

NUS-USI POLICY FILE 2014-2015



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This document collates those democratically decided policies that direct the work of NUS-USI and in particular it's executive committee. The policy file has been updated after the annual conference of NUS-USI Northern Ireland which took place in April 2014. We hope member unions find it a helpful resource.

There are many reasons why such a file is useful to members:

- In order to let member unions be aware of NUS-USI policy on a variety of issues.
- To ensure that member unions are aware that policy is upheld by NUS-USI executive.
- To convince member unions to submit more motions to NUS-USI conference.
- To prevent replicating of already binding motions.
- To allow NUS-USI executive to plan for the year, and allow binding policy to be incorporated into the NUS-USI executive plan of work.
- To enable Unions to answer queries on NUS-USI policies from student members

All motions passed at NUS-USI conference are then categorised by steering committee into the eleven subject areas, which are:

1. Campaigns
2. Community Relations, Human Rights and Political Issues
3. FE Student Union Development
4. Higher Education and Student Financial Support
5. International Affairs
6. NUS-USI Region
7. Sport, Clubs and Societies
8. Training and Student Development
9. Welfare and Health
10. Liberation Issues
11. Environmental Issues

All NUS-USI policy is binding on the NUS-USI executive for five years. Where a policy heading contains a year, such as 2015 in brackets, this means that a particular policy is binding until 2015 and is due to lapse immediately after the 2015 conference. We hope that all member unions add to this policy file, by submitting motions at each and every NUS-USI conference and steering committee would welcome your opinions on the document.

NUS-USI steering committee
March 2015

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CAMPAIGNS

Voter registration (2015)

Conference notes:

That a local election is expected by autumn 2011.

Conference also notes:

That many local authority wards have significant student populations, in particular the Laganbank ward in Belfast.

Conference believes:

That NUS-USI should be responsible for the proactive organisation of voter registration within these areas to ensure that students take part in the democratic process.

Conference hereby mandates:

The Regional Executive to run a proactive campaign of student mobilisation in advance of these elections.

Road Safety (2015)

Conference notes:

The work begun in the last 12 months by NUS-USI with DOE in relation to Road Safety.

Conference also notes:

The disproportionate number of deaths amongst young people (particularly men) on our roads.

Conference resolves:

To include a piece of work in the NUS-USI plan of work for 2011-2010 on road safety with member unions.

Feedback (2015)

Conference notes:

That the quality, timing and method of feedback on assessment is a major issue facing both HE and FE students, as endorsed by the National Student Survey since its inception.

Conference believes:

That there is a need for better engagement by students' unions and institutions with the issue, and that limited good practice currently exists which should be exemplified.

Conference hereby mandates:

The Regional Executive to develop a feedback campaign to be rolled out at member unions that builds on the work already done by the NUS.

Graduate Unemployment (2016)

Conference notes:

The totally unacceptable levels of graduate unemployment reported in recent labour market surveys, and in anecdotal evidence provided to student representatives.

Conference recognises:

A general right to work, and a responsibility on the part of government to ensure this right is honoured.

Conference believes:

That graduate unemployment is symptomatic of an unacceptable and iniquitous labour market, and further recognises the social and economic damage wrought by youth unemployment in general.

Conference believes:

That the national and devolved governments are not doing nearly enough to tackle, or mitigate the effects of graduate and youth unemployment.

Conference resolves:

That the NUS-USI and its affiliated unions must work together to measure the scope of the problem in Northern Ireland in a more systematic way.

Conference mandates:

The President and Regional Executive to work with member unions and NUSUK to measure the problem, develop a robust campaign centred on lobbying and media awareness and, if necessary, pursue a campaign of non-violent direct action in response to this problem.

Campaigns Planning (2017)

Conference notes:

Due to the semester structure member unions have limited time to engage and campaign for students.

Conference further notes:

Many students' unions will plan campaigns well in advance and develop a schedule for each semester and often the full year.

Conference believes:

NUS-USI's involvement in member unions' summer planning and training is crucial to integrate national campaigns into each union's plans.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI should facilitate campaign planning prior to the start of term to successfully plan national campaigns. This may take the form of a workshop involving all member unions sharing ideas and promotion partnership amongst institutions.

Employability (2017)

Conference notes:

Unemployment amongst graduates and young people is at an all-time high in Northern Ireland and the UK.

Conference further notes:

Offering extra-curricular activities to students does not only enhance student experience but also increases individuals' skill sets and employability.

Conference believes:

NUS-USI can play a big part in promoting extra-curricular opportunities to students and the related benefits of these.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI provide advice and support on how to best deliver these opportunities to students, key skills areas which may need to be developed in our region and develop a campaign promoting these opportunities.

Public Transport for Students (2018)

Conference notes:

1. Public transport in Northern Ireland is not entirely student friendly.
2. Public transport does not always prove to be the most cost effective way for students to travel.
3. Currently Translink only offers discounted travel to people between the ages of 16-23 through their Y-Link card

Conference believes:

1. Public transport should be student friendly and not a drain on students' money.
2. More could be done to make public transport more suitable for students.
3. Students over the age of 23 should be able to avail of discounted public transport

Conference resolves:

1. NUS-USI lobby Translink to extend the current Y-Link discount cards to all students.
2. NUS-USI identifies key public transport routes commonly used by student and lobby Translink to ensure they are student friendly.

Student Support (2018)**Conference notes:**

1. Student support services throughout Further and Higher Education institutions in Northern Ireland vary greatly in terms of quality and the range of support offered to students.
2. Support services for students are not always viewed as a priority by university and college senior management.
3. Students face many challenges throughout their time in university and college many of which having damaging effects on their study and wellbeing.

Conference believes:

1. Students should have access to a wide range of support services to help them through their time in University and College.
2. Students should feel supported through any challenges they may face throughout the duration of their study
3. Students should receive high quality support no matter where they study.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI campaigns to improve support services within Further and Higher Education institutions.

Votes at 16 (2018)**NUS-USI Conference believes:**

1. In November the Northern Ireland Assembly unanimously voted in favour of supporting the implementation of Votes at 16, echoing the political support across the Nations in the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament.
2. That the UK government voted to adopt Votes for 16 year olds with a clear mandate in January 2013
3. That the lack of MPs present for the vote signifies a lack of interest in youth engagement in politics
4. That the failure of the UK government to adopt this policy would be undemocratic

5. That the Scottish Parliament will allow 16 year olds to vote in the Scottish referendum in September 2014, but not currently in other elections.

NUS-USI conference further believes:

1. That citizenship education is vital to youth engagement in politics, which Northern Ireland is crying out for.
2. That the scaling back of citizenship activities in schools and colleges is just part of the on-going attack on the rights of young people
3. The Northern Ireland Assembly and Westminster would think twice about the constant attack on young people if 16 and 17 year olds had the vote
4. That the adoption of votes at 16 would be significant for policy makers and would challenge the status-quo of young people paying for the financial crisis and being excluded from having a say.

NUS-USI Conference resolves:

1. To continue the push on Westminster and the Northern Ireland Assembly to adopt and fulfil their political mandate
2. To organise around local and national elections, starting in May 2013 to get 16 and 17 year-olds along to ballot stations and stage actions in direct protest against
3. To work with partners across Northern Ireland and the other Nations to mobilise the youth vote and get 16 year olds registered to vote
4. To organise stunts as part of a "day of action" in the run-up to elections outside local authorities and electoral offices

Support for Youth Fight for Jobs & Education Campaign (2018)

Conference notes:

1. Young people are bearing the brunt of the economic crisis and disastrous austerity policies of the Assembly Executive.
2. Almost one in four young people in Northern Ireland are now without work, the highest rate in the United Kingdom. Additionally, underemployment, precarious employment, poor conditions, low pay and zero-hour contracts are now the norm for young people in work.
3. 'Welfare Reform' will drive young unemployed people further into poverty and rob them of their independence, while schemes like Workfare and Steps to Work exploit them as cheap labour - subsidised by the taxpayer - and undermine the creation of real jobs.
4. Young people from low-income backgrounds are being pushed out of education through increases in tuition fees, cuts to EMA, student support and courses.
5. Young people today are threatened with becoming a 'lost generation'.

Conference further notes:

1. Youth Fight for Jobs & Education (YFJE) has led opposition to Workfare, EMA cuts and is supported by 7 trade unions across the United Kingdom, as well as NUS Wales.
2. In Northern Ireland, YFJE has a strong record of campaigning on these issues and, last year, organised the 'March for a Future' against youth unemployment through the Shankill and Falls.
3. YFJE stands for: A massive government scheme to create socially useful jobs which pay a living wage, No cuts to EMA and the extension of the scheme to all 1-19 year olds, Defending public services, An end to Step to Work and other 'work experience' schemes as well as decent, affordable housing for all.

Conference resolves:

To provide active support for YFJE's actions and campaigning. This includes promotion of the campaigns, support for protest action and organising the student movement to support YFJE demonstrations.

Widening Participation in Tertiary Education (2018)**Conference notes:**

The Education System in Northern Ireland often disadvantages the neediest in our society.

Conference further notes:

The recent cuts to widening participation funding in institutions in the region may have direct impact upon school children in Northern Ireland.

Conference believes:

Involvement in the NUS Widening Participation Champions Programme, which aims to work alongside the institutions, can have a direct impact on students from non-traditional backgrounds, leading to increased participation in tertiary education and improved retention levels.

Conference resolves:

To seek additional funding and resources to support the delivery of the NUS Widening Participation Champions Programme across the region on a sustainable basis.

Representing Apprentices and Other Diverse Learners (2018)**Conference believes:**

1. The Northern Ireland Program for Government has set a target which aims to up skill 200,000 people of working age, which will primarily be done through Apprenticeships.

2. The National Minimum Wage for apprentices is £2.65 per hour. This is less than half of the general National Minimum Wage rate for those aged 21 and over, where the hourly rate is £6.19
3. According to the Skills Funding Agency 2011 Apprenticeship Pay Survey, 26 per cent of apprentices aged 24 or under were paid below the minimum wage
4. That there is a gender imbalance in some apprenticeships, with sectors such as hair and beauty offering the lowest rates of pay
5. The Program Led Apprentice scheme run by DEL does not give real world experience to students, and have faced criticisms from the private sector
6. Recent UK research has found that the return to each £1 of public funding produces a net public benefit of £16 for a Level 2 apprenticeship and £17 for Level 3, yet this group of learners continues to face inadequate funding, pastoral care, equal opportunities and pay.
7. Students' unions have varying success at engaging with apprentices
8. There are currently over 50,000 learners engaged in DEL funded programs delivered through private providers, such as those learners on Steps To Work, Training for Success and New Deal

Conference further believes:

1. The apprentice pay framework reinforces the age discrimination existing in wider society
2. Learners on Steps to Work, Training for Success and such similar programs are more likely to come from areas of multiple deprivations, and will have very little access to support in private education providers.
3. High quality IAG is crucial in redressing the gender imbalance in apprenticeships in some sectors, particularly in the STEM areas
4. Within colleges, apprentices exist very much on the periphery of student life, and have a diminished student experience as a result
5. Students' unions have varying success at engaging with apprentices
6. The lack of evidence on FE learner destinations beyond those going to university compounds the lack of support available for the transition from FE into work

Conference resolves:

1. To conduct research into students experiences as apprentices and other diverse learners and develop new modes of representing and engaging these students.
2. To create a charter outlining minimum and aspirational standards for such learning experiences, including detailed reference to pay and conditions and ensure DEL and training providers sign up to this

3. To work across the organisation to campaign to equalise apprentice pay and work with the Women's Campaign to reduce the gender pay gap for apprentices, targeting the Low Pay Commission

Student Complaints Campaign (2018)

Conference notes:

1. As part of the Higher Education Act 2004 an independent body for student complaints, The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) was established as a final point of call (once University procedures had been exhausted) for student grievances in England and Wales.
2. This part of the 2004 Act was the only part not directly applicable to Northern Ireland.
3. Even so, as part of its consultation in 2004 on the Act, the Department for Employment and Learning asked respondents to give their views on the proposal for an independent complaints body in NI.
4. Of the 47 respondents, 26 (55%) were in favour of an independent body being established, 3 against and 18 did not comment

Conference believes:

1. Any further contemplation of an independent complaints body in NI would only come once the proposed review of the remit of the Northern Ireland Ombudsman is carried out.
2. This review is a matter of urgency in order to allow students the facility for complaints open to their counterparts in England and Wales. The fact that Northern Irish students studying in England and Wales can make use of the OIAHE adds further weight to our argument.

