



Goldsmiths Students' Union Policy

Goldsmiths Students' Union Student Assembly

Motion proposed by Tamara White

Motion Title:

"That's what she said" - "Lad Culture" on campus

Union Notes:

The NUS Women's Campaign commissioned some research into "Lad Culture" the findings of which were published on March 8th 2013

'Lad culture' was defined by our participants as a group or 'pack' mentality residing in activities such as sport and heavy alcohol consumption, and 'banter' which was often sexist, misogynist and homophobic.

Respondents described university education as 'gendered' and cited issues such as the characterisation/status of particular subjects, classroom interactions, and negative attitudes towards feminism and gender-related topics.

'Lad culture' was thought to be particularly influential in the social side of university life. Extracurricular activities and sports in particular were singled out as key sites, and it was reported that sexism in such environments could spill over into sexual harassment and humiliation.

Nights out were described as key spaces in which 'lad culture' was in evidence. Participants highlighted that nightclub promoters (external to the students' union) engaged in 'lad culture' as part of their business model.

For many participants, 'lad culture' had been significant in relation to their personal life. Many reported misogynist

jokes and 'banter' circulating in their friendship groups which made them feel uncomfortable, and pressures to engage in profuse sexual relationships which made it difficult to establish and maintain commitments. Stories of sexual harassment and molestation were common, and there were also accounts of sexual violence.

Sexual harassment and violence were also very much related to 'lad culture'. This included verbal harassment and 'catcalling', as well as physical harassment and sexual molestation. Groping in nightclubs was viewed by some as part of a 'normal' night out.

That "lad culture" has been reported as a problem at Goldsmiths, with students feeling intimidated in seminars and in the bar.

1 in 7 women students experience at least one instance of sexual violence during their time as students.

Union Believes:

That students' unions have a responsibility to challenge this behaviour wherever it occurs

That "lad culture" has become a part of everyday discrimination, treating serious issues as "banter" and "a laugh" which eliminates people's personal experiences and causes upset.

That "lad culture" has come to include web phenomena such as "UniLad", "The Lad Bible" and "Spotted" pages.

That "lad culture" can seriously impact on the experience of students - particularly (but not limited to) women and LGBTQ students.

That not taking issues such as sexual violence seriously is an issue within and beyond students' unions.

Union Resolves:

To support the NUS chaired commission on a national strategy to respond to "lad culture" in higher education

To commit to creating a safer, positive and empowering culture on campus.

To challenge the university to create a "dignity in the learning environment" policy which is more fit for purpose

To ask all union clubs and societies to state clearly their commitment to challenging "lad culture" and to give society and sports team committee members the tools and training to challenge any behaviour which could be seen as "lad culture"

To condemn "Spotted at Goldsmiths" or other similar pages

To support the liberation officers in campaigning to challenge these ideas