

Motion title:

Building on National Conference 2018 'UD105 – National Postgraduate Representation': A Practical Implementation

Conference Believes

1. There has been a trend amongst Students' Unions to introduce Officers dedicated to improving the postgraduate student experience, whether on a full-time, part-time or voluntary basis.
2. Postgraduate students make up approximately 23.8% of students studying in Higher Education (HESA data, AY16/17), yet issues affecting them are not represented by NUS in a proportion reflective of this.
3. The NUS Postgraduate Campaign has regrettably not produced significant outputs or wins for postgraduate students for some time, and the quality of the administration of conference varies annually.
4. The above issues have largely been noted in policy 'UD105 – 'National Postgraduate Representation' passed at National Conference 2018, which resolved to review NUS' postgraduate representation, as well as its governance and funding.
5. The current problems with NUS' resourcing cannot be ignored – we must be pragmatic in setting policy and organising our structures to provide the most benefit to postgraduate students with the scant resource available.

Conference Further Believes

1. The best, most realistic hope of building an effective national Postgraduate Campaign with limited NUS resource is in the expansion of Postgraduate Officer positions in member Students' Unions, and building networks between them with NUS acting as a hub.
2. The lack of wins from the campaign is due in part to the lack of resource historically allocated to the campaign, both directly and through the de-prioritisation of postgraduate issues by relevant NUS officers.
3. To lose further resource, permit an ineffective Postgraduate Committee or similar forum for discussion of postgraduate issues, or remove Postgraduate NEC places, would send an unacceptable signal – given the significant size of the postgraduate student body – that the NUS has no interest in campaigning on postgraduate issues.
4. NUS has a duty to encourage Students' Unions to do more to represent the interests of and engage their postgraduate constituents, to forge links between Students' Unions and staff who deal with postgraduates in their parent institutions, and support any of their initiatives in these areas.

Conference Resolves

1. To commission a national report into postgraduate representation within Students' Unions, in particular the trend towards full-time Postgraduate Officer positions and case studies into these, with specific focus on:
 - the remits of postgraduate representatives, in particular full-time officers;
 - the interaction of representatives of postgraduates with committees and bodies within their parent institution;
 - the impact of the introduction of representatives of postgraduates on postgraduate engagement within institutions and on improvements to the postgraduate experience;
 - issues arising at Students' Unions and institutions as a result of and since the creation of representatives of postgraduates, and lessons learnt from such;
 - current methods of collaboration between representatives of postgraduates within and between Students' Unions, and the effectiveness of such; and
 - candidate nomination, conduct of elections and voting eligibility for representatives of postgraduates.
2. To use the outputs from this investigation to identify best practice to be encouraged across the sector, as regards postgraduate representation within Students' Unions, and the most appropriate methods of doing so.
3. To recommend Students' Unions consider whether creating a full-time officer position dedicated to representing postgraduates within their Union is appropriate in their context.
4. To demand the continuation of representative positions for Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students on the highest NUS political decision-making body in whatever format.
5. To demand the protection of the level of resourcing currently allocated to addressing issues affecting postgraduates and the possibility of providing an increase to the level of resourcing to be genuinely considered in the NUS' Turnaround activities.
6. To set a deadline for the resolutions of Policy UD105 to be completed by NUS, expecting that these are

completed as part of the NUS Turnaround Strategy, of 1 year from the date of the passing of the policy in which this clause is contained. The VP Higher Education or a successor position following any restructure of NUS shall be responsible for ensuring this.

7. To require the NEC Postgraduate Representatives to maintain some mechanism for full- and part-time Postgraduate Officers at Students' Union members of NUS to regularly collaborate on addressing the issues of postgraduates nationally, and receive updates on progress on policy implementation for the Postgraduate Campaign, particularly throughout the duration of any review or restructure of the governance of NUS' Postgraduate Campaign.

8. To create resources to encourage and assist Student Unions to address local issues affecting postgraduates within their parent institutions that are suitable for use by those Students' Unions with postgraduate members but no specific representatives of postgraduates.