Conference resolves:

For NUS-USI to campaign against the Student Complaints' system here in NI & to lobby both the institutions & the assembly for parity with counterparts in England & Wales

Student Travel (2019)

Conference notes:

Most 3rd level students use public transport as a means of travel, however our students feel that bus travel from bus/train depots to their accommodation at night time especially is not available.

Conference believes:

Travel from student areas to university is not frequent enough as well as from bus/train stations to student accommodation on a Sunday evening especially.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI lobbies for better student travel

Beat the Gagging Law (2019)

Conference believes:

1. The Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill was brought in as the UK government's answer to the issue of commercial lobbying.
2. This bill has been rebranded by a wide civil society campaign as the 'Gagging Law'.
3. The Gagging Law places limits on the resources non-political party campaigning organisations can spend, including staff time, in the period leading up to an election.
4. The Gagging Law has been criticised by everyone from the Royal British Legion to Oxfam for silencing campaigning activity
5. Many of the motions submitted to this conference, were they to pass, would be impossible for NUS-USI to carry out due to the implementation of this bill.

Conference further believes:

1. The Gagging Law represents a chilling curtailment of freedom of speech.
2. This law is a direct attack on NUS' and Student Unions' ability to campaign and organise.
3. It is no surprise that this law has been brought in by a government which has consistently broken its promises and attacked society's most vulnerable.
4. The student movement has a proud tradition of using civil disobedience to stand up for progressive ideals in society.
5. Our movement changes lives - we can't let the important work we do be impeded by this undemocratic attack on our rights.
6. Of particular importance in the lead up to the next elections is the work NUS-USI does on liberation. Marginalised groups of students in particular rely on NUS-USI to be their voice in what is an extremely conservative and bigoted political environment.

Conference resolves:

1. To publicly oppose the Gagging Law and denounce it as undemocratic.
2. To call for the repeal of the Gagging Law.
3. To work in partnership with local campaign organisations in Northern Ireland who will also be badly affected by this law.

Against zero-hour contracts, for a Living Wage (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Many students are forced to seek employment during their studies to supplement their meagre loans and measly grants.
2. Many students, particularly in large higher education institutes, seek employment on campus as the most convenient means to support themselves.
3. Institutions are frequently outsourcing campus jobs in a bid to cut costs and undermine workers' rights in the workplace.

4. Outsourcing to private companies often results in these companies using zero-hour contracts and paying the minimum wage to their staff.
5. In-work poverty is rampant, and a high proportion of people living in poverty in Northern Ireland are from working households.

Conference believes:

1. The minimum wage is insufficient to support a person or student with no dependents, never mind supporting working students with dependents, student carers, or student parents.
2. Outsourcing leads to precarious working conditions of workers, both students and non-students.
3. Unionising student workers and non-student workers is essential to ensure that working students are protected.

Conference resolves:

1. To campaign for the minimum wage to be raised to the living wage.
2. To equip students' unions with campaigning resources and appropriate training in order to help them to campaign for the living wage to be adopted and zero-hour contracts banned at their institutions.
3. To encourage students' unions to pay their staff the living wage.
4. To campaign to unionise students who work.
5. To campaign for a national campaign for the Living Wage in Northern Ireland.

Apprentice Engagement and a National Society (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Apprentices are an integral part of our student community and that in the past year NUS-USI had made it a priority to engage this significant portion of our membership
2. There are over 10,000 apprentices in Northern Ireland studying through different mediums including FE colleges, employers and private training providers.
3. Apprentice representation in our student movement should continue to be an important part of NUS-USI's work.

Conference further notes:

1. That through the engagement work of NUS-USI with Belfast Metropolitan College, South West College and North West Regional College; apprentices have identified issues that affect them in their daily lives:
 - a. decent employment,
 - b. a fair wage and
 - c. respect as an apprentice
2. That the best people to talk about apprenticeships are apprentices themselves.
3. Both the Equality and Human Rights Commission and TUC research on access to apprenticeships identify a number of barriers to liberation groups accessing apprenticeships.

Conference mandates:

1. NUS-USI to create a National Society of Apprentices for Northern Ireland in collaboration with our members, the National Union of Students, trade unions and education stakeholders.

Protect our unions (2019)

Conference believes:

1. That in England, Scotland and Wales the 1994 Education Act and the 2006 Charities Act together establish the principle of independent, well-governed and representative students' unions.
2. As the further and higher education sectors have evolved students' unions have as well; they are diverse in mission, scope and levels of resource.
3. Students' unions are increasingly interwoven into the fabric of national education regulation: across the UK we have a presumption of student participation in governance, frameworks for learner and student voice, management of complaints and appeals and student engagement.
4. Twenty years on from the Education Act it is timely to reaffirm the right of every student to organise and seek representation through an independent students' union, and to reflect on how students' unions might evolve in the next twenty years.

Conference notes:

1. That the 1994 Education act was never extended to Northern Ireland and thus there is no such legal protection for Student Unions in Northern Ireland.

Conference resolves

1. To support NUS in its consultation within the student movement and with the further and higher education sectors on the development of a White Paper setting out proposals to ensure students' unions are recognised in law, continue to be well-governed and are sufficiently resourced to carry out their mission of amplifying the student voice, helping students be powerful and improving students' lives.
2. To consider the diverse purposes and activities of students' unions and how these might be more fully developed and supported in a complex and changing educational environment with multiple external pressures.
3. To explore the legal and regulatory frameworks for students' unions and lobby to strengthen these.
4. To use the current legal and regulatory frameworks available to us and any future legislation we may achieve to take steps to establish independent collective student representative bodies where they currently do not exist.
5. To continue lobbying for legal protection for students unions either in the form of the extension of the Education Act, or a new Act that is fit for purpose in 2014 and into the future.

Where's our recovery? (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That in the last year, the Media & the ConDem Government have been constantly talking about Recovery, even lauding this year's Budget as a "Recovery Budget."

2. That this is a Recovery built upon the backs of Students and Workers who have had their Fees quadrupled, their EMA slashed, their living standards trampled upon and their student debt sold to the highest bidder.

Conference believes:

1. That this isn't a recovery for us, it's a recovery for Bosses and Bankers, the people who caused the crisis in the first place.
2. That Zero Hour contracts and Work for Dole schemes only serve to prop up profits to our own detriment. This Government's Austerity policies
3. That a fight for our recovery must involve an NUS-USI which actively fights for the 200,000 strong membership instead of maintaining itself as a Lobbying group. An NUS-USI that stands shoulder to shoulder with other Trade Unions to defend our interests against Government Austerity measures.

Conference mandates the NUS-USI executive:

1. To call a regional demonstration in the Autumn against cuts and privatisation in education.
2. To support the staff striking for better pay in Education.
3. To publically call for a ban on Zero Hours Contracts, unpaid internships and 'work for dole' schemes, as well as support campaigns against them.
4. To form working links with Trade Unions in Education (UCU, NIPSA, UNISON, UNITE) with the aim of working together to defend education and services.

Travel Support Funds (2019)

Conference notes:

That on many courses throughout Further and Higher Education, students are given opportunities to broaden their knowledge and enhance their studies through purposeful educational visits. However, financial support is often not available for these trips and this can have an effect on the students overall experience on the course.

Conference believes:

That the formation of a travel support fund would on some level address this issue and provide students with a greater opportunity to progress their studies by exposing them to a wider base of learning. Furthermore, the fund would be made available to students through an application and selection process to aid in covering basic costs such as travel and accommodation.

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI lobby the appropriate funding bodies for the provision of a travel support/educational visits fund, to which students may apply in order to support small group trips for the purpose of enhancing their education through broadening knowledge and understanding in their field of learning.

Against Privatisation of Student Services (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That some colleges and universities outsource some of their services to outside companies when it can be done themselves, such as catering, cleaning, and security. Outsourcing of services to outside companies means that people previously working their lose their jobs, this company is also outside of the college/universities control and so the students have no control on how it is run.

Conference believes:

1. That outsourcing of facilities that colleges/universities can run themselves is a lack of student representation and doesn't allow the students to voice their opinions on the matter. This usually has a negative impact on students' experience with these services.

Conference resolves:

1. That the NUS USI should be against outsourcing of services, such as the canteen and cleaning facilities, as the students have no say in what way it is run and therefore can not help to improve the facilities for others in colleges/universities. The conference also resolves that NUS-USI should run a campaign showing the benefits of services being run by students, and for students. NUS-USI should also act as a pressure group to try to convince colleges and universities to adhere to this motion.

Fight the Fight against ageism (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Ageism is form of discrimination which should garner the same respect as sexism, racism etc. Ageism is a problem faced within the student movement that is most felt by students under the age of 18 and students regarded as mature. NUS-USI represents students from the age of 16 till the end of their education (whatever age that may be), this means that all opinions, no matter the age of those expressing them should be equally respected. Most students under the age of 18 come from FE colleges, and mature students as well are mostly from FE colleges.

Conference believes:

1. That ageism should not be allowed in NUS-USI or within affiliated colleges and universities. It is wrong to bring someone's age into discussion when assessing their abilities. That phrases such as "S/he will know better when they are older" or "They are too old to understand" should be considered as offensive as comments which refer to gender, race or religion.

Conference resolves:

1. That a policy should be enacted which protects students from ageism within the institution they attend and NUS-USI as a whole. A safeguard should be put in place for these students. Information should be easily assemble for reporting these acts

and someone outside of the NUS-USI should be made available to report to in case that this ageism is coming from NUS-USI itself.

Cross Border Funding (2019)

Proposed by Southern Regional College Students' Union

Conference notes:

1. That students from the Republic of Ireland coming up to study in Northern Ireland are not entitled to receive maintenance loans, travel, EMA, or any other form of bursary that exceeds the cost of the course loan. We believe that this is unfair because students from Northern Ireland that study in the Republic of Ireland are able to receive all loans and bursaries that are available to any other Republic of Ireland student.

Conference believes:

1. That this is the case because students in Northern Ireland are classed as Irish citizens and are able to receive a Personal Public Service number when they move to the Republic of Ireland to study. This gives them access to the extra loans outside of the main course loan. This is not true for the reverse. Conference believes that two students each living 10 minutes away from the college in either direction, one could be across the border and the other is not. These two students would be treated differently just because of where they live, one would have to pay for travel to/from college/university themselves and the other person would not.

Conference resolves:

1. That all FE/HE colleges and universities should have a hardship fund, which is available to all students, not just ones that live in Northern Ireland. These hardship funds are for people who are struggling to pay for their loans and these are funded by the individual college/universities and so are not Government money. Conference also resolves that NUS-USI should campaign for the equality of Irish students within Northern Ireland and that they should be able to apply for all loans that are available to Northern Irish students.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL ISSUES

Student Engagement (2015)

Conference notes:

The work undertaken in recent months by the Cross-Sector group on student engagement, particularly the work in developing the Student Engagement Project.

Conference requests:

That NUS-USI identifies the best practices which arise out of this project and make it available to members and that NUS-USI works with DELNI to try and develop a similar model for use in the North of Ireland.

Community Relations (2015)

Conference notes:

The significant resources invested by local unions in building positive community relations with neighbouring residents.

Conference welcomes:

Proposals from statutory bodies and public representatives that the number of Houses of Multiple Occupation be limited; that landlord registration should be compulsory and the introduction of a deposit scheme to protect tenants.

Conference however expresses concern:

That certain political parties have recently published proposals calling for compulsory university accommodation for all first year students.

Conference supports:

The creation of additional university accommodation to service existing demand among students, however it is felt that such a policy is unworkable, undermines the work done by students' unions to tackle the core issues and will ultimately make Northern Ireland's universities unattractive.

Conference hereby mandates:

NUS-USI to draft a policy paper highlighting ways that existing anti-social behaviour problems can be tackled effectively and to critic existing proposals.

Student Housing (2015)

Conference notes:

The motion passed at the 2010 Sinn Fein Ard Fheis which calls for halls of residence to be a requirement for third level university student in their first year.

Conference resolves:

To oppose this policy by demonstrating both how it is unfair, unworkable and unreasonably restricts a young person freedom of choice.

Conference further resolves:

To build into the 2010-11 plan of work activities to respond to the creasing lobby call for this course of action.

Sectarianism (2015)

Conference notes:

The significant work carried out by Northern Ireland’s political parties in attempting to ensure a lasting peace for Northern Ireland.

Conference further notes:

That for a lasting peace to be secured sectarianism cannot be allowed to fester and should be stamped out at every level within society.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to run a significant campaign against sectarianism throughout the FE and HE instutions and should do this in conjunction with the relevant bodies such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Volunteering (2015)

Conference notes:

That student development is key to improving the employability of Northern Ireland’s graduates from both HE and FE. These student development opportunities include student representation and clubs and societies, as well as volunteering.

