

## Conference 2018

### Ensuring students have the support and opportunities to thrive

#### Conference noted:

1. That the year ahead presents opportunities and challenges to Scotland's students – including the Scottish Government's response to the independent Review of Student Financial Support in Scotland, mental health support, widening access, and Brexit.
2. The student support review report includes a support model - supported by NUS Scotland - which would create parity across further and higher education, while increasing support to reflect cost of living, and lifting bursary levels to over £4,000 for the poorest students.
3. NUS Scotland's long-term goal of achieving Universal Living Grants, and policy to ensure 'short term campaigns contribute to this long-term strategic goal.'
4. There is a lack of consistency in mental health support across Scotland's universities and colleges.
5. While the Scottish Government has set widening access targets, current figures show progress being made far too slowly.
6. The many benefits and opportunities that Scotland's students enjoy because of EU membership, including the ability to study, work and travel freely across Europe.

#### Conference believed:

1. That, of the costing models explored by the student support review, only the model backed by NUS Scotland delivers parity of entitlement between further and higher education, and delivers new investment in bursary support for the poorest students. This increase to bursary would be a step towards our goal of Universal Living Grants.
2. Every student in Scotland should have access to fully funded on-campus mental health support.
3. Widening access to higher education should mean widening access to every higher education institution.
4. That getting students into education is not enough in itself, and that students need support to remain and succeed once they get there.
5. The Scottish and UK governments must do everything in their power to safeguard, or build on, the benefits that EU memberships brings to students.

#### Conference resolved:

1. To continue to campaign for increased investment in bursary support, particularly for the poorest students, in both further and higher education.
2. To continue to push for the Scottish Government's response to the student support review to be bold and radical, and introduce significant new financial investment into the system.
3. To conduct research into students' mental health, and the support available to students, to create a benchmark of the standard of mental health support at colleges and universities.
4. To lobby for this support to be funded through new, ring fenced funding.
5. That widening access remains a priority for NUS Scotland.
6. To ensure that the voices of students are heard throughout the Brexit process, and that education is a priority for the Scottish and UK governments in negotiations.



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## Exploring “ring-fenced” funding for college students’ associations

### Conference noted:

1. The letter from John Kemp (Scottish Funding Council) to principals recommending a minimum £75,000 to £85,000 for a small college students’ association covering a small geographic area, one full-time sabbatical, and one full-time staff member.
2. The motions passed at NUS Scotland Conference in 2014 and 2017 that college students’ associations need full-time dedicated staff.
3. The Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students’ Associations.

### Conference believed:

1. College students’ associations are less likely to have dedicated staff within colleges.
2. College students’ associations are less likely to have a say in their funding amounts and requirements.
3. The majority of college students’ associations are drastically underfunded in regards to the SFC letter.
4. Due to the nature of officer turnover and staff not being dedicated to a college students’ associations being an autonomous voice, continuation and development is lost.
5. Not every college students’ association has paid officers (Comann nan Oileanach at Sabhal Mor Ostaig UHI, and Newbattle Abbey).
6. College students’ associations predominantly are not autonomous legal entities in their own right and are part of their parent institution.

### Conference resolved:

1. To work with college students’ associations by holding focus groups and “NUS Reviews” to determine a funding system that works for them.
2. To explore how the SFC and the Scottish Government can “ring-fence” college SA funding directly to students’ associations.
3. To lobby for further funding to continue the college students’ associations development work.
4. Help address staffing issues and appropriate staff training.
5. For NUS Scotland to pressure the SFC into releasing an up-to-date letter with revised guidelines on college SA funding that takes geography and student population into account.
6. To work with college students’ associations to decide what these guidelines must be.

## Protecting student opportunities in Brexit negotiations

### Conference noted:

1. That NUS Scotland supported a Remain vote in the EU referendum.
  2. While young people overwhelmingly backed a Remain vote, as did 62 per cent of voters in Scotland, across the UK voters voted to leave the EU.
  3. Scotland’s students and institutions currently enjoy great benefits through membership of the European Union, from funding for research and innovation, to the freedom to work, live and study in other EU countries, access to programmes such as Erasmus+, and a reciprocal fees arrangement.
  4. While the Scottish Government has confirmed free tuition for EU students enrolling up to 2018/19, no certainty has been provided beyond that point.
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5. That the effect of the outcome of Brexit negotiations remains uncertain for students, and the education sector as a whole.

**Conference believed:**

1. That the Scottish and UK governments must do everything in its power to protect, or replicate, the benefits that EU memberships brings to students in Scotland, and ensure that Scotland's intuitions continue to be attractive places to come to work and study.
2. That the Scottish Government must provide certainty on the fees status of prospective EU students as a matter of urgency.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To continue to call for students' interests to be at the heart of Brexit negotiations, and to ensure that current benefits are protected or enhanced.

## **Preventing the power of private student halls**

**Conference noted:**

1. PBSA (purpose built student accommodation) has rapidly grown in recent years, taking over the market. They have private investors, so their greater capital means that can afford to buy property more than universities. They can also challenge planning permission more easily.
2. Current costs in Edinburgh for PBSA range from £105 p/w for a bunk-bed room to £245 p/w for a studio with bathroom and kitchen (including bills). This is £5,355 to £12,495 p/year based on a 51 week contract. PBSA offerings are heavily skewed to the expensive end. The maximum student support in Scotland this year is £7625. PBSA is unaffordable for students, particularly those from a disadvantaged background.
3. PBSA is exempt from the new Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016.
4. In some local authorities, e.g. Edinburgh, new housing developments must include 25% affordable beds, but PBSA is exempt from this legislation.

**Conference believed:**

1. It is a right, not a luxury, for students to have access to affordable housing.
2. As universities start relying more on PBSA, private developers will be able to increase their price.
3. En-suite and studio rooms, heavily favoured by PBSA, aren't good for affordability or shared communal space. As PBSA is privately owned by investors, their only goal is to make money, and not to think about student wellbeing.
4. With long contracts, PBSA will dominate further in future. We must act now.

**Conference resolved:**

1. NUS Scotland to lobby the Scottish Government and universities to introduce regulation of purpose built student accommodation (PBSA is Private halls, e.g. unite):
    - To require new developments of PBSA to include provision for affordable student housing amounting to 25% of the total.
    - To ensure PBSA providers reinvest a proportion of profit into student wellbeing and mental health.
    - Ensure PBSA prioritises student and community needs over greater profits.
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## Not another Carillion

### Conference noted:

1. In January 2018, Carillion, the UK's largest employer of construction apprentices, entered liquidation. This has left many apprentices jobless, with uncertainty over future employment and income.
2. If any other employer of apprentices ceased to exist, then this could leave many other apprentices without a means of employment or income.

### Conference believed:

1. There is no clear support system for apprentices if their training provider goes bust or ceases to exist.
2. There is no clear support system for apprentices if they are made unemployed due to unfair business practice.

### Conference resolved:

1. NUS Scotland should work with Trade Unions to identify best practice on sustainable support systems for apprentices, if an apprentice's employer or training provider goes out of business.
2. NUS Scotland should lobby the Scottish Government on securing a clearly identifiable sustainable support system as decided from the outcome of this research.

## Disabled Students' Allowance for FE

### Conference notes:

1. Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is not available to FE students who have a disability or additional support need.
2. The percentage of FE students who define as having a disability or additional support need is not currently known.

### Conference believes:

1. DSA funding should be available to all FE students who have a disability or additional support need.
2. Lack of funding has a negative effect on retention and progression rates.
3. Lack of funding can have a negative effect on health as students worry about needing additional resources to be able to complete their studies.

### Conference resolves:

1. To investigate potential risks FE students face as a result of not being able to access DSA funding.
2. To campaign for access to DSA funding for all FE students who have a disability or additional support need.
3. To work with institutions and carry out research into the number/percentage of FE students with a disability or support need.

## Student homelessness – coming in from the cold

### Conference notes:

1. Shelter Scotland has reported that in the 16/17 term, 15.1 in every 1000 under 25s have experienced homelessness.
  2. Work carried out by NUS UK has uncovered that a rising number of students throughout the UK have been evicted from halls or private accommodation due to rent arrears.
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### **Conference believes:**

1. Homelessness policies are complex in Scotland and students can find difficulties finding the correct support from external agencies that can also provide them with learning support.
2. Shelters can be chaotic places and may hinder students during their time in education when dealing with the added pressure to quickly find a more permanent form of accommodation.
3. Tackling student homelessness successfully requires more than putting a roof over people's heads as learning plays an integral role in widening access to opportunities for change.

### **Conference resolves:**

1. For NUS Scotland to collect data from universities and colleges on the numbers of students presenting as homeless as well as current institutional policies that support these students, e.g policies for temporary accommodation in student housing.
2. For NUS Scotland to lobby the Scottish Government to create or amend better policies to tackle the increasing figures of homelessness, especially for those under 25 by stopping evictions during exam periods and during inclement weather.
3. For NUS Scotland to actively support constituent members in making sure that homeless learners can contribute to decisions about their learning and support needs.

## **Students' association development**

### **Conference notes:**

1. The Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations in Scotland.
2. That Outcome Agreements set out what colleges and universities plan to deliver in return for their funding from the Scottish Funding Council.
3. That Student Partnership Agreements are a way in which students' associations and institutions can promote ways in which students can interact with staff at their institution to improve quality.
4. That colleges produce annual evaluative reports and enhancement plans, based on the How Good is our College? Framework.

### **Conference believes:**

1. That college students' associations are still developing.
2. That college students' associations must participate in developing Outcome Agreements, Student Partnership Agreements, evaluative reports and enhancement plans.
3. That college students' associations have, in some cases, limited resources to be effective in influencing these plans.
4. That college students' associations are asked by other organisations and their students to do much more than they possibly can.

