

1657 No to Islamophobia on our Campus

Passed 22 January 2015

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Union Notes:

- 1) That since 2003, there has been almost a 400 per cent rise in reported hate crime against Muslims. Women wearing religious dress are particularly under threat. ¹
- 2) That this has, in part, been fuelled by recent events in the Middle East.
- 3) That groups such as the English Defence League (EDL) continue to march on explicitly anti-Muslim platforms.
- 4) That NUS recently condemned pressure group 'Student Rights', an organisation claiming to support 'freedom from extremism' on UK university campuses and mostly criticises speakers it sees as 'extremists' who have been invited by Islamic societies. ²
- 5) That November is Islamophobia Awareness Month.

Union Believes:

- 1) That Islamophobia is on the rise in the UK.
- 2) That the rise of groups like the EDL has been fuelled in large part by a growth in mainstream Islamophobia associated with the War on Terror. On campuses this has included vicious media crusades against Islamic Societies, and the use of the "Preventing Violent Extremism" initiative (PVE) to set up "anti-extremism" meetings and discourage anti-war meetings.
- 3) That the use of anti-terror initiatives to clamp down on Muslim students' freedom of expression amounts to a racist witch-hunt in the tradition of McCarthyism.
- 4) That 'Student Rights' activities fuel Islamophobia, by disproportionately and unfairly targeting Muslim students, contributing to their marginalisation and ostracisation, damaging campus cohesion and feeding into a growing trend of islamophobic discourse in wider society.
- 5) That this has led to an environment where many Muslim students feel victimised and unsafe on campus.

¹ <http://www.theweek.co.uk/uk-news/59333/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-increase-in-england-and-wales>

² http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/05/15/tide-turns-against-anti-extremist-student-rights-nus_n_5328334.html

- 6) That recent global events have been used as an excuse to incite hatred towards Muslims and that this is wholly unacceptable and should end now.
- 7) That the government and the media are responsible for creating a harmful rhetoric surrounding Muslims and recent terrorist activity to serve the purpose of motivating the public to hold hateful and dangerous attitudes in order to rally support for ongoing wars in the Middle East.
- 8) That no UEA student should feel unsafe or victimised on the basis of their race or religion.
- 9) That we want to create an environment that is a safe space in which all students can feel safe and free from persecution.

Union Resolves:

- 1) To re-affirm our opposition to islamophobia in all of its forms.
- 2) To mandate the Welfare, Community, and Diversity Officer to draft an open letter condemning the rise of Islamophobia, and to re-affirm our commitment to ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all students.
- 3) To oppose any PVE initiatives, including the Government led initiatives of 'PREVENT' and 'Channel' on our campus.
- 4) To run an awareness campaign in November for Islamophobia Awareness Month.
- 5) To mandate the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer to set up a Students Union 'Faith Committee' comprised of representatives from all faith groups on campus, with the aim of discussing ways in which to eradicate islamophobia and other race and religion based discrimination on our campus.