Conference calls on:

NUS-USI to work to establish a Northern Ireland Student Volunteering Bureau through partnership with local unions and existing volunteer organisations. The NI SVB should serve as a central resource for information on volunteering, advice on funding opportunities and any accreditation that is available.

Volunteering (2015)

Conference notes:

There is a great deal of work carried out by the voluntary section which is to the benefit to many organisations and society as a whole.

Conference further notes:

That events such as what happened on Saint Patrick's Day 2009 paint a very dim picture of students and their contribution to society.

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI should develop link with agencies such as the Volunteer Development Agency and use existing links that NUS have to begin to establish a student volunteer base in every institution that will be managed by the member Union. This will allow Student Unions and their members to engage in more voluntary activity and showcase the positive contribution that students make to society.

Fighting Racism and Fascism (2015)

Conference notes:

1. The continual rise of racism and racist attacks in Northern Ireland.
2. That the Fascist BNP is using the recession as a means to promote their vile, hate fuelled and racist agenda.
3. The BNP call centre is located in a Dundonald industrial estate in East Belfast.

Conference believes:

1. That racism and fascism has no place in our society today.
2. The student movement has a history of tackling racism and fascism and once again we need to stand together to stop these organisations from growing in strength.
3. The BNP is not a 'normal' political party but instead is one with a proven racist, homophobic and sexist agenda.
4. In Dundonald the BNP call centre is actively operating to build a fascist party in the North.
5. We cannot allow them to do this.

Conference resolves:

1. The BNP do not have the right to organise in Northern Ireland.
2. NUS-USI to support trade union and anti-Racist campaigns against the BNP and its active call centre.

NI Assembly (2017)

Conference notes:

This year has been a turning point within the politics in Northern Ireland. This year NUS-USI lobbied each party to ensure that Further and Higher Education is the top of each of the party's agenda.

Conference also notes:

Primary Education has been at the forefront of educational debates in recent years.

Conference notes with concern:

That Top up Fees were introduced in Northern Ireland with direct rule and that our education system, students and economy will now suffer under a system which is clearly not right with evidence of a drop in applications and little opportunities for our graduates here in Northern Ireland.

Conference mandates:

The President and NI Executive to continue to lobby the political parties and make them stand up and invest in an education where everyone in Northern Ireland will benefit.

The President should set up a forum where education spokesperson and policy heads communicate with the student body.

Extra resources are put into place to empower the student leaders in the students' unions around the region to use their voice.

The President should lobby for representation on committees that can raise concerns at executive level.

Community Relations (2017)**Conference notes:**

The University of Ulster Students' Union, in conjunction with the Queen's University of Belfast Students' Union, has worked hard to improve relations between students and residents living side by side within the community.

Conference further notes:

The Unions have worked closely with the Media/Press to promote the community relations work they have engaged in, and to address the negative perceptions that many people have of students living within local communities.

Conference mandates:

The NUS-USI President to work with the universities and colleges throughout the region on a campaign to further promote and enhance good relations between students and long term residents in the community.

Conference mandates NUS-USI to set up a working group to ensure the continuation of the good work of the students' unions in the area of community relations.

Challenging Sectarianism (2018)**Conference notes:**

1. Sectarian tensions in society are being whipped up by both unionist and nationalist politicians.
2. It is students, workers and their families in both communities who will bear the brunt of an upturn in sectarian violence.

Conference affirms that:

1. People from all backgrounds have the right to engage in peaceful protest without harassment.
2. People from all backgrounds have the right to live, work and study free from sectarian threats and intimidation.
3. There is no policing solution to questions of sectarian division - solutions must be based on the coming together of ordinary people from both communities in dialogue.

Conference resolves:

1. That the students' movement has a duty to challenge all forms of sectarianism and will take action to do so, alongside the trade union movement.
2. This will potentially include calling and supporting protests, student walk-outs, strikes and other forms of action aimed at mobilising ordinary people to isolate sectarian forces.
3. The students' movement can best challenge sectarianism by building a united fight-back, alongside the trade unions, against austerity and challenging the right-wing policies of all the parties in the Assembly Executive.

Community Relations Unit (2018)

Conference notes:

The stereotypical image of students perceived by the community. This 'student stereotype' creates a negative image for students throughout NI

Conference believes:

This stereotype also clouds the hard work of the Students Unions and the Student Movement as a whole. NUS-USI needs to focus on a way to rid this stereotype.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI should form a Community Relations unit, while also involving the appropriate staff and students within each Students' Union to deal with this issue.

Volunteer Week (2018)

Conference notes:

There are not enough university led programmes involving the local community they reside

in.

Conference believes:

Volunteer week should be implemented in which university led programmes are implemented within the community they reside to develop relationships and strengthen existing ones.

Conference resolves:

A week of Volunteer activities, which involve the local community, should be implemented.

Antisocial Behaviour Task group (2018)

Conference notes:

NUS-USI recognises the ongoing problems of anti-social behaviour, particularly in the South Belfast Area.

Conference believes:

NUS-USI needs to do something about this.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to create a task group to tackle anti-social behaviour of students, particularly in the South Belfast area, bringing together representatives from the Universities and local communities.

MLA Accountability (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Not one of our MLAs voted for the 2004 Education Act that brought in variable tuition fees. In the Party Manifestos of our local political parties the majority is negative about tuition fees being in place.

Conference believes:

Our Political Parties here in Northern Ireland need to be held to account by their Party Pledges against tuition fees and/or the increase that may arise from the review of tuition fees.

Conference mandates:

NUS-USI to hold local Political Parties and MLAs to account by highlighting their pledges which they got elected on, especially coming up to the important decision that they will be making with regards to tuition fees here in Northern Ireland.

NUS-USI's involvement in the 2015 Northern Ireland Assembly Elections (2019)

Conference notes:

1. The Assembly Elections of 2015 will shape the Political Leadership of Northern Ireland for the next number of years.
2. MLAs elected in 2015 will be part of the DEL review on funding for Universities due to be completed in 2020.
3. NUS-USI championed the first ever National Voter Registration Drive on the 5th February 2014.

Conference believes:

1. The Voter Registration Drive used by the Union of Students in Ireland in 2013 ahead of the National Budget shows that when mobilised, students are a powerful voting force.
2. That the same approach to the Assembly elections could be used effectively in promoting the National work of NUS-USI.

Conference resolves:

1. For NUS-USI to champion several more Voter Registration Days ahead of the May 2015 Assembly Elections.
2. Where the opportunity arises, for NUS-USI to lobby potential candidates for Assembly elections around issues that matter to both the students and young people that we represent.

General Election (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That we are entering into one of the most electorally active periods in many years.
2. In May 2014, European Parliament Elections and Local Council elections will be held.
3. The next UK General Election will be held in May 2015
4. The Northern Ireland Assembly Elections are due to be held in May 2016.
5. NUS-USI must fight with students for a better education system and for social justice.

Conference further notes:

1. It is vital students are encouraged to be electorally active.
2. Voter registration is a fundamental part of NUS-USI's election strategy.
3. That in the 2010 General election, only 44% of people aged 18-24 voted, compared to 76% of those ages 65+.
4. NUS-USI must promote voter registration to make sure student voices are heard.
5. NUS-USI supports the campaign for Votes at 16 and will continue to do so.

Conference resolves:

1. NUS-USI to make the General Election the priority campaign in the next year.
2. NUS-USI will continue to promote voter registration and the power of the student vote to our members. We will also work with relevant stakeholders to help us do this.
3. To mandate the NUS-USI President and the Executive Officers to work with Regional Council and our membership to create and lead a powerful General Election campaign, accessible to all our members.

4. To work with Trade Unions and external stakeholders who share the fundamental values of NUS-USI to make sure our voices are heard nationally.

FE STUDENT UNION DEVELOPMENT

FE Support (2015)

Conference recognises:

The vast variances that exist in the levels of support received by HE and FE students' unions from their respective institutions.

Conference also recognises:

That one of the functions of NUS-USI is to share best practice between students' unions.

Conference hereby mandates:

The President to seek the funding of a full-time staff and/or officer resource for FE Union Development.

Conference also mandates:

The President to create a pilot 'buddy scheme' where HE and FE unions are grouped together to see what resources and assistance they can provide to each other, within their existing resources.

FE student engagement (2015)

Conference notes:

The work of the Cross sector group on student engagement in Higher Education which has been helped secure significant change in how government, statutory bodies and Higher Education organisations work with and for students

Conference also notes:

How beneficial the activities of this group have been in promoting the student voice, student engagement and securing direct student input to many aspect of their learning environment

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI develop the suggestion by SRC SU and create a FE model of this group in Northern Ireland and in so securing for students in Further Education the same level of engagement with government and statutory agencies.

Conference further resolves:

That NUS-USI should work with SUs, Colleges and government to secure the creation of such a group in 2010-11.

NUS-USI FE Officer (2015)

Conference notes:

That the NUS-USI FEUD Officer position has remained unfilled for near 12 months. That a commitment has been made for a number of years to secure funding for a full time Further Education Officer/Staff resources for NUS-USI.

Conference also notes:

That the coming year (2010-2011) will see NUS-USI provided with financial support from both NUS and USI in carried out its activities in behalf of its membership.

Conference resolves:

That the commitment by NUS-USI to provide a full time support to FE members remains unchanged and that in the coming planning cycle every effort will be given to identify a way to delivery on this commitment.

LGBT in FE (2015)

Conference notes:

The NUS-USI resource 'LGBT in FE' which provides advice, support and materials to support the development of LGBT issues in Further Education.

Conference also notes:

How the potential for this resource to support the creation of a vibrant LGBT student community is significant. How, in conjunction with an active NUS-USI LGBT Officer this resource could provide support for LGBT students and Student societies on campus in organising, campaigning, and challenging stigma and discrimination

Conference resolves:

For NUS-USI to work with FE Students' Union to utilise the resource in supporting LGBT students and Students societies on campus.

FE Student Unions (2017)

Conference notes:

1. At present the President is the only full time National officer based in the NUS-USI office.
2. The work load illustrated through the expanding plan of work means that the amount of time that can be specifically dedicated to FE student unions is in threat.

Conference further notes:

1. FE student unions make up the vast majority of NUS-USI membership and deserve as much support from NUS-USI as they require.
2. Both NUS Scotland and NUS Wales have full time officers dedicated to the support

and development of FE unions.

Conference mandates:

1. The President and NUS-USI Executive to contact the NUSUK FEUD officer and relevant officers within USI to develop a strategic plan to develop and support local FE student unions.
2. The President to investigate the potential of a full time Deputy President/FEUD officer.
3. The President to present this report to NUS-USI regional council at the earliest possible opportunity.

FE Student Union Development (2017)

Conference notes:

Some students' unions do not have access to their own facilities and support from their college.

Conference believes:

All students' unions should be given a block grant from their college, office space, a common room and a support worker.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI puts pressure on DEL to ensure that this is carried out throughout the FE sector.

Further Education in the Tertiary Sector (2018)

Conference believes:

1. Further Education in Northern Ireland is often regarded as the "second choice" or "last resort" by the government, media and public, picking up those students that the Higher Education sector "doesn't want"
2. Despite the new wave of populist views about the value of Further Education and skills based economies the parity of esteem between the sectors, policies and proposals do not reflect this in Stormont.
4. The impact of reforms to academic Further Education and schools have devalued vocational education
5. Budgets for Information, Advice and Guidance have been slashed, with students receiving inadequate advice

Conference further believes:

1. Students in the Further Education sector do not have many of the benefits that Higher Education students receive

2. Students are often made to feel that University is the only option, with Further Education as a poorly funded last resort for those not academically inclined.

2. Further education students are at the mercy of a broken information, advice and guidance system, with no guaranteed face-to-face guidance for under-19s

3. Higher education students have far better resourced advocacy and representation services than further education students

Conference resolves:

1. To consult with FE students on their views about the future of Further Education in the Tertiary sector.

2. To demand parity of esteem with Higher Education services such as advocacy and guidance and funding.

FE Students' Union Support (2019)

Conference recognises:

The serious issues that the FE sector has been facing since the college mergers, in particular, how much the Students' Unions are suffering.

Conference mandates:

The NUS-USI President and FEUD Officer to organise meetings with each college before the first semester begins to schedule dates for FE elections, and to find out from each union the specific support they need in order to develop their union.