### **Conference resolves:**

1. For NUS Scotland to seek resource to continue the support that NUS Scotland has offered to college students' associations.
  2. For NUS Scotland to support college students' associations by developing training resources which can be delivered to/by staff in institutions who have responsibility for supporting the students associations and its officers.
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# Education

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## Improved financial support for student nurses

### Conference notes:

1. Student nurses who apply through SAAS are not eligible for any bursaries or awards at The University of Edinburgh as the institution has no data regarding their background.
2. Student nurses who apply through Student Finance England (SFE) are eligible for awards and bursaries, which leads to discrepancies between students at the university, even though they're receiving the same NHS bursary.
3. The Discretionary Fund for student nurses currently allocates £5,000 to The University of Edinburgh, which was used by 3 students in 2016/17.
4. A Scottish student with no children or dependents from a low-income background and living within a SIMD 20 (Scottish Indicator Multiple Deprivation) postcode would, if they lived outside of Edinburgh before starting their studies, be eligible for £5750 living costs loan from SAAS, £1875 Young Student Bursary from SAAS, £3000 Enhanced Scotland Scholarship from the University, if they were taking an undergraduate degree other than nursing (£10,625). A student in exactly the same circumstances undertaking a Nursing degree would only be eligible for a Nursing and Midwifery Student bursary of £6,578. And would ultimately have £4047 less available to them to spend on living expenses.

### Conference believes:

1. The Scottish Government has mandated universities to expand their widening-participation student numbers so it's important that students from these backgrounds can access the appropriate financial support for their attainment.
2. Student nurses often incur extra course costs due to the requirement of placements and the irregular hours worked, this makes it much harder for them to undertake paid employment than their non-nursing counterparts.

### Conference resolves:

1. Mandate NUS Scotland to lobby the Scottish Government to increase the Discretionary Fund for student nurses.

## You can take our code but you can NEVER take our quality

### Conference notes:

1. In late 2017, QAA UK launched the consultation with the UK Higher Education sector to gather feedback on the new quality code.
2. The revised UK Quality Code outlines Scotland's quality enhancement-led approach to be supplementary and not a core practice.
3. The Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland supports HEIs with the aim of ensuring a good student learning experience.
4. The QEF involves students in all levels of quality enhancement.

### Conference believes:

1. The proposed new code does not provide a coherent framework for quality and standards in UK higher education.
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2. The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education does not embrace the current quality enhancement arrangement in Scotland.
  3. The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education does not incorporate the Scottish sector's approach to improving the Student Experience through the Quality Enhancement Framework.
  4. The UK Quality Code should be co-owned by the UK-wide Higher Education sector and not only by the English HE sector.
  5. The inclusion of supplementary practices in the UK Quality Code consultation implies some quality practices are optional and less important.
  6. The UK Quality Code consultation uses confusing language that is vague and leaving quality assurance up to interpretation by the reader rather than clear expectations.
  7. That Scottish HEIs should be constantly working towards improving the quality of student experience rather than only achieving minimal quality standards.

#### **Conference resolves:**

1. To campaign for enhancement based quality assurance over purely compliance based system.
2. NUS Scotland should work with partners across the UK nations to campaign for the code to be inclusive of all quality practices across the sector.
3. NUS Scotland should campaign to ensure that the Scottish sector's enhancement-led approach to improving quality is protected.

## **Dial 999: Scotland's having an art attack!**

#### **Conference notes:**

1. Many local councils are cutting their funding to free music tuition in schools<sup>1</sup>, pricing those from poorer background out of the arts<sup>2</sup>.
2. The Creative Industries contributes £4.6 billion to the Scottish Economy<sup>3</sup>, and £84 billion to the UK Economy<sup>4</sup> per year.
3. Scotland's Creative Industries employ over 73,000 people<sup>5</sup>.
4. Big Noise, a music outreach programme operating in some of Scotland's most socially deprived areas, reported 100% of attendees with more confidence and over 90% were happier.

#### **Conference believes:**

1. Creative Industries students can have severe upfront costs to study with the cost of: art supplies, specialist software and hardware, instrument upkeep, sheet music, recording equipment, camera equipment etc. alongside music text books.
2. Students can be requested to pay additional upfront levies for costs at the beginning of their programme, a cost many cannot afford.

#### **Conference resolves:**

1. To support officers that represent students within the Creative Industries to promote additional study support.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scotsman.com/news/education/union-calls-on-scottish-government-to-protect-school-music-tuition-1-4647729>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/scotlands-music-tradition-under-threat-school-cuts>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/creative-industries-generate-84-billion-a-year-for-the-uk-economy-almost-10m-an-hour-a7124551.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/creativitymatters/economic-value>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/03/16082812/5>

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2. Undertake research into the costs of studying the creative arts in Scotland.
  3. To lobby the Scottish Government to not cut local arts funding and recognise the importance of investing in arts education.
  4. To campaign for additional start-up funding for all students to relieve the burden.

## Protect our Quality Enhancement Framework

### Conference notes:

1. Changes to the UK Quality Code are under consultation, the outcome of which could have implications for Scotland's Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF), Scotland's quality arrangement which supports enhancement of the student learning experience.
2. The UK Government's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which relies on ranking universities by metrics including graduate destinations and 'satisfaction' scores, and has no place for student input.

### Conference believes:

1. QEF promotes partnership working between students and academic staff on the quality of learning and teaching in Scottish Higher Education.
2. QEF encourages Scottish Higher Education Institutions to focus on quality of their learning and teaching practices, as opposed to focusing on education as a consumer good, as is the case with TEF.
3. If 'partnership' and 'students' are removed from the UK Quality Code, this could negatively affect the quality of education in Scotland through removing the role of students in learning and teaching quality.
4. That QEF must be protected, whatever the outcome of the UK Quality Code Consultation.
5. That Scottish Higher Education Institutions do not need TEF, as QEF ensures that education in Scotland is valued for its quality, as opposed to marketising education as is done in TEF.

### Conference resolves:

1. That NUS Scotland must continue to promote QEF as the best way to engage Scotland's Higher Education students in the quality of learning and teaching.
2. To continue to work with partners to influence developments in the UK Quality code, TEF and their effect on QEF.
3. NUS Scotland should continue to oppose TEF as an educational quality measure.
4. That NUS Scotland will lobby the Scottish Government to ensure it maintains its position on QEF being the required mechanism for Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Scotland, regardless of developments in the rest of the UK.

## Apprentice representation

### Conference notes:

1. The National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) was set up in 2014 to be the representative voice of apprentices in the UK.

### Conference believes:

1. NUS Scotland should work together with the National Society of Apprentices Scotland (NSoAS) on common issues that reflect the needs of apprentices across Scotland.
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2. That by working together, NUS Scotland and NSoAS can provide better representation for apprentices in Scotland.

**Conference resolves:**

1. NUS Scotland should support and work with the NSoA on the four main priorities set out by the NSoA leadership team:
  - a. Apprenticeship pay
  - b. Quality apprenticeships
  - c. Cost of living
  - d. Transport

## **Making support plans work for all**

**Conference notes:**

1. Many education institutions use support plans for students with disabilities and additional support needs.

**Conference believes:**

1. These are often written out and agreed but the plan is not followed through.
2. Support plans need to be taken more seriously than they are by teaching and support staff. They need to read and appreciate the importance of the support plan and understand why it is needed.
3. Staff not being aware of students' support plans can cause students unnecessary distress and anxiety if they are having to constantly explain what is in their support plan.
4. Support plans should be done before students start their course. Once they have accepted their place on a course they should be invited in to complete the plan so it is in place from the very beginning.
5. Retention/dropout rates are affected by students feeling as though they are not receiving the support they need/are entitled to.
6. If support plans are not followed then not only the student who has the support plan is affected but the wider student body, as time will need to be spent making arrangements that should already have been in place.

**Conference resolves:**

1. To work with institutions regarding when support plans are carried out and make sure they are in place for the student's first day of term.
2. To campaign and educate around the importance of support plans and the importance of staff being aware of students' needs.

## **Keep fighting climate change!**

**Conference notes:**

1. The huge global warming and climate change already underway, as a result of human activity, is a grave threat to life, the planet and social progress.
  2. Fossil fuel companies continue to stand in the way of serious action on climate change.
  3. The current fossil fuel reserves are five times what could be burnt while staying under 2°C warming.
  4. The Government has intensified its drive for fracking, despite the dangers to the local environment, water supplies and the global climate.
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5. Private ownership of the energy industry drives fuel poverty through profiteering and obstructs renewable energy development.
  6. The profits of the Big Six energy companies (British Gas, EDF, E.ON, npower, Scottish power and SSE) have risen tenfold since 2007.
  7. NUS UK voted last year to “campaign for the nationalisation of the Big Six under democratic control”.

#### **Conference believes:**

1. The need to confront the fossil fuel industry and energy companies cannot be avoided if we want to avoid catastrophic climate change.
2. The argument for a public, democratically controlled energy sector - to abolish fuel poverty and help fund a transition to renewable energy - is compelling.
3. Public ownership of energy will only be won by campaigning by grassroots worker, student, green and community groups.
4. Grassroots campaigns (like those against fracking and against Heathrow’s third runway) are crucially important to fighting climate change, and should be supported.

#### **Conference resolves:**

1. To affirm our commitment to campaigning for the nationalisation of the Big Six under democratic control as part of a renewed drive for student action on climate change.
2. To support protests and direct action against fossil fuel expansion, including the fight against fracking and a third runway at Heathrow, and in support of an accelerated renewable transition.
3. To campaign for the nationalisation of all privatised energy companies under democratic control as part of a renewed drive for student action on climate change.
4. To lobby colleges and universities to integrate Sustainable Development Goals into curriculums, to ensure that all students and apprentices are educated on the importance of their roles in combating climate change and securing a more sustainable future for all.
5. To support the divestment of fossil fuels by colleges and universities.

