

The quarterly newsletter for NUS alumni network

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Introduction from the President

Welcome to the July 2017 Friends of NUS newsletter – the first since my election as President in April. I stood on a platform of making further and higher education accessible for all students and, having taken office only last week, I have already started on this work.

NUS has a proud history of fighting to remove the barriers to education, and there is one obstacle that underlines all others: money. That's why the flagship project of my presidency will be the establishment of a poverty commission to look at the financial barriers facing students.

We continue to see education as a public good that should be publicly funded and free education is back on the political agenda. From tuition fees to college closures, the government's approach to post-16 education is broken, and we've therefore called for an urgent review into student funding. We expect to play a leading role in making students' voices heard during the now inevitable changes.

These discussions ground our generation firmly in the NUS tradition. We've spent decades promoting fair systems of student funding, and former VP Alan Evans explores a good example of this below: our response to the 1967 rise in international student fees.

Friends of NUS gives us a unique platform to explore today's challenges through a historical lens. We learn lessons and gain inspiration from those who have gone before us and, as we look toward our 100th anniversary celebrations in 2022, this role will only become more important.

On 15 November our annual Friends of NUS event in London will look at how the poverty commission fits into our historical mission and vision. We'll discuss how student funding has evolved over the decades and the pivotal role that NUS has played at every step of the way. If you were involved in a major student finance campaign from years gone by then we'd love to hear from you. Otherwise, please save the date and look out for further information - I look forward to seeing you there.

Shakira Martin
NUS President



Preserving our past to inspire the future

A look at the NUS archives – and how Friends of NUS can help

The story goes that space was tight in Endsleigh Street, which NUS occupied from 1925 until 1983, and so archive materials were stored at a warehouse in Leytonstone. At some point, no one really knows when, they were largely destroyed by either flooding or fire. There is no explanation of the extent of the damage, or what, if anything, might have been saved. What we do know is there a significant gap in NUS archive materials.

Our current main archive is at the [Modern Records Centre](#). It was once destined for landfill until I intervened to redirect the removal firm, to the annoyance of management at the time.

Apparently the entire NUS-USI archive was once thrown out on the grounds it was taking up space and no-one was interested. Given the significance of students in the peace process it was an act of vandalism not to keep it. In 1971 the Scottish Union of Students collapsed, its members leaving to join what had become NUSUK. It seems no-one thought to remove the archives and make them safe before their HQ was abolished. Today you can't even find a list of the former presidents. The records of an entire organisation had gone in an instant.

We are aware of some significant collections of NUS papers in other archives. A number of activists involved in (what was then) the Gay Rights Campaign in the 1970s and early 1980s have donated papers to the Hall-Carpenter archives at LSE, preserving material from those early days which is not in the official NUS archives. Similarly, our noted wartime president Brian Simon donated all of his papers to the Institute of Education archives, including those relating to his time as president and his efforts to keep NUS from being closed during the conflict. There are presumably other useful examples we know nothing about.

As we approach our hundredth anniversary I am hoping we can use the opportunity to rebuild our archives. ***So what's to be done?***

We have a large backlog of materials that relate to our history from 1980 onwards, but unless we take action these materials could well be lost or destroyed accidentally. We do not have a significant amount of material from before 1960, so we need to proactively collect them. There might be materials surviving in the private collections of former officers and staff, this alumni initiative could help a process of seeking out donations but they in turn would need to be catalogued. Donors would need to trust the organisation to look after their materials and given our chequered history in this area we need to earn that trust.

To take this work forward it is recommended that we:

- Develop a clear archives policy giving guidance on what materials to preserve
- Resubmit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to establish an archive and digitisation project based on feedback and guidance from the HLF team
- Depending on the outcome of the re-submitted HLF bid, seek out other trusts and sources of funding for heritage/archive activity
- Liaise with both MRC Warwick and Glasgow Caledonian University Archives on the development of our archives policy and develop new partnership agreements
- Ask friends and alumni to donate materials to Warwick, for example Stanley Jenkin's papers are held there under his name.

If Friends have any thoughts or advice on what else we might do, if you know of NUS-related materials in other archives, or if anyone can clarify what happened to our records possibly in Leytonstone then it would be great to hear from you. Please email mike.day@nus.org.uk

Mike Day
International Relations and NUS-USI Director

[Read an extended version of this article online here](#)

Dates for the Diary

15 November: Friends of NUS annual reception, London

28 March 2018: Friends of NUS reception at National Conference, Glasgow.

Out of the blue in December 1966 Tony Crosland, Secretary of State for Education and Science, announced that overseas students' fees would increase threefold. Circular 27/66 would see degree course students, who then paid £70 a year, pay £250 and fees for other courses, mainly in FE colleges, would increase from £40 to £150.