Printing Costs in FE (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Students in Further Education often have to print all of their own course related materials such as hand outs, presentations, essays, homework and assignment submissions
2. The cost of printing in FE is expensive especially colour printing
3. In some colleges, first year students all receive an equal amount of free printing credits but this is not renewed in years 2 or 3
4. Students often have to pay to have assignments bound to meet the requirements for submission set by their college or the examination board

Conference believes:

1. Students should not have to pay for printing materials as a direct result of their course for example, assignment submissions that cannot be submitted online
2. Colleges and tutors should, where possible, allow students to upload home, essays and assignment submissions online or by email to reduce paper and ink costs as some courses have already adopted

3. Colleges and courses, where possible, should adopt a paperless scheme where all course material is available online or through a student portal
4. The method of purchasing printing credits is often confusing or difficult and can be at times, inaccessible to disabled students
5. Students often have to print large e-books or PDFs in colour for their course but they should not be expected to have to print course materials that should be provided by their college or by their tutor
6. Printing costs for non-essential/non-course related materials should be reduced

Conference resolves:

1. NUS-USI should lobby the Department of Employment and Learning to ensure that there is funding available for Colleges to reduce or eliminate printing costs for course related materials and assignment submissions
2. NUS-USI should lobby the Department of Employment and Learning to encourage Colleges to adopt "paperless" courses and to fund IT services to enable students to access course materials online or through a student portal
3. NUS-USI should lobby Department of Employment and Learning to ensure that the methods of purchasing printing credits is simple and accessible for all students
4. NUS-USI should provide training for FE member unions to enable them to lobby their own college management or heads of school to reduce or eliminate course related printing costs and implement paperless courses

Cost of Public Transport in FE (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Most FE students use public transport to attend college
2. Public transport outside of Belfast and in rural areas is often limited and there are often timetabling conflicts
3. Translink already offer a discounted student service known as yLink. Many students are still unaware of the yLink card and the student services Translink currently offer
4. The free travel pass from Translink is funded by Education and Library Board and only applies to full-time FE students studying FE courses under the age of 19 who live 5 or more miles from their nearest college and is only valid Monday-Friday 8-6

Conference believes:

1. Transport links outside of Belfast and in rural areas needs to be improved as many students often need to use more than one service to travel to and from their accommodation
2. The restrictions on the free travel pass from Translink mean that the majority of students within colleges are unable to access it including part time students, mature students and students who don't study at the nearest college
3. The validity of the free travel pass means that students that must travel outside these times in order to attend college must pay for the extra services they use
4. Students often resort to using a car to travel to and from college as public transport just isn't an option for them due to issues such as poor timetabling, lack of services or cost
5. Students that use a car to travel to college often end up incurring more travelling costs due to the high running costs of a car
6. The yLink service is inaccessible to many students and is complicated to apply for and often students aren't even aware of the service

7. Colleges are not required to provide parking for their students and often students are left to park on the road near college or at local, private or council-owned car parks which are at a premium in availability and cost along with cost of learning to drive, car payments, insurance and petrol

Conference resolves:

1. NUS-USI should continue to work with and lobby Translink to improve their services outside of Belfast and in rural areas during term time to ensure that students can utilise their services to attend college
2. NUS-USI should continue to engage with Translink to encourage them to add themselves to the NUS Extra card, widening the availability of their already discounted student services or where possible, allow students to use their own student card to gain student fares on travel services without having to apply for a yLink card
3. NUS-USI should lobby the Education and Library Board to reduce the restrictions on the free travel pass to include a wider bracket of students especially those who receive little or no funding for travel
4. NUS-USI should lobby the Department of Employment and Learning to ensure students are funded for excessive travel costs, especially if the only way they can travel to attend their classes on time is by car

Access to IT resources in FE (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Access to IT resources such as PCs and Laptops in many colleges is limited due to it being in high demand
2. IT resources are often restricted due to the high demand, resulting in many students not being able to access IT resources when they need it most
3. There is a lack of computers in Learning Resource Centres, Libraries and ICT suites within colleges
4. Access to WiFi is limited and often difficult to access, with some students having no access to the internet at all within college
5. Students studying STEM subjects and other similar courses often need specialist software to enable them to complete their studies and submit assignments and this software is often expensive

Conference believes:

1. The under availability of computers within colleges often means students must buy their own PC or laptop so that they can complete their work
2. There shouldn't be restrictions placed on the IT resources that are available as this can be detrimental to students completing work on time
3. Students shouldn't have to pay for access to software that is vital to their studies
4. WiFi access needs to be improved throughout colleges so that students who do bring in their own laptop or tablet are able to still access the internet and complete their studies within the college
5. College computers and IT resources should have the most up to date software and operating so that students can not only learn how to use these services, but to ensure compatibility

Conference resolves:

1. NUS-USI should lobby the Department of Employment and Learning for funding for IT resources and to ensure that colleges have more than enough IT resources for all of their students, regardless of the types of courses they attend
2. Schemes such as Microsoft Dreamspark (where colleges can register their students for software that is free or at a vastly reduced price) should be introduced across all colleges and made available to all students that require it
3. NUS-USI should lobby DEL to ensure that there is funding for upgrading existing IT services within colleges and improving services such as WiFi

HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Materials Grants for Art & Design Students (2015)

Conference notes:

1. There is an urgent need for special maintenance payments to be made to Art & Design students.
2. Most of the student population in this sector find themselves substantially out of pocket through equipment and materials expenditure in comparison to their colleagues studying other academic disciplines.
3. Art & Design students have considerable pre-study expenditure when gaining a place on their preferred course including the purchase of items such as Computers, Knitting/Sewing machines, Draughtsman's desks, portfolios and rental of studio space. These costs are in addition to the daily and weekly costs of raw materials, from canvas to colour copies, software, consumables, film, textiles, steel, paint, wood, tools, stationery etc...

Conference believes:

The Art & Design sector has a strong argument for special bursaries to enable that sectors students to progress through their course without disadvantage

Conference mandates NUS-USI to:

Draw up a detailed submission to the Department of Education (or whichever is the appropriate dept. at the time) highlighting the current status of student support in the A&D sector and the necessary remedial provision from the government.

Offer design work to A&D students to produce the many posters and promotional items, which NUS-USI uses in a year, or offer design work to A&D students whenever the need arises.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (2015)

Conference notes:

The recent 'Pathway Report' published by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for higher education complaints in England and Wales, which shows the improvements in the student complaints system since the Board of Visitor system was replaced.

Conference welcomes:

The support that has now been given by the entire sector to the continued development of the OIA, in particular comments from the representative organisations for academic and academic support staff, universities, registrars and vice-chancellors, as well as students and the government.

Conference recognises:

That Northern Ireland is currently the only part of the UK that continues to operate the outdated Visitorial system. This is despite the changes elsewhere; the lack of student buy-in to the process; inefficiency created by the ad-hoc nature of the Board; and questions around the independence of the Visitors given they are normally educated at one of the two Northern Ireland universities.

Conference welcomes:

The indications given by the OIA that it would be willing to accept the extension of its remit to cover Northern Ireland.

Conference therefore mandates:

The President to use the opportunity posed by the Pathway Report to step up efforts to dissolve the Board of Visitors and replace it with the more transparent OIA model.

Policy Digest (2015)

Conference notes:

The fractured nature of higher education policy in Northern Ireland that is created because of the combination of local and national bodies.

Conference believes:

That one of the key functions of NUS-USI should be to make students' unions aware of major changes to the way universities operate.

Conference further notes:

That there are a number of communications and publications from both NUS and NUS-USI that aim to report back on these, but that there is no central resource for information on HE policy.

Conference mandates:

The President to lead on the creation of a monthly digest of higher education developments, both from local bodies like DEL and national groups such as the QAA.

Conference also mandates:

The President to create an online portal, either as part of NUS Officer Online or as a stand-alone site, which brings together NUS, USI and NUS-USI information on HE policy within a single resource.

Income Creation (2015)

Conference notes:

That students' unions across the UK and Ireland face cuts to their university grants, alongside simultaneous falls in commercial revenue.

Conference further notes:

That many of Northern Ireland's unions cannot afford to pay full affiliation fees to NUS-USI.

Conference hereby mandates:

The President to establish a special working group made up of local unions with the support of the national unions, to investigate the development of commercial opportunities that will increase independent revenue for both NUS-USI and member unions.

The Coalition Government and the Comprehensive Spending Review (2016)

Conference opposes:

The UK Coalition government's ruinous and anti-social strategy of cuts and rampant marketisation.

Conference rejects:

The view that the Coalition's economic and public-sector policies reflect a genuine desire to reduce the deficit.

Conference mandates:

The President and Regional Executive to work with trade unions in a constructive, thoughtful way, reflecting a spirit of solidarity in the face of a generalised Thatcherite onslaught against the public sector, the working population at large, and the most vulnerable and needy in our society.

Higher Education Strategy (2016)

Conference notes:

The recent public consultation (ended 15th April 2011) on the creation of a Higher Education Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Conference recognises:

The significant potential for this strategy to fundamentally reform and change the way Higher Education is accessed and delivered.

Conference believes:

That this strategy cannot be successful in isolation from other significant developments in the sector and that significant work needs to be undertaken by both the Department for Employment and Learning and the NI Executive to see the issues of HE funding, widening access and the HE strategy better linked and coordinated.

Conference mandates:

The President and the Regional Executive Committee to:

1. Work closely with students' unions in developing and delivering a strategy for approaching these issues in an integrated and strategic way.
2. Prioritise issues such as access, flexibility affordability and quality in achieving this.
3. Ensure that significant developments across the UK and Ireland are factored and considered (especially in the area of student mobility) on these issues.
4. Work closely with colleagues from USI and NUS in developing responses to some of the most cross cutting issues

Higher Education Funding (2016)

Conference notes:

The recent reviews of Higher Education including the Browne Review in England (October 2010), the Stuart review (March 2010 – released October 2010) and updated Stuart review (February 2011).

Conference recognises:

That the contents of the Browne review and second Stuart review represent an assault on the principle of a publicly funded higher education system and would lead to Northern Ireland having some of the most expensive public Universities in Europe.

Conference further notes:

That 2006 saw the introduction of top up fees which tripled the cost of education for students and families in Northern Ireland with no demonstrable improvement in the education provision for students in Universities and colleges here.

Conference mandates:

The President and Regional Executive Committee:

1. To oppose further increases in the cost of education for students in Northern Ireland
2. Oppose the removal of the current cap and any increase in tuition fees at the current level in NI
3. Continue to challenge the cuts aimed at the HE sector
4. Develop a strategy to work with the NI Assembly and MLAs on a reversal of recent increases in tuition fees
5. To work in partnership with staff and trade unions in furthering these objectives

Further Education Funding (2016)

Conference notes:

The significant reduction in student support available to students studying in FE in Northern

Ireland – particularly the reductions in the FE Award and reductions in the hardship/support fund

Conferences further notes:

The continued threat to the provision of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in Northern Ireland and how any reduction in this will have a significant impact on access to further education and social mobility

Conferences mandates the President, FEUD Officer and Regional Executive Committee to:

1. Work in partnership with students and staff across the sector to challenge any attempt to reduce funding opportunities available to students
2. To work to reverse any reductions in support already in place
3. Develop a collation of students and staff to coordinate activities in FE
4. Defend EMA from reduction, abolition or reforms which are simply a front for substantial cuts
5. Work to ensure the best package of student support and funding is available for students in FE

Postgraduate Students (2016)

Conference notes:

Postgraduate students are currently under represented, and play a significant role in the up skilling of the Northern Ireland workforce and for some occupations in the private and public sectors; these qualifications are a key pre-entry requisite.

Conference further notes:

The funding routes to access postgraduate provision are complex and student support systems are weak.

Conference believes:

Part-time, flexible and accessible postgraduate provision which meets the needs of students as well as employers is critical to future expansion and should be incentivised by research and funding council funding regimes. Robust equality impact assessments should be applied to postgraduate funding regimes to ensure that they promote fairness and opportunities across all the potential postgraduate student population.

Conference resolves:

To encourage further detailed research to be commissioned to assess the mechanisms and the merits of alternative funding and student support models with the aim of developing a system that increases access to and expands postgraduate provision.

Student Parents (2016)

Conference notes:

Student Parents face unprecedented difficulties in both FE and HE institutions, with the levels of support varying dramatically from institution to institution. The proposed changes to tuition fees, the threat of EMA funding being terminated and complicated support funds put these students under extra pressures.

Conference believes:

Institutions need to offer accessible and uncomplicated support structures for student parents. Many students' parents feel their needs and requirements are not being met, and would welcome more collaboration with DEL and HE/FE Institutions to ascertain how to provide adequate assistance. A lack of funding and support is a massive barrier to participation in education for student parents.

Conference resolves:

1. For NUS-USI to instigate a review into the structures of support currently offered by DEL and the funding models used and the adequacy of these structures.
2. To work on behalf of student parents in liaising with DEL and HE/FE Institutions to improve participation and engagement.