## **Home ‘sweet’ home**

#### **Conference notes:**

1. A number of institutions across the UK have outsourced their student accommodation to private providers e.g. Leeds Beckett University, University of Reading.
2. The price of private student accommodation on average is higher than institution owned student accommodation (NUS, 2016).
3. In 2006 82 per cent of student accommodation was operated by institutions, by 2015-16 it is 59 per cent (NUS, 2016).
4. Purpose built student accommodation is exempt from the newly implemented Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016.

#### **Conference believes:**

1. High prices and privatisation of student accommodation may push people into the mostly unregulated private rental sector.
  2. Student officers are in a position of influence when it comes to making sure their institutions are good landlords.
  3. Most private providers of student accommodation are purely for profit.
  4. Everyone deserves to have affordable, safe and secure accommodation.
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### Conference resolves:

1. To take a stance against for-profit providers of student accommodation.
2. To conduct Scotland specific research into the widespread use of private student accommodation.
3. Support SAs/SUs in campaigns against the outsourcing of student accommodation by institutions.
4. Work with regional student forums against the development of further private providers of student accommodation within their areas.
5. Work with Shelter or similar organisation to develop a 'Student renter guide'.
6. Develop a toolkit for SAs/SUs for campaigning against outsourcing student accommodation to for-profit providers.

### Taken for a ride: addressing bus service in Scotland

#### Conference notes:

1. The combination of increasing rent, living costs and the growing diversity of routes into further and higher education has resulted in growing numbers of part-time and commuting students dependant on a robust and cost effective public transport system.
2. The current state of affairs in municipal and city bus service delivery has consistently struggled to meet the needs of students and the public alike, in terms of affordability, availability and sustainability.
3. Inadequate stakeholder engagement, and the lack of a coherent national framework for cooperation across key decision-makers, has led to a deficiency between service delivery and the service user.
4. Through the rising cost of public transport, the environment becomes more polluted as more people opt for using their car as a form of transport.
5. While a staggering £2.6 billion in public subsidies has been handed to bus firms in Scotland; the number of bus routes registered with the Traffic Commissioner has fallen by 21% since 2006.
6. Unite's Haud The Bus campaign seeks to take public transport into public ownership in Scotland.

#### Conference believes:

1. Consultation done right produces gains; gains for bus companies, passengers and students alike. At present, communication with colleges, universities, student unions and the National Union of Students over service changes and fare increases is inadequate.
2. Stakeholder engagement, particularly in communities where students have a large presence, is crucial in fostering trust and cooperation between service providers and service users.
3. NUS Scotland, as one of the main policy interfaces students depend on, has a role to play in national coordination of such consultancy strategy.
4. Free bus travel for students would decrease student poverty, transport in public ownership would alleviate to some extent the burden for those struggling financially, but free transport would be a true victory for all.

#### Conference resolves:

1. For NUS Scotland, in partnership with student unions/associations, to develop general guidelines for student unions and associations to utilise talks with bus companies on improving service and provision – whilst respecting tailored circumstances.
  2. On the national level, that NUS Scotland officers lobby Holyrood over the specific issue of bus provision for students, and the inconsistency of service quality and provision across the nation.
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3. To work with student unions, universities, colleges and bus companies to improve service quality and provision for students, and to ensure student representation and feedback is cultivated and acted upon.
  4. For NUS Scotland to affiliate to the Haud The Bus campaign whilst also campaigning for free public transport.

## Widening access but priced out of retention

### Conference notes:

1. The Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP)<sup>6</sup>.
2. A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final report of the Commission on Widening Access<sup>7</sup>.
3. The Student Support Review Report<sup>8</sup>.

### Conference believes:

1. The cost of studying is still too high.
2. The cost of student halls (ranging from £120 p/w upwards), is forcing students from less advantaged backgrounds, out of education.
3. Students in the Highlands and Islands cannot are more restricted in their ability to commute for education.
4. Students may take on additional debt to cover the cost of accommodation.
5. The rent is too high.
6. Financial pressure affects mental health, and can contribute to students dropping out of education.
7. Students are not cash cows.

### Conference resolves:

1. To support students' associations that are lobbying to lower the cost of student halls.
2. To lobby the Scottish Government in setting "standardised" costs for accommodation.
3. For NUS Scotland to conduct a full review into the standards, and cost, of student halls, and wider student accommodation.

## Liberation as a priority

### Conference notes:

1. Students who define into one or more liberation campaign make up a significant percentage of our membership.
2. Liberation Campaigns and their officers have carried out many great campaigns over the years, but with limited capacity and resources, student engagement with the liberation campaigns and the great work they do, has lagged.

### Conference believes:

1. NUS Scotland has a responsibility to students who define into liberation groups and the Liberation officers and committees who volunteer to run the campaign.
2. Liberation Campaigns are founded on the basis of self-organisation and grass-roots activism, NUS should support the campaigns in these founding aims.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scottishwideraccess.org/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-fairness-final-report-commission-widening-access/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/independent-review-student-financial-support-scotland/>

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3. There are several important periods for liberation campaigns during the year, particularly History months and/or awareness days, NUS should make these a priority within its yearly operations to provide platforms for liberation campaigns to engage more widely with students and for students to strengthen the engagement with these students

#### **Conference resolves:**

1. That NUS Scotland, with respect for autonomy and grass roots activism support liberation officers in developing and running activist training days.
2. That in the planning of these training days, NUS recognises the grassroots culture of liberation campaigns to make these events more accessible for students in this regard.
3. That NUS Scotland work in partnership with liberation officers and other sector groups to organise events or campaigns to mark the history months and/or awareness days of the liberation campaigns.
4. That NUS Scotland, recognises and works with the liberation campaigns to ensure officers and committees are supported according to their needs, and make special arrangements where the needs of these groups do not fit with the status-quo.
5. That NUS Scotland provides a platform at the Gathering and Zone to share the successes of the liberation campaigns.

### **Protecting the future of Scottish Mental Health First Aid training**

#### **Conference notes:**

1. That Scottish Mental Health first Aid training has been stalled by the Government for the past 2 years, with no funding for training new trainers.
2. Scotland is seeing a continuous rise in the number of students accessing support services for their mental wellbeing.
3. University staff in all departments but especially academics are feeling overwhelmed and under-equipped to support students who present to them with mental illness (Student Minds: The Role of an Academic, 2018).

#### **Conference believes:**

1. That Scottish Mental Health First Aid training is key to progressing Think Positive and the work of student associations across Scotland.
2. Staff in both HE and FE should be trained to recognise signs of mental illness and be able to provide short-term support within their boundaries.
3. Students have the right to appropriate support from all staff, not just those in counselling, wellbeing and disability services.

#### **Conference resolves:**

1. To lobby the Scottish Government to reintroduce Scottish Mental Health First Aid Train the Trainer programme or equivalent.
  2. To ensure the future of Scottish Mental Health First Aid training is not only protected, but enhanced.
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## Yellow, blue, green, pink (students' use of foodbank)

### Conference notes:

1. Foodbanks supply three-day emergency food packs.
2. 145,865 food packs were handed out in 2017 in Scotland.

### Conference believes:

1. Students across Scotland are using Foodbanks.
2. Foodbanks and breakfast clubs are increasing in Scotland's colleges and universities.
3. That all students should be able to afford to eat.

### Conference resolves:

1. To undertake research with partner organisations to discover the extent of Foodbank use by students in Scotland.
2. To support Foodbanks in providing for those students most in need.
3. To continue to lobby for a living wage for students.

## A fair wage for the liberation officers

### Conference notes:

1. The Black Students' Officer, Disabled Students' Officer, LGBT+ Officer, and Trans Officer are currently unpaid, volunteer roles within NUS Scotland. Volunteer officers often have to work part-time alongside their studies and NUS role for this reason within NUS Scotland.
2. Many part-time officers have to work part-time alongside their studies and NUS role for this reason.
3. The limited amount of time and energy liberation officers can dedicate due to this results in a lack of support for the respective groups the officers represent.
4. Much of the Equalities Law is devolved, meaning that much of the work for the liberation officers in Scotland is independent from their counterparts in the UK.

### Conference believes:

1. That Liberation officers are among and/or represent some of the most marginalised students in Scotland. It is unfair and classist for liberation roles to be voluntary as this can act as a barrier to those unable to work for free, but willing to work towards making education accessible.
2. The work done by Liberation Officers is vital and they should be remunerated for this, so they are not placed under pressure, financially or health-wise because of carrying out their roles.
3. A full-time Women's Officer at NUS Scotland is integral to the leadership and successes of NUS. So, NUS should take responsibility centrally to remunerate the Black Students' Officer, Disabled Students' Officer, LGBT+ Officer, and Trans Officer and not do so by changing the Full-time status of the Women's Officer role.

### Conference resolves:

1. To amend the currently unpaid liberation roles in NUS Scotland to part-time paid roles on the basis of at least one day a week without changing the full-time status of the Women's Officer.
  2. To support the wage to be aligned to the Living Wage.
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## Building our activists

### Conference resolved:

1. Organise and run activist development programmes, for officers and students, across Scotland. This will build capacity across the country for student activists to lead campaigns on campuses and nationally, as well as providing students with skills in a range of methods of campaigning and community organising.
2. To work with students' associations to roll this out at every campus, building capacity to train activists and develop local campaigns relevant to their members.
3. Provide regional support and co-ordination throughout the year, for local and national campaigns.
4. Bring together a coalition of relevant campaigning partners, committed to furthering education as a social good and social justice, to extend our activist reach and our messages into our wider communities and areas of public life.