NUS' executive immediately opposed this measure. It was discriminatory, had been announced surreptitiously and would impact retrospectively, especially on those least able to bear the unplanned additional financial burden.

NUS research found that it would affect 32,000 overseas students; the majority funded by their families or themselves but 12,000 funded by the governments of developing countries or charitable foundations.

We sought to mobilise members in 650 universities and colleges to take part in local and national action against Circular 27/66, including:

- A poster and pamphlet campaign
- A mass protest meeting at Central Hall Westminster
- A lobby of MPs at the House of Commons by 3,500 student leaders
- An NUS deputation to the Secretary of State for Education and Science
- A memo to the Department of Education and Science (DES) of the costs incurred by overseas students to study at colleges and universities in the UK
- A meeting with the Leader of the Opposition, Edward Heath, to set out the concerns of NUS over this divisive and ill-thought-out measure.

NUS garnered support from the teaching unions, the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals, the World University Service and the Council for Education in the Commonwealth. Lionel Robbins (author of the Robbins Report on Higher Education 1963) called the measure '*an exhibition of xenophobia*'; while the New Statesman described it as '*callous and miserly*' and H D (Billy) Hughes, Principal of Ruskin College, called the circular an exercise in '*financial apartheid*'.

Our intensive campaign, while not achieving withdrawal of the measure, successfully ameliorated the impact of the increases in fees. The government conceded that no student already in the system would pay an increase of more than £50 a year.

The comprehensive memorandum, produced by NUS and submitted to the DES, was a major factor in persuading the government to establish a £500,000 hardship fund to support overseas students to meet the extra costs of completing their studies.

The government was bruised and somewhat baffled by the ferocity of the opposition to the increase in overseas student fees. The government never withdrew circular 27/66, but our stance enhanced NUS' reputation as a resourceful and effective lobbying body, and a powerful advocate for the education and welfare of overseas students.

Alan Evans
NUS Vice President 1967-68

[Read an extended version of this article online here](#)

Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you! If you want to contribute to the alumNUS newsletter, or would like further info on any of the topics covered in this issue, contact friends@nus.org.uk

History Corner: Ivison Macadam

NUS' founding president, first manager and a long-term trustee.

Born in Edinburgh in 1894, Macadam's education was disrupted by the war and was in his mid-twenties before he went to King's College London, where he was elected student president. The horrors of the war had a profound influence on a whole generation of students and the formation of NUS was motivated by the desire from students to promote co-operation and peace in Europe. In order to be part of this organisation, it was felt necessary to have a single national union.



Macadam worked hard to achieve this and was elected the first president in 1922.

While being part of the European student movement was a prime aim of the new organisation, Macadam's vision included student representation and activities. He became one of NUS' first staff members and was instrumental in raising money to ensure a sound financial foundation including the purchase of the Endsleigh Street property.

Macadam went on to become first Secretary and Director General of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, commonly known as Chatham House. He was involved in a wide range of organisations including St John's Ambulance and King George's Jubilee Trust, responsible for organising many royal events. He was knighted in 1955.

Macadam was an establishment figure and as a trustee of NUS disagreed with executives, particularly in the 1940s over NUS' stand at the start of the Second World War. However, he was always motivated by his values: co-operation, voluntary work, and the importance of education. Without his vision, organisational ability and energy, NUS would not be celebrating over 95 years of activity.

Noticeboard

National Conference 2018 will be taking place in Glasgow on 27-29 March. As well as being invited to a fringe event, Friends of NUS will be eligible for a balcony pass to watch events unfold on Conference floor.

All members of Friends of NUS are invited to attend, and we would be particularly keen to take the opportunity to see Scottish Friends. If you know any former NUSers in Scotland, please spread the word and keep an eye on the **Friends of NUS Events page** for updates.

We are always keen to hear from Friends, whether to contribute to the newsletter, help us fill gaps in our archive, or offer support to NUS' current work. We are also always looking to expand our Friends of NUS membership list. To get involved in any of these projects, please email friends@nus.org.uk

The deadline for content for the next edition will be 20 September.