Collaboration with Trade Unions (2016)

Conference notes:

The proposed cuts to education across the UK and in Northern Ireland have led to an upsurge in demonstrations, marches and rallies. In March 2011 the UCU voted for National Strike Action on the 24 March over pension schemes.

Conference believes:

The fight against cuts to education funding needs to be done in a collaborative way, with joint efforts between NUS-USI and its member Unions, UCU and TUC and a sharing of resources and assistance.

Conference further believes:

The planned strike action may potentially cause students disruptions to learning, however it is vital in the fight against the cuts proposed by the coalition.

Conference resolves:

1. For NUS-USI to continue work collaboratively with the Trade Unions and support one another to defend the education sector from cuts.

2. For NUS-USI to assist member Student Unions in mitigating any confusion for students caused by strike action.

Student Support Funds (2017)

Conference notes:

The rapidly increasing cost of living and the worsening economic conditions in Northern Ireland.

Conference further notes:

The contribution that the DEL Student Support Funds make to supporting students who get into financial difficulty or other hardship during their courses. In both HE and FE, vulnerable students benefit immensely from this.

Conference directs:

NUS-USI to campaign to ensure that the Support Fund budget is not cut, or negatively affected in any way by a changeover of departmental responsibility for HE and FE.

Governance in Further and Higher Education (2017)

Conference notes:

The publication of the recent review into education institution governance in Scotland, and the opportunities that has provided for making education in Scotland more democratic, with more opportunities and representation for students.

Conference also notes:

The anomalies and problems arising in Higher & Further Education governance in Northern Ireland – particularly the Education Order (Northern Ireland) 1996, which omits all the legal protections offered to students' unions provided in the Education Act 1994 in England & Wales.

Conference further notes:

The serious repercussions this is having at some institutions, and how this could disadvantage other students' unions in the future.

Conference resolves:

To call for a full review of Further & Higher Education Governance in Northern Ireland by the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly.

Student Financial Support (2018)

Conference notes:

NUSUK has recently completed a "Pound in your Pocket" research survey into student financial support, ranging from apprentice to postgraduate but for English domiciled

students only.

Conference believes:

That, recognising the divergence and complexity of maintenance support across the UK, NUS-USI can resolve to build a strong case for the social and economic benefit of public investment in student financial support.

Conference resolves:

For NUS-USI to conduct its own research into student financial support, exposing the financial barriers to students being academically successful.

Students and Money: There's just not Enough! (2018)

Conference believes:

1. The single most important priority is to ensure all students have enough personal funding to meet their needs during their studies
2. With the Assembly elections taking place in 2014, we should be ambitious about how we would add value to the financial support system and make a strong case for additional public expenditure
3. The Pound in Your Pocket Research has highlighted the vital need for a more sustainable student support model in England.
4. Currently certain courses cross cut departments, such as Health (nursing) and Education (numbers of students)-meaning there is no one single and cohesive funding policy for all students.
4. Student Nurses are not entitled to student loans or the same kind of student support as their peers studying History courses.
5. Support for disabled students is inconsistent across sectors and poorly targeted and administered; sorting this mess out must be a top priority

Conference Further Believes:

1. Students are an easy target, it is absurd that some full time undergraduates now borrow up to £27,000 to pay for a degree but the vast majority can only borrow between £10,000 and £15,000 to meet their living costs during that degree
2. The mainstream system of student loans should enable all students to meet most of their best-estimated costs without turning to other sources of income; this means having much larger maintenance loans
3. NUS's Pound In Your Pocket research has shown that students experience significant loss of mental wellbeing when faced with financial pressures.
4. There should be a better system for recognising the different rates of costs of living outside of a narrow view of London or Home.

5. There should be an independent national student financial advice service
6. There should be a standards accreditation system for student employment opportunities
7. There should be more frequent installments of loan payments, with a front-loaded payment of loans to help people meet 'set up' costs
8. The system of regulated discretionary bursaries and fee waivers in higher education is highly dysfunctional and has little positive effect on access
9. The multitude of discretionary funds and pots in further education is also highly dysfunctional, poorly focused, and a source of unequal treatment of students

Conference resolves:

1. To mandate the NUS-USI to carry out detailed research into the financial experiences of students in Northern Ireland across HE and FE.
2. To mandate NUS-USI to produce detailed proposals reflecting the principles set out in this motion and to pursue their implementation.

Access to Education (2018)

Conference notes:

2008/09 will see the review of Higher Education funding in Northern Ireland.

Conference believes:

The system of variable tuition fees imposed in 2004 has clearly led to a downturn in applications to higher education institutions. NUS-USI's Access to Education Campaign has highlighted all important issues to DEL including the need for an 'independent' review.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to continue with the Access to Education Campaign until we can assure the capitation on Fees is to be retained & continue to aim for the abolition of variable tuition fees.

Student Debt (2018)

Conference notes:

The majority of students leave university with a substantial amount of debt.

Conference believes:

Student debt throughout university can have a negative effect on students' studies. The additional burden after completion of the course can hold people back particularly with the rising costs of property.

Conference resolves:

For NUS-USI to campaign against student debt at both local and national level.

Access to Education Campaign (2018)**Conference notes:**

NUS-USI has been working on the Access to Education Campaign.

Conference believes:

NUS-USI needs to continue this campaign.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to continue the work done in the Access to Education Campaign, specifically calling for the cap to be retained in the first instance, and higher education to be free, in the build-up to the Review of Higher Education Funding in 2009.

Looking after the Pound in Your Pocket (2019)**Conference notes:**

1. NUS-USI completed Pound in Your Pocket research earlier this year which focused on student finance for students in further and higher education in Northern Ireland.
2. Increasing costs including rent, food, childcare, course costs and transport can all have a detrimental effect on students potentially resulting in them dropping out of study altogether.
3. 4512 students responded to the survey and the results will be/have been discussed at Conference today.

Conference believes:

1. The results of the survey should be used as a foundation for further campaigns surrounding the level of student finance currently provided.
2. Students should be supported financially throughout the year and not just during term time.

Conference resolves:

1. To campaign against any and all cuts to student funding.
2. To lobby for increased funding – maintenance grants/loans, EMA.
3. To campaign for monthly student loan payments, including the summer period.
4. To ensure manageable payment options for self-financing students at all institutions.
5. Increased funding for student support funds and hardship funds.
6. To inform students about the dangers of payday lenders and unregistered landlords.

Campaigning against the privatisation of the student loan book (2019)

Conference notes:

1. George Osborne confirmed in the autumn statement in 2013 that the current government coalition government is planning to sell off the student loan book.
2. This means that student loans taken out from 1998 – 2012 will be put out to tender for private companies.
3. There is a concern that in order to make this 'product' attractive for private investors, the cap on repayment and interest rates may be increased, or removed altogether.
4. It is not yet clear what impact this will have on students from Northern Ireland who access funding through Student Finance NI.

Conference believes:

1. This is and should be an urgent priority for the student movement in the UK.
2. Assurances from Tory ministers that this will not happen are not particularly comforting. We must remember that this is the government who have priced thousands of potential students out of education, and their neoliberal right-wing austerity-driven agenda should be opposed at every turn.
3. Education is a right, not a privilege, and NUS-USI should be fighting for free, accessible, and fairly funded education for all.
4. This includes fighting for living grants for all students, and in the mean-time, ensuring that existing student debt is protected from the threat of the sell-off.
5. We in Northern Ireland are in a comparatively good position to our counterparts in the UK in terms of our ability to influence and work with the government to ensure that no student or past student has their loan unfairly sold off to the highest bidder.
6. We are also in a unique position in that the situation regarding the loan book in Northern Ireland does not currently look like it will change. However, it is crucial we campaign pre-emptively to ensure that it remains this way.
7. Whilst Northern Ireland-funded students may currently be protected, NUS-USI also represents many UK students who are at risk. It is crucial we fight to protect these students and campaign to stop their existing debt from being sold off.

Conference resolves:

1. To campaign to defend education and opposing the privatisation of the loan book.
2. For the NUS-USI President & Deputy President to lobby government to ensure the student loan book in Northern Ireland is not privatised and ensure that this forms a part of our General Election campaign.
3. To release a press statement no later than a month after NUS-USI Conference 2014 highlighting the importance of the issue and indicating that it is a priority campaign for the organisation.
4. To meet with the relevant government ministers as a matter of urgency to discuss the issue, and to circulate an update on the situation to the membership when this meeting has taken place.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

International Students Campaign (2016)

Conference notes:

The current review into the Tier 4 student visa system has made proposals that will severely impact Northern Ireland's ability to attract international Students.

Conference further notes:

International Students play a vital role in the economy and contribute on average £25 000 per year in fees to their institutions.

Conference believes:

By altering the Student Visa system and preventing international students from studying in UK FE/HEI's the economy may suffer and the cultural diversity in campuses will be severely limited.

Conference resolves:

1. For NUS-USI link up with the NUS International Students Campaign and put pressure on the NI Assembly to fight the proposed immigration changes.
2. To mandate NUS-USI to campaign for transparency in international students' tuition fee calculations and distribution in all future campaigns involving UK domestic fees.

International Students (2016)

Conference notes:

The increasing numbers of international students attending institutes of further and higher education in Northern Ireland.

Conference further notes:

The lack of active participation by these students in Student issues

Conference agrees:

The advantage to be gained by including these students in student activity due to the diverse nature of their backgrounds will strengthen and enhance the student experience to all union members.

Conference mandates:

NUS-USI to actively promote the inclusion of international students within the student community, in order to offer a diverse and vibrant culture for all students.

Justice and human rights for Palestine (2017)

Conference notes:

1. That the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the State of Israel and occupied Golan Heights is progressively worsening in terms of equality, justice, human rights and sustainable peace for all.
2. The discussion surrounding the Israel - Palestine conflict is often polarized, with the radical viewpoints espoused usually given precedence, resulting unhelpful propaganda battles being fought which moves focus away from human rights and political focussed progressive debate.

Conference believes:

1. Israel is currently occupying Palestinian territory in the West Bank and Gaza strip.
2. That Israel is in breach of International law in respect to its obligations as an occupying power which are stipulated within the 1907 Hague Regulations (arts 42-56) and the Fourth Geneva Convention (GC IV, art. 27-34 and 47-78), as well as in certain provisions of Additional Protocol I and customary international humanitarian law.
3. Israel is using an oppressive regime which fits the legal definition of Apartheid as stipulated within the 2002 Rome statutes and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid
4. Israel follows a policy of home demolitions and forced relocations to effectively control the demographics of those deemed undesirable by the state.
5. Israel does not allow Palestinian refugees or their descendents to return to the territory from which they were expelled in 1948 by Israeli forces both before and after the existence of the Israeli State.
6. The refusal to accept responsibility, or permit a viable solution to the refugee crisis which Israel itself created, is an obstacle to a just peace in the region.
7. A diverse range of Palestinian and Israeli organisations have called for a policy of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel pertaining to goods, services, economic ties and any other activities which assist the Israeli government in the continued oppression and occupation of Palestine.
8. The National Union of Students - Union of Students Ireland has so far held no policy in support of the growing movement to support Palestinian & Israeli human rights.
9. That there is no excuse or justification for the abuse of human rights and international law.
10. Terrorism, in all its forms, must be fully condemned and organizations which are defined as terrorist do not hold the principles or interests of the basic rights of Palestinian and Israeli people as a priority and cannot be said to represent the population of the region as a collective whole.

11. Palestinians have a right under international law to resist occupation and to democratically determine their own future.
12. Settlements built by Israel or Israeli citizens within the Occupied Palestinian territories are illegal as stipulated within the 4th Geneva Convention and other relevant international law.

Conference resolves:

1. That support should be given to individual students and student groups within Northern Ireland that work in a progressive, human rights based manner to ending the Occupation of Palestinian territories deemed occupied by the International community in 1967
2. Where "support" is to be taken as meaning: The facilitation of events, speakers, positive engagement, debates, nonviolent direct action that is within the law and support for student members of NUS-USI within Israel - Palestine itself.
3. To demand freedom for Palestine, calling for an end to the military occupation of the Palestinian territories and the right to return for refugees who chose to exercise that right.
4. That a progressive adoption of the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions campaign should be implemented and promoted with a focus on the educational aspects so as to Boycott goods made in Israel's illegal settlements and divest from any company which is complicit in the abuse of Palestinian human rights and the occupation of Palestinian territories.
5. To implement the BDS campaign using a progressive approach that utilizes an assessed look at companies and products to determine if they fit the Palestinian call to BDS.
6. To use the much needed educational approach that sends a clear message as to why there is a BDS campaign along with what it is and is NOT about.
7. That we must support Israeli and Palestinian Human Rights NGO's such as that of B'tselem. Organisations such as these are typically demonised and attacked by the Israeli government in an undemocratic way.
8. Strongly condemn Israel's activities and policies which allow for continued human rights abuses and the perpetuation of a conflict based status quo that allows for such things as home demolitions, evictions and the brutal use of military power to put down nonviolent demonstrations for civil and human rights.
9. To support the Palestinians right to education by building links with Institutions of Education such as Bethlehem University and other such educational Institutions.