## Buy Scotland a round

### Conference believed:

1. That education (particularly colleges), student support and public services are underfunded.
2. That taxation should be progressive: the richest in society should always pay a higher rate than the poorest.

### Conference resolved:

1. That NUS Scotland shall not be timid in advocating that the Scottish Government uses its tax-raising powers creatively to tax the rich to fund education and public services for all.

## Technology and education

### Conference believed:

1. Technology is being used increasingly in further and higher education to support learning, both in the classroom and outwith contact hours.
2. A number of universities, including Scottish universities are now offering Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) which cover a range of subjects and have tens of thousands of students.
3. The use of video conference and online learning platforms enables students from rural communities to access education and should be seen as an alternative choice, rather than something which undermines the current system of higher and further education.

### Conference further believed:

1. Technology has the potential to transform education in a positive way which benefits students. However, research has shown that students do have concerns about the way technology is used in colleges and universities, ranging from poor IT skills demonstrated by academic staff to worries that contact time with staff is being replaced by online learning.
  2. MOOCs equally are a positive development in that they allow a wider range of students to access high quality higher education and interact with other students, from across the globe. However, there are issues around the accreditation and recognition of skills and knowledge gained through MOOCs and MOOCs also cannot replicate the experience of an in-person higher education.
  3. MOOCS should not be confused, or compared to, other non-traditional education systems, which provide fully accredited qualifications and are recognised and funded by SAAS, such as those delivered by the University of the Highlands and Islands and the Open University – don't tar us all with the same brush!
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### **Conference resolved:**

1. That NUS Scotland should conduct research into the use of technology in further and higher education, students' views on this and how this could be improved.
2. That NUS Scotland should conduct research into MOOCs and the issues they pose for current and future students, students' associations and traditional higher education, with a view to developing future policy in this area.
3. That NUS Scotland should support local work to lobby for better use of technology in colleges and universities and against replacing contact time with online learning where this is not of benefit to the education experience.

## **Fair employment & social equality**

### **Conference noted:**

1. That a study by Bristol University has found that students from state schools consistently outperform their private school counterparts but that this is not reflected in their access to employment, with just 58% of state-school-educated graduates finding a professional job, compared with 74% of privately educated graduates.
2. That issues around tax avoidance, estimated to cost the treasury upwards of £120 billion annually, have featured prominently in the media over the last few years.
3. That many students are in casualised employment on zero-hour contracts, often under the guise of being more flexible.
4. That public sector procurement in Scotland runs to over £9 billion a year and that NUS Scotland has argued for upcoming legislation to allow greater flexibility in what criteria can be used to award contracts.

### **Conference believed:**

1. That, as with university admissions processes, employers should consider more than just paper qualifications and factor in broader considerations when hiring new staff.
2. That a race to the bottom on wages and conditions will do nothing to stimulate growth, much less promote social equality.
3. That zero-hour contracts put workers in a precarious position and that there are much fairer ways of providing flexibility.
4. That relative poverty is as important an issue to tackle as absolute poverty.

### **Conference resolved:**

1. To work with interested parties to establish an accredited 'ethical employer' award; which could incorporate criteria over issues such as 'contextualised employment', the living wage, tax avoidance, zero-hour contracts, childcare and trade union recognition.
  2. To affiliate to the Scottish Living Wage Campaign.
  3. To work alongside NUS UK, trade unions and other relevant organisations to help associations run their own living wage campaign at their institution.
  4. To continue to lobby the Scottish Government and public-sector procurement consortia to make greater use of their ability to include these issues in the criteria for awarding contracts.
  5. Work with STUC and trade unions to develop guidance for student workers' and promote trade union membership.
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## Student tenants' unions, halls and a new deal on housing

### Conference noted:

1. That rent constitutes the largest single monthly cost for most students.
2. That the private-rented sector is now larger than the socially-rented sector for the first time in 50 years.
3. That the cost of accommodation in halls of residence continues to increase
4. That the introduction of short-assured tenancies in 1988 was heavily criticised by housing campaigners at the time.
5. That there are over 23,000 empty private-sector homes in Scotland.
6. The government is planning to impose a draconian 'Bedroom Tax' on millions of people, many of whom are students.

### Conference believed:

1. That quality, safe, secure and affordable housing is not a luxury or an optional extra; it is a fundamental pre-requisite to students' ability to fulfil their potential both educationally and otherwise.
2. That organising students *as tenants* creates a powerful potential to make change.
3. That the support available for housing is woefully inadequate and that taxation around housing is deeply regressive.
4. That above-inflation increases in rent are an abuse of the position of landlords.
5. That short-assured tenancies are not always in the best interests of students
6. That progressive council taxation and disincentives to leaving homes empty benefits students.
7. Students should not be disadvantaged by having a bedroom in their house that is not occupied 7 days a week.
8. Carers will be disproportionately affected by the 'Bedroom Tax'.
9. That a large part of the blame for high rents for students lies with the curtailing of investment to, and the selling off of, the social housing stock.
10. Whilst some comparatively strong legislation has been passed to protect tenants from unscrupulous landlords relatively little funding has been invested in ensuring its enforcement.
11. Whilst 'problematic' tenants, or those who fall behind on their rent, can be kicked out of their flat, no similar punishment currently exists for 'problematic' landlords.
12. The Scottish Government has recently cut funding for council run landlord accreditation programs instead setting up Landlord Accreditation Scotland, which is woefully underfunded.
13. That so long as no serious penalties exist for landlords who operate without a HMO all the legislation in the world won't prevent the most abusive landlords from exploiting tenants.
14. That the rent is too damn high.

### Conference resolved:

1. To explore greater collaboration with Shelter Scotland and other tenant advocacy groups over issues that benefit students
  2. To work with Shelter to explore alternatives to short-assured tenancies that benefit students but still give students flexibility to move within the housing market
  3. To produce guidance to associations on establishing student tenants' unions
  4. To explore the legality and rent-strikes, and what impact these and other tactics would have on winning a cap on increases in rent
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5. To work with tenants' advocates to provide guidance to student tenants' about their rights
  6. To continue advocating on behalf of students' in the formation of Scottish Government policy.
  7. To lobby government to reverse the decision to impose the 'Bedroom Tax'.
  8. To actively support grass-roots protests against the 'Bedroom Tax'.
  9. In the long term, to call for a program of government investment into the social housing stock and an end to right-to-buy.
  10. To call for the Scottish Government to dedicate the resources necessary to ensure that tenants' rights are being protected.
  11. To call for councils to use existing legislation to confiscate the property of landlords operating without an HMO license or exploiting their tenants and to add any such expropriated properties to the social housing stock.

## **NUS Gaelic language plan**

### **Conference noted:**

1. That, under the 2005 Gaelic (Scotland) Act, selected public authorities (including local authorities, universities and colleges) are required to produce Gaelic Language Plans.
2. Gaelic is an integral part of Scotland's culture and more than just an academic subject.
3. That Bòrd na Gàidhlig (the Gaelic Language Board) has produced methodology and guidance for public authorities in producing Gaelic Language Plans.
4. That NUS Wales has an elected Welsh language officer and a Welsh language committee which ensure a co-ordinated approach to language matters across the country.

### **Conference believed:**

1. That, although the 2005 Gaelic (Scotland) Act does not apply to bodies such as NUS Scotland, NUS Scotland has an obligation to its Gaelic-speaking members and should aim to produce its own Gaelic Language Plan.
2. That a Gaelic Language plan is more than a mere policy or statement of support, it gives clear direction to an organisation in defining how it will support Gaelic language revitalisation efforts and provides a consistency in the approach taken by a body from one year to the next.
3. That educational institutions have historically played a profoundly destructive role in discouraging the usage and learning of Gaelic and by teaching as a subject only rather than dealing with it as a living community language.

### **Conference resolved:**

1. To research the needs of students and student leaders who speak or are learning Scottish Gaelic in relation to NUS Scotland's work.
2. To open a dialogue with NUS Wales and the Union of Students of Ireland to facilitate an exchange of ideas.
3. To write Gaelic Language Plan for NUS Scotland, the final draft of which will be submitted to National Conference in March 2014 for approval.
4. To apply for funding to Bòrd na Gàidhlig to help facilitate this project.

## **Building autonomous and democratic students' associations**

### **Conference believed:**

1. That all students' associations should be autonomous from their institutions.
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2. That autonomy isn't just about being legally separate but also about having the funding and staff support to be independent of our institutions.
  3. That, following the Education Act 1994 passed by the Westminster Government, many Students' Associations have opted to become charities or been forced to by their institutions.
  4. That this change has led to a certain degree of tension in many students' associations, often having to choose between compliance with charity law and compliance with the democratically expressed will of their members.
  5. That Trustee Boards are not, and cannot ever be, democratic.
  6. That we should not reject the charity structure outright as many students' associations struggling to exert their autonomy often find it a useful vehicle.
  7. That a well-funded, vibrant, democratic and autonomous movement is something that we should constantly be working towards.
  8. That the Education Act 1994 has given institutions far too much power over our associations and that this must be rectified.
  9. That both education and charity law is now a devolved matter.

#### **Conference resolved:**

1. To conduct research into the impact which the Education Act 1994 and having charitable status has on students' associations autonomy and democratic nature.
2. To use this research to develop proposals for a new legal structure for students' associations which reconciles the potential conflict between governance structures and democratic structures.
3. To lobby the Scottish Government to implement legislation which would allow students' associations to adopt this new legal structure should they so wish.
4. To call for a nationally agreed minimum level of funding per head for all students' associations.

