



Student Council
29/01/2014

Re-affirm UBU stance on Free Education

Background:

1. At its National Conference in April the National Union of Students (NUS) voted to support free education. The NUS resolved to campaign for education to be funded through public investment rather than tuition fees or a graduate tax. Measures suggested to achieve this included ending tax evasion, raising taxes for the most well off and employer contributions.
2. The NUS highlighted the fact that free education would pay for itself - government figures show that for every £1 invested in higher education the economy expands by £2.60.
3. The Coalition Government's 2010 Higher Education funding reforms sought to continue a trend of redefining direct public investment in education as private debt resting on the shoulders of individuals. The Government pays more than £7 billion annually to fund higher education tuition fee loans alone; of this the most recent revised figures suggest that up to 40 per cent will be covered by public sources due to non-repayment.

Purpose:

1. Back in Oct 2014 we voted to support the National Demo for Free Education – this is about affirming our stance with respect to funding HE in the UK, rather than a specific action. This is about re-affirming that we think education is a right and not a privilege, and that Higher Education is a public good and we demand public investment in the sector.
2. 'Free Education' is a misnomer for the campaign as this is about much more than removing fees: it's about how we should best fund education without accumulating debt, it's about access, as well as supporting students through education (financially and otherwise), democratising and liberating education.
3. In the run up to the General Election we want to start a discussion about the public funding of higher education.

Action:

1. To start a discussion on campus about free education, what it means and how higher education should be funded.



2. To give UBU a mandate to put resources into campaigning for a free and fairer education system.

3. To lobby political parties and local representatives to respond to student pressures in the run up to the General Election and come up with innovative models of publicly funding Higher Education rather than only proposing tuition fees and graduate tax.

Proposed by:

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