Internationalisation of Students in Northern Ireland (2017)

Conference notes:

There are an increasing number of international students coming to study at FE and HE level

in Northern Ireland.

Conference further notes:

There is a lack of integration between international and local students.

Conference believes:

Internationalisation of students within Northern Ireland will not only be beneficial to the international student experience but also help submerge our home students in a more diverse range of cultures and experiences.

Conference resolves:

For NUS-USI to promote and raise awareness of the benefits of internationalisation within our institutions and community.

Internationalism and Europe (2017)

Conference notes:

1. When students come from abroad to study within the UK from outside the EU, they are expected to pay huge fees in order to study.
2. These fees are extremely high when talking in terms of British pounds and even higher when these figures are converted into most currencies.
3. International students who do not have access to loans have difficulty paying these fees. Along with living expenses this puts a huge burden on these students.

Conference believes:

These financial burdens stop people from abroad coming into the UK to study.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to put pressure on government to review this.

Stop the War Coalition (2018)

Conference notes:

The invasion of Iraq by superpowers has marked its 5th anniversary and has claimed the lives of over 1 million people.

Conference believes:

That tackling social injustices should be the duty of those organisations that have the support and numbers to do so.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI should support the Stop the War Coalition and support the campaign to get troops out of Iraq.

International Students Involvement (2018)

Conference notes:

A large amount of students travel from different countries to study in Northern Ireland

Conference believes:

These students find it hard to integrate into life in Northern Ireland, particularly at weekends.

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI commits more resources into helping the integration of International students into life in Northern Ireland, particularly at the weekends.

International students (2019)

Conference notes with concern:

1. That international students contribute immensely culturally, academically and economically to our institutions and local communities.
2. Recent developments that have made it harder for international students to come to study in Northern Ireland and places even greater restrictions on those who do come.
3. That international students face incredible barriers because of the immigration rules. This includes bureaucratic visa procedures, new credibility interviews, police registration requirements.
4. That the Government has cracked down on international students because they are in the net migration target.
5. That international students are particularly vulnerable because they do not have access to sufficient support networks and have to navigate an unfamiliar country and culture.

Conference believes:

1. That institutions need to provide greater support to international students and stop unfair practices such as increasing fees mid-course.
2. All institutions should provide a fixed fee guarantee for international students.
3. That international students should be removed from the Government's net migration target.
4. That the Government's approach and rhetoric on immigration has been xenophobia and pandering to a far-right sentiment. This will have a profound effect on public perception towards international students.
5. That immigration restrictions are harming the UK's education sector.

Conference mandates:

1. To work with the International Students Campaign and the NUS International Students Officer on campaigning for international students.
2. To seek what pressure can be put on the Home Office through the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Living in a Multicultural NI (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Northern Ireland is no longer just Protestant and Catholic, we live in a multicultural society and NI is not now only part of the UK, it stands alone on the world stage.

Conference welcomes:

1. The continuing diversification of the student population through the growth of groups such as international, mature and disabled students entering both FE and HE institutions.

Conference recognises:

1. The work being done on student diversity issues by the Liberation Campaign, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Equality Challenge Unit and that a more diverse student population enriched and adds value to the education experience of all students.

Conference resolves:

1. To work with member unions and outside agencies to promote a calendar of events throughout the academic year to increase awareness and inclusion for everyone within Northern Ireland.

NUS-USI REGION

NUS-USI Name (2015)

Conference notes:

The work that has been carried out by the national unions, NUS-USI staff and officers and local students' unions through the governance review.

Conference believes:

That the new model for NUS-USI will ensure that students are backed up by a strong and locally accountable organisation, supported by the UK and Irish unions.

Conference notes:

That there is currently a lack of awareness around what NUS-USI is and does among both students and public bodies and representatives.

Conference therefore mandates:

The Governance Review Group to forward proposals for a new name for the organisation, while ensuring that it is acceptable to all parts of the student body.

Best Bar None (2015)

Conference notes:

That student bars are often caught between obligations to be responsible alcohol retailers and demands from students for even cheaper drink prices.

Conference believes:

That students' unions have the ability to drive the alcohol sector to become more responsible and to recognise the affects that alcohol abuse has on a student's social and academic life.

Conference welcomes:

The Best Bar None scheme that has been rolled out by local authorities in England to recognise bars that are examples of best practice.

Conference mandates:

The Regional Executive to have the scheme extended to Northern Ireland, to improve the image among members of the public of students' unions.

Class reps (2015)

Conference notes:

That the quality and effectiveness of student representation varies from institution to

institution, as well as inside each institution.

Conference believes:

That there is a need for additional resources to be provided to member unions in building strong representation structures.

Conference hereby mandates:

The Regional Executive to develop the materials already created by the NUS and the AMSU to improve the quality of class representation in Northern Ireland.

'Consumer'-oriented language (2016)

Conference notes with concern:

That students are commonly referred to as 'customers' or 'consumers' in government policy and institutional publications.

Conference asserts:

That students are not customers, and that such language devalues the inherent value of education, and subtly reflects the unacceptable transition towards a market in education.

Conference mandates:

The President and Regional Executive to work with member unions to erase this way of thinking from existing policy and practice.

Collaboration with Other Education Providers (2016)

Conference notes:

The Royal College of Nursing and the Open University represent a significant portion of students in Northern Ireland, and have so far not consistently participated in engagement with NUS-USI.

Conference believes:

Having a more engaged and involved dialogue with other education providers will simultaneously promote best practice and improve the learner experience and representation at the highest level for these providers.

Conference further believes:

The potential for increased part-time and less conventional higher education as part of a distinctive, innovative Higher Education system in Northern Ireland is crucial and should be welcomed.

Conference resolves:

1. To mandate NUS-USI to engage regularly with the alternative education providers in Northern Ireland to ensure that all students are being represented and consulted with in matters that affect them.
2. For NUS-USI to make provision for a co-opted member from each organisation to participate in the executive council.

External Funding (2016)

Conference notes:

That the difficulties of the current economic climate restricts officers opportunities to run certain projects. Recent success in securing external funding has supported such creative initiatives and projects.

UnLtd is a charity which supports social entrepreneurs. UnLtd Millennium Awards are funded by the income from a legacy of £100 million granted by the Millennium Commission.

<http://www.unltd.org.uk/template.php?ID=1&PageName=whatareunltdawards>

Conference mandates:

NUS-USI to encourage further investigation and utilization of outside funding available. By identifying external funds for its membership

Fair Trade (2016)

Conference notes:

That some institutions have official fair-trade status whilst others are continually pushing towards this accreditation.

Now more than 4,500 products have been licensed to carry the Fairtrade mark... A massive 72% of the UK public now recognise the Fairtrade mark.

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/15thanniversary/fairtradefacts.aspx>

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to be fair-trade conscious and help raise awareness amongst other institutions and its student body.

Volunteering (2016)

Conference notes:

The increasing competitive nature with regards to jobs for new graduates. With increased volunteer opportunities students can enhance employability skills and build life experience.

87% of employers think that volunteering can have a generally positive effect on career progression for people aged 16-25.

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/News/mediacentre/keyvolunteeringfactsandfigures>

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to practice small scale volunteer schemes striving towards the future development of volunteer centres in each institution.

Paid Deputy President (2016)

Conference notes:

The extremely hard work that is carried out by the officers of NUS-USI

Conference further notes:

The difficult task it is as President of NUS-USI as the only full-time officer within the organisation

Conference mandates:

The NUS-USI President to lobby NUS and USI to provide funding for the Deputy President role to be made a paid officer position.

NUS-USI Activists (2016)

Conference notes:

That the future is very uncertain for both the HE and FE sector as a whole and that now more than any time before there is a greater need to get students motivated and involved.

Conference also notes:

That over recent years a number of positions on the Officer Board of NUS-USI have went unfilled. As a result the organisation is not as strong as it could or can be.

Conference believes:

That this needs to be rectified and one way of doing this would be to have a general NUS-USI Activist to inform the students of NUS-USI campaigns and the work that the organisation does.

Conference therefore mandates:

The President of NUS-USI to investigate the possibility of establishing an NUS-USI activist within each institution and where an institution has multiple campuses an activist for each.

Informal Networking (2016)

Conference notes:

That between institutions there can be significant duplication of work and campaigns.

Conference further notes:

That there can be a level of poor memory within student unions as a result of the high

turnover rate of officers

Conference believes:

That an informal networking even should be held each year for officers from across institutions to meet and discuss relevant campaigns and ideas and also share experiences.

Conference therefore mandates:

The President to investigate this possibility.

St Patrick's Day Preparations (2016)

Conference recognises:

The hard work put in by a number of organisations in trying to avoid a repeat of the scenes of St Patrick's Day 2009.

Conference notes:

That a large amount of resources both physical and financial are required to ensure the day goes as peacefully as possible and there is never a guarantee that the day will pass peacefully.

Conference believes:

That these resources could be much better spent by holding some other form of event such as an open air concert in Botanic Gardens or a street carnival like Notting Hill as these events could be much easier and more effectively managed and stewarded.

Conference mandates:

The President of NUS-USI to make contact with relevant government departments such as DEL and DCAL to establish if this would be possible and how plans could be formulated to make this a reality.

Communication (2016)

Conference notes:

The difficulties experienced in communication between the Regional and National Offices and local Students' Unions.

Conference further notes:

That these difficulties are related to all concerned with the region.

Conference mandates:

The Regional Executive to update Students' Unions on a weekly basis, so that the Region will be in a position to work together on areas of mutual interest.

Consultations (2016)

Conference welcomes:

The good working relationship between NUS-USI and other stakeholder organisations.

Conference notes with alarm:

The delay experienced by NUS-USI in acquiring information on consultations relating to draft legislation which may have been relevant to students.

Conference mandates:

The Convenor and Regional Executive to contact the relevant Government Departments calling on them to ensure that NUS-USI is informed of relevant consultations and initiatives.

NUS-USI Card (2016)

Conference notes:

1. Both NUSUK & USI have made significant progress in developing commercial services for their members (i.e. USI Membership card, NUSUK ITM deal)
2. In some cases, member colleges of NUS-USI benefit from these services.

Conference believes:

1. Commercial arrangements negotiated by NUSUK & USI are sometimes not viable in the region.
2. There needs to be a local approach to the provision of commercial services for members of NUS-USI.
3. The NUS-USI card needs to be promoted more to NUS-USI members

Conference mandates:

1. The NUS-USI President to investigate methods to promote the NUS-USI card.
2. The NUS-USI President to investigate the potential for a staff position within NUS-USI specifically for the development of commercial services.
3. This staff position to assist member colleges negotiate commercial services for their own Students' Unions.

Implementation of Motions (2016)

Conference welcomes:

Motions and constitutional debate in Northern Ireland Conference.

Conference notes:

Until 1997 this facility was not in place.

Conference further notes:

Previously some motions have not been implemented to their full potential.

Conference believes:

In order to be a fully democratic organisation and for conference motions to be fully and successfully implemented this situation must be rectified.

Conference mandates:

1. Steering Committee to draw all motions passed by NUS-USI Conference together placing them in a document to be distributed before the beginning of July and the new Officerships to all member unions as well as the NUS-USI Executive.
2. NUS-USI Executive to review motions at the beginning of their new Officerships to incorporate them into the plans of work for the Officers and Staff.
3. NUS-USI Executive to report back to member unions every three months on the progression of the completion of motions.

The Re-branding of NUS-USI (2017)**Conference notes:**

The long shared history of NUS, USI and NUS-USI now underpinned by the ongoing success of the new trilateral arrangement; and the great strides made in creating an independent and autonomous identity for NUS-USI as an organisation.

Conference recognises:

The ongoing confusion surrounding the terminology and name of NUS-USI with member unions, students, external stakeholders and the media which has led to misleading perceptions of NUS-USI.

Conference believes:

That on this basis a more “user friendly” branding is required that will ensure the intent and aims of NUS-USI are easily and immediately recognisable by all stakeholders and not confused with our trilateral partners.

