

1859 It's Time to Talk about Costs on Campus

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Union Notes:

- 1) That student feedback, such as that found in the Union's Annual Student Survey (ASS), consistently reports dissatisfaction with the costs of retail outlets on campus.
- 2) Likewise, last years' 'The Real Costs of Study' report highlighted concerns that many hidden course costs were unaffordable and presenting a significant financial hurdle for many students.
- 3) That many educational costs, such as those offered by the university's central services, have become increasingly expensive against a stagnant student maintenance package.
- 4) Some students, such as those in HSC, incur substantial further costs for example through placement.
- 5) Essential costs from external providers, such as transport, are also increasingly expensive, with students expressing dissatisfaction with the quality and price of the service currently offered.
- 6) Many students cannot afford to eat on campus, and those that do opt for cheaper, less nutritious options.

Union Believes:

- 1) That previous work to highlight hidden course costs has been largely successful, meaning the priority should now be tackling how 'unhidden' costs are presenting a barrier to study and having a negative impact on both student attainment and wellbeing.
- 2) That students should not be expected to pay for items that are essential to their core study.
- 3) That the current rate of fees for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes are more than sufficient to cover all costs incurred through duration of study and should be inclusive of those costs.
- 4) That the university could do more to influence external providers, such as First Bus, to ensure that the service they provide is affordable and of an acceptable quality.
- 5) As per its charitable objectives, the union should strive to provide an affordable offer for students in its retail outlets.
- 6) Although progress has been made to offer cheaper options in both union and university catering outlets, these are options are by and large significantly less nutritious.
- 7) That a balanced, healthy, diet is crucial to the attainment of students.
- 8) That the combined effect of these costs on campus: upfront course costs, transport costs, and other essential costs such as food and drink, are representing a significant squeeze on student finances.
- 9) That the accumulative impact of the increasing costs are leading to many students feeling forced to work an increasingly number of hours, which has a proven effect on attainment.
- 10) That this will hit students from poorer backgrounds the hardest.

Union Resolves:

- 1) To research the impact of these accumulated costs through producing a 'Costs on Campus' report – providing a comprehensive review of the kinds of costs encountered by students, the effect on their overall finances, and the potential impacts on attainment. This should include a set of recommendations on how the university can make these costs more affordable, and include a commitment to move towards all course costs being inclusive of fees.
- 2) To produce a key set of objectives on how pricing in our retail outlets can be adapted to meet the needs of our students.
- 3) To explore offering healthier, affordable options in union-operated retail outlets to complement the current hot food offer.
- 4) To lobby for the creation of a Student Forum whereby students can provide feedback on the university's catering outlets.
- 5) To lobby First Bus to implement a 'Student Fare' – similar to the Young Persons Fare currently offered for those under-20.