#### **Fund education, scrap Trident**

##### **Conference believed:**

1. The cost of renewing Trident, Britain's nuclear weapons system, has risen to £100 billion (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/sep/18/trident-replacement-hidden-cost-revealed>.)
  2. According to the Treasury, by mid-2010 Britain had spent more than £20 billion on the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10359548>). The cost of Britain's war on Libya last year totalled £1.75 billion (<http://english.ruvr.ru/2011/09/26/56750480.html>)
  3. Many thousands of students and young people have played a key role in opposing wars and calling for end to Britain's nuclear weapons system.
  4. That since 2010 funding for courses at colleges and universities has been slashed, along with a programme of complete re-shaping across many institutions throughout Scotland and the rest of the UK.
  5. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, black and minority ethnic students, students with disabilities and impairments, women students and LGBT+ students as well as students who are parents and/or carers are being cut out of further and higher education due to the withdrawal of vital funding for support services, such as counselling and mental health services, Education Maintenance Allowance (E.M.A) and the health in pregnancy grant.
  6. That a mass anti-Trident demonstration has been called for in Glasgow on April 13th.
  7. That this demonstration has been supported by the Faslane Peace Camp, Scottish CND, 'No to NATO' coalition, the Scottish Green party, Radical Independence Conference, amongst others.
  8. That a 'Fund Education, Scrap Trident' Bloc is being organised for this demonstration, with students
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mobilising from across Scotland.

**Conference believed:**

1. That education is a social good and should be a right and not a privilege.
2. That students play a vital and progressive role in civil society and as a union, we should engage on national and international debates.
3. That nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are immoral and should be consistently opposed.
4. The money that funds the maintenance of nuclear weapons and illegal wars would be better spent on providing education and welfare.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To work with the Scottish CND and Student CND and other organisations that campaign for the British government to not spend billions on Trident replacement.
2. To support further actions which oppose nuclear weapons and Trident replacement.

## **Rent Guarantor Scheme for EU and Overseas students**

**Conference believed:**

1. Overseas and EU students looking for private rental accommodation are often required to either provide a year worth of rent or UK guarantor
2. That the above obstacles mean that most students cannot find private accommodation which puts them in a position where they are forced to take any accommodation that is available. This is unsafe for our students as they are obliged to rent flats that don't fit requirements and are neglected by the landlord. Additionally, their exposure to dodgy landlords puts them at risk of eviction – enforced at the will of the landlord - and other fraudulent activities.
3. International Students cannot afford to enter the UK with these risks. *Most of them are not informed about these risk in advance.*

**Conference further believed:**

1. Safety and well-being should be our priority, and our international students should be protected in every way once they are in Scotland.
2. That the Rent Guarantor Scheme offers low costs and lost risks for institutions and provides a short assured tenancy.
3. That Rent Guarantor Schemes work to the benefit of international students when renting accommodation
4. Since the University and Colleges receive fees from international students, it should be expected that that act as the guarantor for international students.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To effectively work with Students' Associations, universities and colleges to establish Rent Guarantor Schemes.
2. To distribute information regarding fraudulent activities, rogue landlords, so that each institution can define which properties are eligible for the scheme.
3. It will be university/college's decision whether to accept students under this scheme to ensure the terms and conditions for students accessing this system are met.

### **3 = 3: Drop the 'at start of course rule'**

#### **Conference believed:**

1. That the current rule for EU nationals to be eligible to receive student support funding is that they have been living in Scotland for over three years 'at the start of their course'.
2. That the above rule in affect means that in affect a fourth year student who has been living in Scotland for over six years is not eligible for student support, whilst a student doing his/her second one-year course is eligible and who has been living in Scotland for three years is eligible.
3. That this rule is confusing and unfair.

#### **Conference further believed:**

1. That it strives to bring equality to all students.
2. That no student should face financial hardship.
3. That financial hardship can cause a lot of stress for students and puts them at risk of course withdrawal.
4. That all students should be eligible to receive student support regardless of nationality or time living in Scotland.

#### **Conference resolved:**

1. That whatever position NUS Scotland will take in the student support fund negotiations in the student review, it will seek to sort out this glitch and make that EU students are eligible for student support funding once living in Scotland for over three years regardless of the starting time of the course.

### **Protect Students from Brexit & Immigration Targets and Devolve Immigration Powers to Scotland**

#### **Conference believed:**

1. That due to the Brexit vote great uncertainty exists for EU national students in terms of their future residency in Scotland.
2. That it has a valuable position when it comes to lobbying Scottish Parliament: previous efforts post-EU referendum has led to securing tuition fee exemption for EU nationals who currently study for the remainder of their studies.
3. That it made a valuable contribution to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee in regards to 'The EU Referendum and its Implications for Scotland'<sup>9</sup> which led to the committee's January report<sup>10</sup>.
4. Now It should make use of the opportunity again to submit evidence to the Committee which issued a deadline for a call of evidence from 20<sup>th</sup> June to 25<sup>th</sup> August<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> NUS Response to Evidence

[http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_European/General%20Documents/CTEER\\_EURef\\_NUS\\_Scotland.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/General%20Documents/CTEER_EURef_NUS_Scotland.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Brexit - What Scotland thinks: summary of evidence and emerging issues

[http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_European/Reports/CTEERCS052017R01.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/Reports/CTEERCS052017R01.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee: Call for Evidence

<http://www.parliament.scot/gettinginvolved/105354.aspx>

### Conference further believed:

1. That the efforts the Scottish Government has recently made into exploring whether Immigration can become a devolved matter is welcoming and should be supported<sup>1213</sup>.
2. That student should be excluded from immigration quotas, and that the Scottish Government should put effort in making this point in its consultation with the UK Government - as currently there is cross party support to exclude students from immigration quotas.

### Conference resolved:

1. To vocally support of immigration laws being devolved to Scottish Parliament
2. To lobby Scottish Government to actively pressure the UK government to exclude international students from immigration quotas.
3. To lobby Scottish Government to work with the UK Government to introduce a new Post-Study Work Visa in Scotland to allow international students who are currently in education or have completed their further/higher education course to stay in Scotland
4. To lobby Scottish Government to put pressure on the UK government to confirm rights to reside and work in the UK post-exit for EU national students.
5. By reiterating the above in its response to the recent call for evidence from the Culture, Tourism and External Relations Committee in their recent call for evidence.

### Boycott Prevent and support UK wide Student Not Suspects Campaign

#### Conference noted:

1. The government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory requirement on public bodies and 'specified authorities' – including universities and colleges – 'to prevent people being drawn into terrorism' and to implement the 'Prevent' agenda.
2. The Prevent agenda, as part of the Government's 'anti-extremism' work has been used to create an expansive surveillance architecture to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting Black people and Muslims and students with mental health issues as well as students engaged in student activism.
3. Under Prevent, lecturers and staff have been known to report students as being 'at risk of radicalisation' for merely taking an interest in political affairs in class, or for observing their religion more closely, whilst politically active students have found themselves visited by counter-terrorism officers.

#### Conference believed:

1. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.
2. The Government's identified 'warning signs' of 'radicalisation' problematise and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties.
3. That the Act could serve to isolate many students who already feel that the only avenue through which the Government will engage them is 'anti-radicalisation' initiatives, resulting in further alienation and disaffection.

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<sup>12</sup> Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee – Immigration Inquiry PDF  
[http://www.parliament.scot/Inquiries/CTEER\\_2017.06.20\\_Immigration\\_CFE.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/Inquiries/CTEER_2017.06.20_Immigration_CFE.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Options of Differentiating the UK's Immigration System  
[http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_European/General%20Documents/CTEER\\_Dr\\_Hepburn\\_report\\_2017.04.24.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/General%20Documents/CTEER_Dr_Hepburn_report_2017.04.24.pdf)



### **Conference resolved:**

1. To mandate the Officers of this Union to not engage with the Prevent strategy or implement the proposals of the Act, and to boycott it as far as legally possible.
2. To work with campuses, trade unions including UCU on combating the Prevent strategy and its implementation on campus.
3. To educate students on the dangers of the CTSA and the Prevent Strategy.
4. To lobby NUS affiliated universities and colleges to be more transparent on prevent and similar policies and to stop cohering with Prevent policy's commands.

## **Conference 2019**

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### **Stop student poverty: Annual national bargaining process**

#### **Conference noted:**

1. A national bargaining process is a process wherein unions negotiate i.e. pay conditions with the Government and/or employer.
2. National bargaining is often focused on ensuring that income goes up with the same rate as the living costs. By voting union members get a say to accept or decline the offer made to them.
3. The Student Support Review that lasted two years, after being campaigned for since 2015 was governmentally orchestrated, offered incremental improvements and fell short of fixing the system of student support.
4. The student support system is based on the idea that if students work besides their study no financial hardship will be incurred, however figures show that even when working full-time, work is no longer a route out of poverty; 52 per cent of people in Scotland officially below the breadline are in a job, working to remain poor.
5. The student support system is incredibly complicated and complex, a consistent approach is needed in order to address this broken system and embolden our movement.

#### **Conference believed:**

1. NUS Scotland addresses the problems of the broken student support system frequently and has shown great leadership in the last year by condemning the Scottish Government for their reluctance to resolving student poverty.
2. However, NUS Scotland does currently not have an annual national bargaining process that can bring consistency in the demand for the system to be fixed.
3. A national bargaining process gives students a voice to demand real improvements right now. It would strengthen NUS Scotland's position as a credible union.

#### **Conference resolved:**

1. That NUS Scotland should explore the creation of an annual national bargaining process on student support with the Scottish Government, allowing us to better respond to student need, tackle student poverty and push for a truly free education.
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## The Parent Trap 2: Universal credit

### Conference noted:

1. The current NUS Scotland policy on student parents and carers is about to lapse
2. The report 'Bairn Necessities' was published by NUS Scotland in 2016. This report identified gaps in support and funding for student parents and carers in Scotland and still provides useful tools to compare progress at institutions.
3. All institutions should have a student parent and carer maternity policy, however this is not currently the case.
4. Self-directed study is still a valuable part of a course therefore it is not realistic for student parents to study without childcare support.
5. A significant proportion of adult returners are women who have gone to study once their children have started school. Whilst nursery places are a vital lifeline to many student parents, provision for older children is often forgotten. Accessible, flexible and affordable breakfast clubs and afterschool care should be a public good available to all parents.
6. Universal credit is a devolved policy.