Conference mandates:

1. The NUS-USI President and NUS-USI Regional Executive to convene a working group to examine the branding and identity of NUS-USI as it currently stands.
2. For the convened working group to investigate the feasibility of a rebranding exercise not limited to new name and logo for the organisation, and to make

recommendations to conference on the creation of a new unique brand identity that reflects the advances made in the governance arrangements of NUS-USI.

Communications (2017)

Conference believes:

That greater communication is required between the NUS-USI Executive and the individual COs.

Conference further believes:

That such communication would promote the benefits of NUS-USI Executive work in the Region and create a harmony between COs and Executive.

Conference mandates:

NUS-USI Executive to visit each college in a structured manner to provide advice, communicate on relevant issues, and act as a support network to individual COs, especially in the Further Education Sector.

NUS-USI Communication Strategy (2018)

Conference notes:

1. Students' Unions on the ground need to be adequately informed and kept up to date with the work of NUS-USI.
2. Communication between NUS-USI and member unions is a two way process and requires commitment from all.
3. Not all member unions can attend all meetings on Regional Council to receive communications for NUS-USI.

Conference believes:

1. By improving communications between NUS-USI and member unions will encourage better support and co-operation for national issues and campaigns.
2. There are countless ways of communicating and we should make best and appropriate use of all methods.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI develops a communication strategy together with member unions to strengthen links and the fluidity of information sharing between all.

Regional Conference (2018)

Conference notes:

The lack of Regional Council meetings that have taken place throughout the past year.

Conference believes:

The lack of Regional Council meetings limits discussion and debate between the organisation and member unions, as well as weakening accountability.

Conference resolves:

This conference mandates the President to ensure such meetings take place regularly and will be held on dates, agreed in advance, by member unions.

NUS-USI Website (2018)**Conference notes:**

The lack of regular updates provided by the NUS-USI website in recent years.

Conference believes:

This has drastically limited the organisation's communication with its membership on various student issues, policy decisions and also with regard to promoting events.

Conference resolves:

The organisation will ensure the NUS-USI website is updated regularly so as to provide updates on policy, actions as well as events planned by the organisation.

Online Officer Reports (2018)**Conference notes:**

Accountability of the NUS-USI Regional Executive is vital to the legitimacy of the National Union.

Conference believes:

Reports from each Regional Executive member should be available to all student members.

Conference resolves:

That the organisation shall regularly upload the reports of Regional Executive members on to the organisation's website for all member to view.

NUS-USI Constitution Corrections (2019)

Conference notes

1. The NUS-USI Constitution has become larger over the years.
2. That there are some errors in the NUS-USI Constitution.
3. That this is natural due to constitutional amendments from the NUS-USI membership

Conference mandates:

1. That the NUS-USI constitution should be reviewed in the next year in consultation with our membership to make it simpler and more accessible.

A fight against the Belfast centralisation (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That NUS-USI represents the interests over 200,000 students in Northern Ireland. NUS-USI represents students from all over Northern Ireland, to colleges as far as Enniskillen and Strabane. For these students and other students within FE colleges transport to Belfast can be difficult and usually unfunded by their college. Unlike FE, HE union members are paid and this allows for them to travel. Not only is this travel unfunded, these meetings are usually held in the evening, making traveling home difficult for some as public transport services to rural areas only run until certain times. In most cases, conference calls are unable to be set up.

Conference believes:

1. That it is unfair for these students who do not have their transport reimbursed to travel long distances for meetings. This cost is putting FE unions off attending meetings and leaves that these meetings are dominated by Belfast Unions which are mostly HE unions. This means that NUS-USI is not hearing the problems these FE colleges face and their students are virtually ignored.

Conference resolves:

1. That REC meetings should at least at one point in the year be in a location that is not Belfast central but which travel to is efficient. Meetings should also at least at one point be held on a day which is not during the working week as travel home (usually after six o'clock) from these meetings is difficult, as is getting out of class to attend them.

Regional Executive Plan Of Work (2019)

This conference notes:

1. That this year the Regional Executive operated under a Plan Of Work passed at the first Regional Council.
2. That for the first time, the Northern Ireland President and PT officers have a clear agenda to work for and goals to achieve throughout the year.
3. That it is most welcome and more professional for the workload to be decided at the outset of the term of office of the Regional Executive.

This conference resolves:

1. That the Plan of Work should be presented at the first Regional Induction and training events of the year for discussion.
2. That the Plan should be put to the first Regional Council of the year for ratification.

This conference mandates:

Every Northern Ireland President (or whatever the title may be) to consult with other members of the Regional Executive immediately into their term of office on the preparation of a detailed Plan Of Work. Such a plan is to be presented to the first regional council of the year.

NUS-USI Region (2019)**Regional Executive positions****Conference notes:**

The hard work that is undertaken by part-time members of the Regional Executive Committee in assisting the President in fulfilling their role and ensuring co-ordination between the member unions.

Conference further notes:

That officer positions have been created on an ad hoc basis and that there are now ten part-time officers in addition to the President.

Conference recognises:

That the positions on the Regional Executive were not examined as part of the recent Governance Review.

Conference therefore resolves:

To establish a sub-committee of Regional Council to be made up of two members nominated by each member union, which shall review the current positions, examine any gaps or overlaps that exist and report back its findings.

Regional Council (2019)**Conference notes:**

That all Higher Education and Further Education members are not adequately represented at NUS-USI Regional Council, this is in according with attendance monitoring, and not to the fault of efforts of NUS-USI. Also Council has shown that it is not willing to travel across all member institutions in order to encourage this participation of members.

Conference believes:

That through the academic year Regional Council should adopt the same policy as USI National Council in that Regional Council should move more freely across its jurisdiction and quorum cannot be made without representation of all members.

Conferences notes:

1. That NUS-USI should hold Regional Council in all regions across its jurisdiction to encourage participation and that quorum can only be made if all members are present.

2. It was agreed that the words 'and quorum cannot be made without representation of all members' be removed to read:-

Conference believes:

1. That through the academic year Regional Council should adopt the same policy as USI National Council in that Regional Council should move more freely across its jurisdiction.

Conferences notes:

That NUS-USI should hold Regional Council in all regions across its jurisdiction to encourage participation.

Communication with member unions (2019)

Conference recognises:

That there is currently a lack of information and contact from the Regional Executive Committee relating to the operation of NUS-USI.

Conference believes:

That communication is essential for a strong regional voice to emerge and to ensure that issues are highlighted as they arise.

Conference mandates:

The President to hold a monthly meeting with the Presidents of each member union.

SPORT, CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Recreational Sporting Activities (2017)

Conference notes:

Student sport is an integral part of student life for many of our members.

Conference further notes:

Sport has many benefits for students for both personal development and physical wellbeing.

Conference believes:

By increasing recreational sport within member institutions we can not only get more students involved in our unions but also promote a healthy lifestyle amongst students.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI should develop a campaign to promote student sport focusing on recreation, social and health benefits to students

Sport (2017)

Conference notes:

Due to the pressure of finding time for all lessons there is not much time available in many colleges when all students are free to participate in clubs and societies.

Conference believes:

That a time on the timetable should be made when all students are free.

Conference further believes:

1. That this free time can also be used for Tutorials, Student Union and Class Reps Meetings.
2. That if the same time, such as Wednesday afternoons, was made free throughout colleges this would allow colleges to compete with each other.
3. This would improve students' lives at FE colleges.
4. This would provide equality for all students as they would all have access to participating in all clubs and societies.
5. This would also provide many health and social benefits.
6. This would also help in developing the students' union clubs and societies.

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI puts pressure on DEL to enforce that every college has a time slot on

Wednesday afternoons when all students are available to participate in clubs and societies.

Students Participation in Sporting Activities (2019)

Conference notes:

That in many cases students who may have been previously physically active can fall into a rut of inactivity once they attend University. Not only does this result in the depreciation of their physical health but also affects their mental well being.

Conference believes:

That institutions should invest money in order to provide appropriate on campus facilities for students to take part in sport at a recreational level. Failing these institutions should work with local Sports Centres/ complexes to provide students with easy access to facilities at a subsidised rate.

Conference further believes:

That this will have a positive effect on the general well being of students.

Conference therefore mandates:

NUS-USI to work alongside appropriate sporting bodies with in institutions to provide campaigns in order to increase the level of student participation in sporting activities, pushing the idea that a healthy body = a healthy mind.

Union Support for Clubs and Societies (2019)

Conference recognises:

Clubs and societies may sometimes be disengaged from the Students' Union.

Conference believes:

We need to develop and engage with unions to support clubs and societies and develop their role within the Students' Union.

Conference resolves:

To role out the NUSUK Activists Academy model on a local level within the unions to help develop their clubs and societies.

TRAINING AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Course Reps (2017)

Conference notes:

That student reps are an invaluable group amongst the student body. Conference also notes that Student's Unions have limited resources to support these students.

Conference believes:

That student reps are at the heart of our institutions. Conference also believes that there is a need for additional resources and support to improve how effectively we represent our students.

Conference hereby mandates:

The Regional Executive to lobby, and support our Student's Unions when they lobby, both their institutions and government for more funding to support student reps.

Street Reps and Community Funding (2017)

Conference notes:

The inception of the Street Reps Scheme at Queen's Students' Union, which connects students more closely with their local neighbourhoods and improves community relations.

Conference also notes:

The wide range of funding that is available for community groups and community initiatives from various agencies.

Conference resolves to:

Work to expand the Street Reps scheme to other institutions and to use NUS-USI's influence to push for funding to improve the initiative.

LGBT Training (2017)

Conference recognises:

That there is no training in Northern Ireland for LGBT students.

Conference urges:

LGBT Officer along with the help of the President of NUS-USI to hold training for all LGBT students and officers in October 2007.

Conference Further mandates:

To set up an LGBT working group to support the LGBT Officer to make the LGBT movement in Northern Ireland more successful within NUS-USI.

Structuring Training (2018)

Conference notes:

The training provided to student representatives provided and facilitated by NUS-USI.

Conference believes:

With the sabbatical positions usually being filled by a new person annually, there is a lack of structure for the representatives training.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to form a structured training regime in advance, that may be adapted for each students' union and for this to be confirmed by the elected representatives of each union.

Student Opportunities (2018)

Conference notes:

One of NUS-USI's main focuses is student development.

Conference believes:

NUS-USI should help student development by providing and supporting Unions to provide more student opportunities.

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI investigates the feasibility of running short work-placements for students, or actively supports member unions in doing so.

WELFARE AND HEALTH

Regional Mental Health Alliance (2016)

Conference notes:

The increase in the incidence of mental illness amongst the population and specifically on the student population.

Conference welcomes:

The work carried out previously by NUS-USI, NUS and USI on Mental Health and Wellbeing promotion.

Conference further notes:

That many organisations exist to further the cause of the Mental Health lobby, but many of these operate alone.

Conference mandates:

The Convenor and Regional Executive Committee to work with other relevant external agencies and both National Unions to form a Regional Mental Health Alliance.

Conference further mandates:

The Convenor, as Northern Area Officer of USI, to interact with USI on any proposed all-island Mental Health Alliance, similar to that of NUS UK.

Private Rented Sector Tenants' Association (2017)

Conference notes:

The poor state of private rented sector accommodation in Northern Ireland – way behind the rest of the UK and Ireland. Damp, cold and poorly maintained student accommodation is rife and often peddled by unscrupulous landlords.

Conference further notes:

That the NI Housing Executive expects the private rented sector to continue to expand, and if that is to happen, tenants need a dedicated representative body to represent their interests to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive and

Conference resolves:

To support the efforts of the Housing Rights' Service to establish a Northern Ireland Tenant's Association.

Suicide Awareness (2017)

Conference notes:

There has been an increased level of work on mental health campaigns amongst the student population.

Conference further notes:

Suicide awareness is key to suicide prevention.

Conference believes:

By training students beyond the regional executive will help our message to reach a wider range of students who may not necessarily engage with their students' union.

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI provides a platform for suicide awareness training to larger groups of students within the various institutions.

Campaign for More Sexual Health Clinics (2017)

Conference recognises:

The importance of sexual health clinics in providing testing for sexual transmitted infections, information on sexual health, and contraception and specifically the positive impact this has in women student's lives.

Conference notes with concern:

The worryingly small number of sexual health clinics across Northern Ireland and the reduced funding for provision of this key service, particularly on campuses in rural areas.

Conference resolves:

To lobby local government and to campaign for more funding in this area, in order to provide more sexual health clinics across Northern Ireland.

Student Mental Health (2017)

Conference notes:

1. Students are faced with increasing financial and academic pressures coupled with part time work commitments.
2. In their attempts to balance all these pressure, their mental health and well being is affected.

Conference notes with concern:

A recent MORI poll illustrates that year-by-year more students are experiencing stress.

