Daniel Nasr advised students that part of the proposals of the TEF was that universities that got a good score could increase their fees above the £9000 mark. This was optional for universities and they did not need to do this. He also highlighted that the union had already committed to this campaign for excellent education.

4.5 Motion to oppose all fee increases past £9000 mark (Emergency Motion)

Proposer: Danny Nasr (president)

Secunder: Mollie Kneath (education officer)

Union Notes

1. In 2010, tuition fees were tripled under the Conservative/Liberal Democrats coalition.
2. Over 50,000 students marched to show their discontent with this increase.
3. In 2016 the Conservative government replaced maintenance grants with maintenance loans.
4. Also in 2016, the Conservative government announced cuts to Disabled Students' Allowance, meaning students would not receive individual support.
5. Also in 2016, the Conservative government introduced the Higher Education Bill and Teaching Excellence Framework, which is enabled by it.
6. The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is based on a series of metrics including the National Student Survey (NSS) and Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE). Based on universities' success in the TEF, they are allowed to increase their tuition fees.
7. Achieving a good score in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in 2015 allows universities to increase their fees past £9000.
8. Goldsmiths achieved a rating of 'excellence' in QAA in 2015.
9. In 2015, Goldsmiths' Students' Union passed policy to fight the white paper as a whole, including an NSS boycott.
10. In 2014, Goldsmiths' Students' Union passed policy to fight for free education.
11. NUS and UCU have called a national demo on #Nov19 called United for Education, in part to oppose these reforms.

Union Believes

1. Tuition fee increases will hit students from low-income and non-traditional backgrounds the most. This includes part-time students, students with caring responsibilities, mature students, and disabled students most notably.
2. Any rise in tuition fees is synonymous with the marketisation of the higher education sector.

3. Goldsmiths Students' Union has a proud history of standing up against detrimental reforms to our education systems.
4. Tuition fees should not exist, let alone be raised above £9000 a year for home students.
5. This is going to have a detrimental effect upon the fees of international students, whose fees are already uncapped and average £18-20,000 a year.
6. The metrics that feed into the TEF are flawed and aim to link employability with teaching quality, without considering the personal and external factors that come into play when applying for jobs.
7. The TEF aims to create a culture in which students will associate quality with price, thus suggesting that universities with cheaper fees are not of a good enough standard.

Union Resolves

1. To oppose any fee increases.
2. To lobby the university in an institutional capacity to not raise their fees.
3. To mobilise and organise our students on campus using a variety of tactics to pressure the university not to increase fees.
4. To mandate the officers of the union to organise and attend, alongside students, the #Nov19 demo.
5. To continue to participate in national action opposing the Higher Education bill, the TEF and the general trend of marketisation of the sector.

No one spoke against the motion

Liam Renouf asked whether this would be making any changes to the mandate to campaign for free education.

DN advised that we should have both as the campaign for free education is a long term commitment whilst this was a response to a potential local change in policy.

Mollie Kneath also added that the new government has been quite ruthless in its approach and circumstances have changed and a response was required to this change.

Danny also added that this mandates the union to go demonstrate outside of the Bedford Town hall if students are faced with a hike in prices.

DN also advised that should the prices go up then the NSS should be sabotaged so the university does not get the opportunity to raise fees. DN advised that this was not a meaningful survey since there was no real response. He gave an example that nothing had been done for black students who were the least satisfied with assessments but the university is happy to promote good NSS results.

Liam Renouf enquired as to whether this was definitely going to be a sabotage

Mollie Kneath replied that we would know what the correct language is on the 6th as this may need to be a national campaign.

Vote

For : 60

Against 0

Abstain 3

Motion passes

Any other business

Tara: black history month come over and have

Neda: Academics for peace

Danny: NUS regional networking

Activist in October

Cut the rent event in

Shout out to the chair