### Conference believed:

1. Universal credit negatively affects student parents and carers as well as other groups
2. SFC funding guidelines only provides childcare for contact time but does not cover study time.
3. Not having allocated study time puts added unnecessary stress on student parents

### Conference resolved:

1. That a group is set up to improve the support in place for Student Parents and Carers. This group should consist of students across institutions as well as NUS Scotland representatives.
2. That the group will engage in conversations with Scottish decision makers to mitigate against the impact of the introduction of universal credit with specific focus on the potential adverse effect on student parents and carers in Scotland so they are not shut out of education.
3. NUS Scotland to lobby Scottish Government to alter Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidelines to grant student parents childcare provisions for full-time course hours.

## A new representative structure for NUS Scotland

### Conference noted:

1. The last time NUS Scotland's structures were broadly reformed was in 2011.
  2. That the system was designed to organise our work into three campaigns; priority, education and communities.
  3. That this model assumed there would be a full time President, Vice President Education (VPE) and Vice President Communities (VPC) to lead each campaign.
  4. That the Scottish Executive Committee roles were designed to support this structure.
  5. That the language we use in our structures places too much responsibility on the shoulders of unpaid, voluntary officers.
  6. That voluntary positions within NUS Scotland, particularly liberation, need to be better supported to ensure their priorities are embedded into the work of the organisation.
  7. That following motions to Scotland Conference 2018 and The Scottish Executive Committee, NUS Scotland began to explore issuing honorariums to liberation officers to recognise their work but, due to turnaround, these discussions needed to be paused.
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### Conference believed:

1. That the funding was never found for a full time Vice President Communities. This meant the Communities campaign was left with no funded, political leadership.
2. That the 2014 replacement of campaign co-conveners with a block of eight further obscured the original structure.
3. That the 2018 decision to replace the VPE with a Deputy President, meant that the structure deviated even further from its original design.
4. That voluntary officers' titles and role descriptions imply an unreasonable level of activity in relation to available support.
5. That the Turnaround process has forced us to reform our structures across NUS UK, and is likely to reduce the number of Full-Time Officers in NUS Scotland.
6. That the turnaround process has not adequately identified how liberation will be supported, giving NUS Scotland an opportunity to undertake consultation and develop an effective structure for supporting and embedding liberation

### Conference resolved:

1. To have the SEC consider our current structures and propose reforms during session 2019-20.
2. That the SEC's proposal must be shaped by consultation with members throughout the year.
3. That the SEC's proposal ensures effective representation, a clear structure for our campaigns, a focus on delivering the work of NUS Scotland, tie in with Turnaround related changes, and that more realistic expectations are set regarding voluntary officers.
4. That self-defining students and NUS Scotland's liberation representatives will be fully consulted to ensure any proposed reforms result in a structure that better supports their work and does not undermine their political autonomy or self-organising.
5. That any structure must seek to include honorariums for liberation officers and, if they are not included, adequate justification given as to why such financial recognition has been excluded.

### Keeping mental health in the conversation

#### Conference noted:

1. That in the past year we have seen significant progress within the sector on acknowledging and addressing the mental health issues faced by students.
2. That the Scottish Government has announced £20 million over 4 years to implement 80 counsellors in universities and colleges.
3. That NUS Scotland's Government-funded Think Positive projects have both secured additional funding in the past year and are seeing record numbers of institutions participating.
4. That the Scottish Government has asked all institutions to take part in Think Positive's Student Mental Health Agreements project through the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science's Letter of Guidance to the Scottish Funding Council.

#### Conference believed:

1. That the announced counselling provision must include provision that is sensitive to liberation groups and regional differences.
  2. As implementation of the new counsellors will be over four years, there is still an urgent need to implement other measures that will help to address student mental ill-health in the interim and beyond.
  3. That while we welcomed the recent announcement by the Scottish Government of 80 counsellors, counselling does not address the entirety of the problem.
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4. Students often face significant gaps in mental health support when transferring between NHS boards and university or college.
  5. EU and International students are similarly likely to face gaps in provision when moving between their home country and university or college.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To continue to work with the Scottish Government to ensure implementation of the counselling posts benefits all students.
2. To continue to support students' associations to campaign locally on mental health related issues.
3. To campaign for a uniform policy across NHS services on transferring between mental health services.
4. To lobby institutions to have a policy on the portability of care for EU and international students.

**Fairness for Scotland's apprentices!**

**Conference noted:**

1. That apprentices are amongst the worst paid workers in society.
2. National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) policy is that the Apprentice National Minimum Wage be abolished, that everyone should be paid the real living wage, and that trade union membership is promoted to apprentices by NSoA.

**Conference believed:**

1. That apprentices are students as well as workers, and NUS has responsibility to work with NSoA fight for their interests.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To campaign for the abolition of the Apprentice Minimum Wage.
2. To lobby the Living Wage Foundation in Scotland to include apprentices in their accreditation scheme.
3. To support our members to promote Trade Union membership to apprentices in their institutions.

**Mind the gap – let's put an end to the summer pay gap!**

**Conference noted:**

1. The independent Student Support Review, "A New Social Contract for Students in Scotland" was published in 2017, with numerous recommendations to significantly increase bursary support for the poorest students in both further and higher education.
2. The Budget for Better campaign was launched in December 2017 by NUS Scotland to achieve campaign goals of increased funding for bursaries, a better deal for graduates and better mental health support.
3. The Independent Student Support Review included a recommendation for students' choice on timing of support payments.

**Conference believed:**

1. The Budget for Better campaign was successful in its endeavour to push for better mental health support and student graduates, but there is still more work to be done.
  2. There is a disparity with payments between University students & HE students at College.
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3. A summer pay gap can leave some students in debt. For some students, they are hindered from securing accommodation before the start of their course as in many cases, two months are due to be paid up front as deposit for either student halls or private tenancy.
  4. No student should lose their benefit entitlements because they are in receipt of student funding.

#### **Conference resolved:**

1. NUS Scotland should continue the momentum of the Budget for Better campaign and fight to put an end to the summer pay gap and ensure there is parity for all students of all backgrounds in HE education.
2. NUS Scotland to support student associations in developing the capacity for mass protest and direct action in order to demand the end to the summer pay gap.
3. As the independent Student Support Review recommends, NUS Scotland must continue lobbying Scottish Government to develop a new Special Support Payment for students in receipt of benefits, similar to that already adopted in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **Equity in education**

#### **Conference noted:**

1. Scotland is considered as a world-leading educational provider throughout further and higher education.
2. Some progress has been made to ensure equity throughout all areas of education in Scotland, including through joint working with the Scottish Government and NUS Scotland on initiatives such as the Gender Action Plan.

#### **Conference believed:**

1. That for students' associations to flourish and for the student movement to grow, greater understanding must be given to governmental policy that progresses the rights and protections of students.
2. Students with particular circumstances, or those defined under the Equality Act (2010) as being a 'protected characteristic' are often subject to increased barriers to participation when trying to access services.
3. Students, particularly BME or LGBTI students, often face additional barriers to mental health services, resources, student support networks, healthcare and other aspects of education due to the lack of cultural sensitivity or reasonable adjustments made to enhance their learning.
4. Through their Gender Action Plan, Race Equality Action Plan, Inclusive Education Working Group recommendations and more, the Scottish Government has frameworks which, if correctly engaged, could provide structure for students' associations to work within.

#### **Conference resolved:**

1. To use future NUS Scotland events to engage students with these national frameworks and initiatives in line with student association policy.
2. That NUS Scotland Scottish Executive Committee and liberation officers will be involved in developing and delivering the engagement and awareness.
3. To develop a resource detailing existing equity frameworks which universities and colleges are responsible to engage with, and to provide guidance for students' associations to employ these to campaign and lobby for institution development.

### **Raising the bar for widening access**

#### **Conference noted:**

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1. That Scotland's universities were set a widening access target for 2021, that 16% of their student population should be from Scotland's 20% most deprived areas (according to the SIMD).
  2. That recent figures have shown that Scottish Universities are on track to meet their 2021 target for Widening Access several years earlier than expected, hitting 15.6% as of 2017/18.

**Conference believed:**

1. That this is a positive development, demonstrating we are on track to achieve a more socially and economically just education system, that ensures universities aren't simply for the wealthy and the elite.
2. That this demonstrates Scotland's universities have a notable ability to widen access when dedicating their time and resource to doing so.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To use the current momentum in Widening Access, continuing to press for change in our institutions to ensure the 2021 target is met and that the ambitions of our sector extend beyond that date.

**A better deal for student renters**

**Conference noted:**

1. Protections for tenants in Scotland are still far behind those of many other places in Europe and that high rents and low quality housing have a severely detrimental effect on student tenants' welfare.
2. Legal changes that have strengthened the rights of, and recourse available to, tenants in the private rented sector in recent years include specialist landlord and tenant dispute resolution, a new code of practice for letting agents and security of tenure. Further, the limited rent control powers for local authorities have yet to be used anywhere in Scotland.
3. Many student renters have been left behind, with privately - and institution-owned purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) having been exempted from recent legislative changes.
4. Research conducted by NUS and Unipol, showed the continued rise of privately-run PBSA across the UK, with student accommodation now split 50:50 between educational institutions and private operators.
5. PBSA rents have outstripped inflation, with increasing availability of 'luxury' student accommodation that is the preserve of the few.

**Conference believed:**

1. Students – like everyone – have a right to housing that is safe, habitable and affordable.
2. From Mary Barbour to Living Rent, Scotland has shown, time and again, the immense collective power of renters.
3. The Scottish Government should take steps to improve the rights of student renters in PBSA.
4. That the Scottish Government should introduce effective rent controls that ensure affordable and high quality housing for all student tenants.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To work with Living Rent to build tenant organising on campuses across Scotland, and campaign for an effective model of rent controls to be introduced.
  2. To lobby government to put in place better regulation of PBSA: to ensure affordability for students, and that meaningful recourse and compensation is available to them in the event of disputes with providers.
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3. To continue to lobby the Scottish Government to improve cost-of-living support available to Scotland's students – especially those from the poorest backgrounds.
  4. To lobby decision-makers to explore council tax exemption schemes for part-time students and apprentices.
  5. To lobby for better protections and support for those who may not easily be able to provide a guarantor, such as international and estranged students, to ensure they are better able secure accommodation.

### Equal marriage in Northern Ireland

#### Conference noted:

1. In the most recent vote, 51% of Northern Irish MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) voted for marriage equality, but the DUP (Democratic Unionist Party) was able to veto it by invoking a petition of concern<sup>14</sup>.
2. 70% of the Northern Irish public are in support of marriage equality<sup>15</sup>.
3. Northern Ireland is the only place in the UK where same-sex marriage is still illegal.
4. Reduced LGBT+ rights in Northern Ireland has led to a mental health crisis in the community that is particularly severe, with 35% of LGBT+ individuals self-harming compared to 13% in rest of UK, 57% drinking to hazardous levels compared to 24% in England, and 25% attempting suicide<sup>16</sup>.

#### Conference believed:

1. That marriage is a fundamental human right that everyone, regardless of their identity, should have access to.
2. That it is our duty as a students' association to fight for marriage equality and LGBT+ rights in Northern Ireland, not only on behalf of our LGBT+ and Northern Irish student populations, but also as a fundamental right.

#### Conference resolved:

1. Support the Love Equality Coalition campaign for equal marriage in Northern Ireland during LGBT+ history month.
2. Support the Love Equality Coalition further by publishing a statement of support as a Students' Association, and running an awareness-raising campaign about marriage equality in Northern Ireland.
3. Encourage local LGBTQ+ organisations to do the same.

### Fighting student homelessness

#### Conference noted:

1. That students in Scotland can sometimes face the risk of homelessness.
2. That this is due to several factors stemming from student life; precarious work and uncertain incomes, lack of parental support, shoddy landlords and more.

#### Conference believed:

1. That having safe and secure accommodation is a core aspect of having a successful education.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-politics-34692546>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/survey-shows-70-support-for-samesex-marriages-in-northern-ireland-34842125.html>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/mental-health-northern-ireland-fundamental-facts>

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2. That the numbers of students in colleges and universities who end up facing homelessness is unacceptable and that sufficient support does not support those who end up without accommodation.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To support our members in campaigning against charges on emergency accommodation in institutional accommodation.

**Justice for estranged students**

**Tabled by:** Forth Valley College Students' Association

**Conference noted:**

1. That much has been done recently to financially assist Scotland's most vulnerable students, the clearest example of this the Care Experienced bursary.
2. That the bursary exists because care experienced students cannot consistently rely on familial support during their studies, exposing them to financial risk.
3. That estranged students, those who have no contact with parents due to a breakdown in relationship, death or other unfortunate circumstances, face the same lack of familial support as care experiences students.
4. That estranged students are often disproportionately from marginalised groups, such as the LGBT+ community.

**Conference believed:**

1. That estranged students have slipped through the net, not benefitting from any of the new measures that now exist to support Scotland's most vulnerable student cohorts.
2. That estranged students face a number of challenges, but many of them stem from a lack of access to financial support. Whether it is an inability to evidence parental income to SAAS, having no parents or family - or none willing - to assist them, or their exclusion from new support structures, the system has clearly failed them.
3. That many solutions to estranged students' problems already exist, and that NUS Scotland must play a role in identifying and applying them.

**Conference resolved:**

1. To support StandAlone in their calls for support on the same terms as the Care Experienced bursary for estranged students, and that estranged students should not graduate with more debt than those with parental support due to their independent student status.
2. To work with StandAlone and other groups advocating for estranged students to better understand the extent of their needs, identify potential solutions and lobby the Scottish Government to implement them.

**Resourcing our women's rep**

**Conference noted:**

1. Proposed reforms to NUS UK will de-fund the Women's Campaign in Scotland and change the full-time Women's Officer position into a voluntary Women's Representative.

**Conference believed:**

1. Despite a small budget the campaign had been effective and consistent fulfilling its purpose. Working with students, officers and the wider education and women's sector: combating gender based violence, pro-choice advocacy, ending period poverty, Women in STEM, sex-worker solidarity etc.
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2. The campaign is an influential and powerful voice across the educational spheres, successfully lobbying and influencing the Scottish Government, the SFC, Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, trade unions, women's organisations etc.
  3. The campaign is fundamental to securing a free, fair and accessible education in Scotland, working in a devolved capacity which cannot be fulfilled by the NUS UK Women's Officer.

#### **Conference resolved:**

- 1 NUS Scotland should commit organisational capacity and £500 budget to support a voluntary Women's Representative to continue to engage in sector-wide developments including: Equally Safe in Colleges and Universities, free access to sanitary products, Scottish Funding Council Gender Governance and any other areas of work deemed a priority.
7. If, following the turnaround process NUS Scotland retains two full-time officers, due consultation and consideration should be given to exploring the benefits of a full-time President/Women's Officer Structure.
8. That refunding a full-time Women's Officer role and campaign in Scotland becomes a key consideration for all future consultation and reforms proposed for NUS Scotland's officer structure, and that this is represented in UK-wide consultations and reforms.
9. The SEC communicates the justification for any decisions they have made regarding reinstating a full-time Women's Officer in any proposed restructure.

### **Defending gender balance**

#### **Conference noted:**

1. Gender balancing rules within NUS Scotland is the result of the struggle to ensure that women students in Scotland can access and participate in the democracy of our National Union, whether through setting policy, electing officers or running in elections.
2. NUS Scotland has been a long-time proponent of gender parity across public and political spaces in Scotland (supporting Women 50:50 and other campaigns), recognising it as a necessary step to ensure women have their voices heard at the highest level of decision making across our society, and as a necessary step towards gender equity.
3. Proposed reforms to NUS UK National Conference will likely result in the end of gender balancing at conferences, the removal of NUS Scotland Women's Conference and full-time officer.

#### **Conference believed:**

- 1 The impending reforms means that NUS Scotland Conference will become the only platform for women students in Scotland to engage with the democratic processes of NUS Scotland, making it even more integral that gender balanced conferences are maintained, ensuring that women students can continue to participate and have their voices heard within NUS Scotland.
- 2 Gender balancing at NUS Scotland conference is further necessitated to ensure the continued viability and engagement with the women's movement through the Women's liberation caucus to be held at Scotland Conference following reforms.

#### **Conference resolved:**

- 1 NUS Scotland SEC will submit rules change to NUS Scotland Conference 2020 which maintains gender balancing among delegates to all democratic events.
- 2 SEC work with other Liberation Representatives to ensure that rules changes are proposed to NUS Scotland Conference 2020 to ensure adequate representation from all five liberation groups at NUS Scotland democratic events.

### **Certainty for EU students**

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### Conference noted:

1. The UK Government's handling of the Brexit process has presented unacceptable levels of uncertainty for students – in Scotland and across the EU.
2. The Scottish Government has taken the welcome step of guaranteeing cost-of-living and tuition fee support for Scottish students at EU universities so they can continue their studies in Scotland after Brexit.
3. While fee status for EU students starting their studies in 2019/20 has been assured, there has been no certainty provided for 2020/21.
4. Universities are currently creating prospectuses for 2020/21 entry.

### Conference believed:

- 1 A diverse campus benefits all who study there and that all students would suffer from a decrease in EU students studying in Scotland.
- 2 EU students considering study in Scotland should be able to make an informed decision and know what fees they would be paying if entering in 2020/21.

### Conference resolved:

- 1 NUS Scotland will work with the wider university and college sectors to call for clarity for European students starting in 2020/21.
- 2 NUS Scotland will continue to lobby the UK Government to ensure the voices of students are heard in the Brexit process.

## Graduations: the big payoff, not the big pay out!

### Conference noted:

1. The recent FOI data shows many institutions across Scotland are charging their students to graduate.
2. That despite recent victories at Strathclyde, Aberdeen, Robert Gordon, Napier and Stirling where SAs have successfully abolished fees, there are still universities and colleges across Scotland charging graduation fees to their students.
3. These institutions apply charges to attend the ceremony, and some still charge students who cannot attend through an "in absentia" graduation fee.
4. In addition to graduation fees, students have to pay expensive robe hire costs.

### Conference believed:

- 1 That graduations are supposed to be a celebration of success and all students who have worked hard and achieved their qualifications should be able to participate at no cost to themselves.
7. That charging students to receive their degree or certificate at the end of their course is incompatible with the principle of free education.
8. The monopoly on expensive robe hire should be broken and students unable to pay gown costs should be supported through graduation hardship funds.

### Conference resolved:

- 1 To continue to support our member associations to campaign against graduation fees on their campus.
  - 2 To use our platform to celebrate and amplify the successes of our members as they fight for these changes, building momentum for change across the country.
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- 3 To apply pressure nationally so other institutions are more likely to work with their SA to dispense with graduation charges.
  - 4 To conduct research into the cost of robe hire and support member associations lobbying for graduation hardship funds.

## **Less rhetoric, more funding!**

### **Conference noted:**

1. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has outlined that education is the “defining and driving priority” of the Scottish Government.
2. Despite this, the Scottish Budget 2019-20, passed by MSPs on 21 February 2019, sees a real terms reduction in funding for day-to-day costs at Scotland’s colleges and universities.

### **Conference believed:**

3. Continued cuts to college and university budgets will negatively impact on the experience of Scotland’s students, whether that is through a reduction in teaching staff, courses on offer or available support services.
4. If education is the priority of the Scottish Government then we need to see investment – not cuts – in our colleges, universities and, most importantly, our students.

### **Conference resolved:**

2. Continue to campaign for a fully-funded education sector that can attract and retain the best staff, offer a wide variety of courses and classes, provide the support services our diverse student population need, and a student support system that meets the living costs our students face.
3. Work with Colleges Scotland, Universities Scotland, trade unions and other key partners to lobby the Scottish Government to ensure they move beyond their usual rhetoric and fully fund the further and higher education sectors.

## **Police and campus democracy**

### **Conference believed:**

1. That since late 2013 there has been a recent upsurge in struggle in the student movement.
2. This has included demonstrations and occupations at several universities in solidarity with workers’ struggles on campuses, against police violence, and in opposition to the closure of the University of London Union (ULU).
3. That institutional managements have responded to this with draconian injunctions intended to restrict the right to protest and by actively colluding with the police to arrest and inflict violence on students.

### **Conference further believed:**

1. That colleges and universities should be sites in which critical thinking and active dissent are encouraged, not restricted.
2. That the recent use of injunctions and recourse to the police is the reflex of a university or college management which has lost the substantive argument with staff and students over marketisation, tuition fees, outsourcing and higher education pay.
3. That colleges and universities should be run by those who study and work in them, and not by overpaid and unaccountable senior managers.
4. That police should not be allowed on to campus without active permission from both the college or university management and the student union.

### **Conference resolved:**

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1. To condemn heavy handed policing of protests wherever it happens and to lobby Police Scotland around these issues.
  2. To demand of Parliament a law which says that police cannot enter and operate on university/college campuses/property without (active, ongoing i.e. unrescinded) permission from both university management and the student union.
  3. To demand of university/college managements that they give a pledge – and write into university regulations – that they will not call police onto campus or university/college property without (active, ongoing) permission from the student union.
  4. To create a legal fund to support students facing charges or legal costs from either participation in campus protests or occupations, or general mistreatment by college or university management.

## **Right to Education**

### **Conference noted:**

1. That over 1/3 of the Palestinian population are students in full-time education and face systematic attacks on their education as a result of the Israeli occupation.
2. That Israel uses physical barriers of movement in order to isolate and ghettoise Palestinians. The existence of barriers such as military checkpoints and the separation wall prevent thousands of students and teachers from accessing institutions.
3. That Birzeit University in the West Bank has been sealed off on a number of occasions by roadblocks; and the road to Birzeit remains subject to frequent 'flying checkpoints', which block, harass and intimidate students and staff.
4. That Al-Quds University in East Jerusalem is surrounded by an 8 metre-high concrete wall, which cuts the University off from over a third of its students.
5. That over 70 educational institutions from nurseries to universities in the Gaza strip have been partially or fully destroyed.
6. Every year between 500-700 Palestinian children, some as young as 10, are detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system.
7. Both institutions and representatives of students' unions have been targeted through means such as forced closures and detention without charge respectively.

### **Conference believed:**

1. That the right to education is enshrined as a fundamental human right in international law, as declared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
2. It is the responsibility of students and wider society to defend the universal right to education and to demand its realisation.

### **Conference resolved:**

1. To affiliate to the Right to Education Campaign and release a public statement of solidarity and support.
2. To facilitate Students' Unions' affiliation to the campaign.
3. To support the Right to Education Campaign's call for international action against Israeli human right violations.

## **Improving student housing**

### **Conference believed:**

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1. This year we've made some big strides in the work we're doing on housing, particularly for students, but we can still go further.
  2. Access to affordable, secure, accessible and fit for purpose housing should be a guaranteed right for all students.
  3. Halls shouldn't simply be a commercial opportunity for institutions. It is there to provide a safe and affordable option for students.
  4. When a student moves from halls of residence to the private rented sector, that shouldn't automatically stop an institution's responsibility towards that student.
  5. Institutions owe a particular duty of care towards students with physical and mental health issues, students from more disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with parent and caring responsibilities.

#### **Conference resolved:**

1. To continue our work with student tenant unions, fighting for an improved private rented sector.
2. Research the profits generated by each halls of residence, and work with students' associations to campaign locally for halls of residence profits to be reinvested into:
  - a. Better quality living facilities
  - b. Reduced rent
  - c. Additional support services, such as counselling services.

#### **Fossil Fuel UK campaign**

#### **Conference believed:**

1. That NUS runs several projects aimed at improving the sustainability of universities and colleges, and has campaigned on climate change for years to create a safe future for current and future generations.
2. That NUS played a leading role in the successful campaign to divest UK institutions' investments from companies supporting the South African Apartheid regime.
3. That we are running out of time to keep global warming below 2°C above pre-industrial levels - the internationally-agreed limit for ensuring a safe and stable future for the economy, the planet and all people on it, as recently outlined in the IPCC's 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report.<sup>17</sup>
4. That the oil, coal and gas reserves of the world's 200 largest fossil fuel companies reserves contain five times more carbon than is safe to burn to stay below well in excess of the amount of carbon that can be safely burned to have a chance of staying below 2°C.
5. That People & Planet, in partnership with 350.org and others, has launched a Fossil Free UK campaign, calling on education institutions to divest from fossil fuels and sever their links with these companies.<sup>18</sup>
6. The recent University of Oxford Smith School describing the rapidly growing, global fossil fuel divestment movement as 'the most far-reaching threat to fossil fuel companies'.

#### **Conference further believed:**

1. That the fossil fuel industry, by continuing to invest over \$600bn annually to explore for new reserves of oil, coal and gas, is recklessly increasing the threat that climate change poses to the current generation, future generations and the planet.
2. That NUS Scotland must do everything in its power to rapidly reduce investment in fossil fuels and expand investment in clean energy alternatives.

#### **Conference resolved:**

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<sup>17</sup><http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/sep/27/ipcc-world-dangerous-climate-change>

<sup>18</sup><http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free>

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1. To publicly support the Fossil Free UK campaign.
  2. For NUS Scotland to help stop the 'greenwash' of the fossil fuel industry by rejecting sponsorship or support from fossil fuel companies.
  3. For NUS Scotland to divest any investments it holds in the fossil fuel industry and to establish an ethical investment policy, to be ratified by SEC, which would govern any future investments by NUS Scotland.
  4. To collaborate with People & Planet on its Fossil Free divestment campaign.
  5. For NUS Scotland to support students and student unions in lobbying their universities to divest from the fossil fuel industry and to make resources available via NUS Connect.

## Wealth redistribution and education

### Conference believed:

1. There is an austerity agenda that refuses to fund education properly, which produces a false choice between underfunded, fee-laden, debt-ridden education for the many or free, elite education for the privileged few.
2. This is no choice at all.
3. NUS believes in democracy – but political democracy is incomplete when the distribution of wealth is violently unequal and undemocratic.
4. Vast wealth lies in the coffers of a handful of rich, powerful people and their private businesses, instead of being invested in socially useful purposes such as education.
5. In 2008, the UK government spent £850 billion to bail out banks, but these banks have continued to operate much as before, instead of being required to spend that public money on the public good.
6. If this wealth was instead under democratic control, our society could use it to build a comprehensive accessible free education system for all and pay every education worker decently, and still have plenty left over for free, world-class healthcare, good social housing, and decent public services and benefits for all.

### Conference resolved:

1. To reject the absurd idea that our society lacks the resources to provide decently for its citizens, and make campaigning for the democratisation of our society's wealth a priority running through NUS's work.
2. To demand that free, accessible, quality education, and decent wages, public services and benefits, are funded by:
  - a. Ending tax evasion and avoidance and cracking down on tax havens
  - b. Imposing serious taxes on the incomes, inheritance and capital gains of the rich
  - c. Taking the banks, and their wealth, under democratic control.
3. To raise these demands in particular when putting forward positions on fees and education funding, and when organising protest actions.

## Scotland as a nation of debt justice

### Conference believed:

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1. Unjust and unpayable sovereign debt continues to keep many of the world's most vulnerable countries in poverty, as governments are forced to service these debts ahead of citizen-determined investment.
  2. Many of the debts owed to the UK are the result of irresponsible lending; to dictators, for arms deals, and for white elephant construction projects.
  3. Export deals made through UK Export Finance continue to force poor countries into debt, with minimal requirements for companies to conduct human rights and environmental impacts.
  4. There is currently no fair and transparent debt workout mechanism to allow countries to seek debt relief.

**Conference further believed:**

1. Scottish citizens, institutions and policy makers can play a key role in advocating for global debt justice.
2. Students have always been a key component of the economic justice movement in Scotland for example through engagement with Make Poverty History in 2005.
3. The Jubilee Scotland coalition campaigns for Scotland to be a nation of debt justice, through lobbying institutions and empowering people across Scotland to take action for economic justice.

**Conference resolved:**

1. That NUS Scotland sign the Jubilee Scotland's Debt Justice Pledge, calling for Scotland to be a nation of debt justice through:
    - a. auditing any debt which may be inherited from the UK and cancel that which is found to be unjust,
    - b. ensuring that exports do not contribute to new unjust debt,
    - c. promoting itself as a seat of arbitration for unjust debt,
    - d. promoting the concept for debt justice internationally
  2. That NUS Scotland affiliate as a member organisation to the Jubilee Scotland coalition.
  3. To investigate new opportunities to work with the Jubilee Scotland coalition and contribute to campaigns for debt justice.
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