Conference mandates:

The NUS-USI to continue their student mental health campaign in partnership with local

Unions and to help coordinate mental health campaigns on an annual basis in all member colleges.

Free Health Services for All Students (2017)

Conference notes:

That not all students will receive free eye or dental treatment on the NHS if you earn over a certain amount of money a year.

Conference mandates:

NUS-USI to work in partnership with both national unions to try and get free NHS treatment for all students.

Mental Health (2017)

Conference recognises:

That it is commonly referred to that young members of the LGBT community are at a higher risk of suffering from mental health issues.

Conference is disgusted:

By the lack of actual research undertaken on this issue.

Conference mandates:

NUS-USI to undertake a national survey on the mental health of LGBT Students.

Abortion Rights and Supporting the Pro Choice Movement (2018)

Conferences notes:

1. Last year NUS-USI took an historical step forward in the fight for women's body autonomy by adopting a formal pro-choice policy.
2. Shortly after this in 2012 the first ever private Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Service clinic, Marie Stopes International opened on this island in Belfast.
3. In March 2013 an unsuccessful amendment to the Justice Bill was tabled by the DUP and SDLP jointly, seeking to outlaw the private provision of such Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Services.
4. A Petition of Concern was proposed in relation to this amendment which was spearheaded by Sinn Fein MLA for South Down, Caitríona Ruane.
5. Northern Ireland's Department of Health has taken 11 years to publish guidance on the legal framework for abortions in Northern Ireland; the new guidelines remain unclear and will require women seeking a medical termination to acquire two doctors' signatures in order to access safe abortions

6. The NUS-USI Women's Campaign, NUS-USI Women's Officer and USI Equality and Citizenship Officer have worked and are continuing to work extensively on this issue.
7. Several students' unions across the UK have taken their pro-choice policy a step further by directly affiliating to Abortion Rights, the largest national pro-choice campaign in the UK.

Conference further notes:

1. Abortion Rights works to defend (and extend) the 1967 Abortion Act, and protect access to safe and legal abortion services.
2. The Family Planning Association has estimated that 40 women a week travel from Northern Ireland to England to access safe and legal abortions, often costing up to £1800 for the procedure. This is an unacceptable situation for women to be in.
3. Abortion Rights receive no government or church funding and rely almost entirely on donations and fundraisers.
4. That women's rights to accessing safe and legal abortions are under heightened attack by many politicians in Northern Ireland, and we must stem this tide.
5. The National Union of Students and the Trade Union Congress are two of many official affiliates/supporters of Abortion Rights.

Conference resolves:

1. For NUS-USI to continue supporting UK and Irish campaigns for full, safe access to abortion services.
2. For NUS-USI to continue to show solidarity with the Marie Stopes International Clinic, by supporting their cause to remain in operation in Northern Ireland.
3. For the NUS-USI REC to condemn the Health Minister in the failure to timely deliver clear and acceptable guidelines for the legal and safe access to abortions in Northern Ireland.
4. For the NUS-USI leadership to publically congratulate those elected politicians in Northern Ireland who supported the Petition of Concern in this instance and support the right of a women's life to be saved when at risk, through safe and legal medical abortions.

Off-Campus Conduct Regulations (2018)

Conference notes:

1. The important role that our further and higher education institutions, and the student movement, play within the local community.
2. Those who commit criminal acts or are involved in anti-social behaviour should be dealt with by the appropriate statutory body and reprimanded in accordance with the rule of law.

3. For example, that the Conduct Regulations of Queen's University Belfast can impose draconian penalties on students that often far exceed the action taken by external agencies such as the Police, or the City Conference, for the same, or a similar, offence.

Conference believes:

That NUS-USI should play a constructive role in working with the Further and Higher Education institutions, local residents, and the statutory authorities to ensure that Northern Ireland is a safe and peaceful place to live, work and study.

Conference further believes:

Student activity that has taken place outside of an institution's property should not be subject to the relevant institution's conduct regulations, unless the students in question have been representing the applicable institution in an official capacity.

Conference resolves:

To mandate the NUS-USI President, and the organisation, to work with local unions to assist them in any campaigning activity relating to their institutions conduct regulations.

Housing standards in private rented accommodation (2018)

Conference believes:

1. There is limited understanding of how housing can impact on students' health, wellbeing and academic achievement.
2. Students are often targeted by commercial companies seeking to make profit without regard to student welfare or property standards.
3. Governments across the UK have taken steps to improve standards in the private rented sector. Scotland has introduced compulsory landlord registration schemes and eliminated unfair fees and charges by letting agents, and the Welsh government has recently consulted on a mandatory register and code of conduct for both landlords and letting agents.
4. Tenancy deposit schemes in Northern Ireland are only a first step in ensuring students are not exploited by rogue landlords in the Private Rented Sector.

Conference further believes:

1. All students have a right to safe, warm, good quality housing which provides a strong foundation for their studies.
2. Accreditation can play an important role in driving up standards as well as informing and influencing student choice.
3. Letting agents are currently a largely unregulated sector in much of the UK and this has a detrimental impact on housing standards.
4. Benefit cuts combined with the shortfall in social housing supply leave young people,

disabled students and those with caring responsibilities increasingly vulnerable in the housing market.

5. Changes to education funding and rapidly increasing living costs mean that many students feel forced to live at home due to inability to access a decent standard of housing elsewhere.

Conference resolves:

1. To examine issues students face in relation to quality of accommodation, and particularly how this impacts on health, academic attainment and social inclusion.
2. To fund and introduce a yearly student housing survey focussed on housing conditions, service provided by estate agents and landlords, hidden tenancy costs, rogue landlords, time taken to deal with repairs and whether outside organisations had to become involved.
3. To develop a UK wide, robust evidence base on students' experience of housing, either by undertaking research or by working with other bodies in the housing sector.
4. To support students' unions in ensuring students are well-informed and empowered to make good housing choices and encouraged not to rush into renting.
5. To ensure that housing research is inclusive of FE students and their living situations.
6. To work with the NI Private Tenants Forum in their campaign to increase standards in the sector.
7. To liaise with the Housing Rights Service, the Landlords Association of Northern Ireland, Unipol and the Accreditation Network UK to develop a student housing accreditation scheme.
8. To lobby the NI Assembly to commit more resource to local accreditation schemes.
9. To work with other organisations to lobby government to regulate letting agents so that they are less able to exploit student tenants and provide substandard properties.
10. To lobby the government to increase provision of affordable, good quality housing.
11. To lobby the Universities to increase the provision of halls of residence.
12. To investigate the viability of more innovative types of housing provision, such as co-operative models, as potential solutions to student housing problems.

Fuel Poverty (2018)

Conference notes:

1. Research has suggested that many students live in fuel poverty, but are often not visible in research statistics and are therefore overlooked by policy-makers.
2. The majority of students are unable to access benefits, including winter fuel payments and the social fund.

3. Buying groups have been recommended by the Consumer Council NI.
4. Buying groups set up by various Councils in NI are not student friendly.

Conference resolves:

1. To develop an understanding of the scale of the problem of fuel poverty among students.
2. To lobby for students to be included in work undertaken to alleviate fuel poverty.
3. To develop a partnership with Boilerjuice, or a similar company, to enable students to manage fuel payments more effectively whilst driving down prices.

Rented Accommodation (2018)

Conference notes:

There are many students living in rented accommodation which is of risk to their health.

Conference believes:

Annual Checks should be carried out on rented property and halls of residence to ensure they are up to standard in line with current legislation.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to lobby local government to have such legislation implemented.

Suicide amongst students (2018)

Conference notes:

The high rate of suicides within the Student Body of Northern Ireland.

Conference believes:

There is a need for more awareness amongst the student body about suicide and the advice and support available for students.

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI runs a campaign aimed at decreasing suicide rates amongst the student body.

NUS-USI Mental Health Campaign Strategy (2019)

Conference notes:

1. In 2007 a partnership between NUS-USI and Mindwise was made to create the Open Your Mind Project
2. From 2007 till 2012 the project was a huge success

3. In early 2013 due to leftover funding from the Public Health funding the project was able to have a short lived re-launch
4. That the Open Your Mind Project was able to offer students training and opportunities to peer-educate other about Mental Health problems

Conference further notes:

1. From the Open Your Mind survey in 2013 it was reported that 68% of the applicants suffered from mental health problems
2. NUS-USI should support unions to move away from awareness raising and towards evidence based campaigns that can enact real change.

Conference mandates:

1. NUS-USI Officers to support students unions in their mental health campaigns and to promote the 'take the pledge' campaign from Time to Change, a charity which works to end mental health discrimination.
2. NUS-USI to continue working with Mindwise to identify more opportunities for funding
3. NUS-USI to continue to lobby the Health Minister to create more funding opportunities for peer-led mental health campaign

Contraceptive Options (2019)

Conference notes:

1. There are many different contraceptive options available both privately through National Chemists and publicly through the NHS and Family Planning Clinics.

Conference believes:

1. Many people are unaware of the options when choosing contraceptives and also of the many associated health risks of using them incorrectly or not at all.

Conference resolves:

1. That NUS-USI should work closely with the Public Health Agency and local Health Trusts to promote the availability of contraceptives and to educate students in safe sex, the use of contraceptives and emergency contraceptives. Conference also resolves that NUS-USI should continue to support College Health Clinics and Sexual Health and Guidance Week.

Organ Donation Opt-Out (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That NUS-USI do not have an official stance on whether or not people should be automatically registered for organ donation or not. Organ donation is vital because around 5,000 people die each year in the UK in circumstances where they can become a donor, these are thousands of organs which are buried that could be used again by a different person to help save their lives.

Conference believes:

1. That viable organs should not be wasted as people die while they are on the waiting list. Each year approximately 200 patients in Northern Ireland are on transplant waiting lists. If all viable organs were used in transplantation, the waiting lists would be drastically reduced and the unnecessary deaths of waiting list patients would be reduced also.

Conference resolves:

1. That NUS-USI should have a stance of automatic registration of organ donation, with an option to opt-out. The conference also resolves that NUS-USI lobby legislators to change the law so that the law reflects NUS-USI's stance and until this happens, NUS-USI should promote this stance by running campaigns and help Students' Unions run registration days to get people to register to donate their organs.

Human Trafficking (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That human trafficking is a rising problem within Northern Ireland with 41 potential victims last year, a considerable rise from 17 potential victims in 2012. Victims are often led to believe they are traveling to Northern Ireland for legitimate employment, but are then exploited by their captors. Human trafficking comes in many forms including sexual exploitation, forced labour, and domestic servitude. It is an horrendous abuse against those most vulnerable in our society.

Conference believes:

1. That more needs to be done in relation to this issue and that we should support initiatives against human trafficking put forward by the government. Students should be made aware of the issue and its importance both around the world and locally.

Conference resolves:

1. That there should be a policy showing NUS-USI's support of the abolishment of human trafficking. That NUS-USI should support the movement and the event that is anti-human trafficking day on the 18th of October, by raising awareness within all HE and FE institutions that it is affiliated with. Students should be educated around the issue and enabled to spot the signs of human trafficking and encouraged to report any human trafficking activity to the relevant authorities.

Gambling Addiction (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That the number of students who are becoming addicted to gambling is also on the rise with one in five turning to gambling to find extra funds to pay for the cost of living and their fees. Smartphones and online gambling are playing a big part in the rise of young people developing gambling problems. Gambling is an addiction and should be recognised as such. Conference does not have a policy on gambling.

Conference believes:

1. That it is important that we support these students in the same way we would if had any other mental health problem. They should not be punished by their university or college and should instead be given extra guidance and assistance to help them.

Conference resolves:

1. That support systems need to be put in place in order to protect these students from both financial and emotional backlash that may come from being removed from college/university, unable to pay debts or ostracised because of their addiction.

Fighting for student carers (2019)

Conference notes:

1. A student carer is a student of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help. This could be caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems.
2. Student carers are under-represented in further and higher education. The difference is particularly stark for women aged 16–24; 10% of women carers in that age range who care for more than 50 hours per week are in education, compared to 17% of men carers.
3. The NUS Women's Campaign produced 'learning with care' in 2013 which was the first ever comprehensive research into the experiences of student carers in the UK
4. Only 36% of student carers felt able to balance commitments such as work, study, and family/relationships, compared to 53% of students without caring responsibilities.
5. More than half of student carers (56%) had seriously considered leaving their course, compared to 39% of students without caring responsibilities.
6. Student carers had experienced varying degrees of support from their institutions, but in all cases there was a lack of coordinated, systematic support.
7. Two thirds of student carers (67%) regularly worry about not having enough money to meet their basic living expenses. Many student carers have had to sacrifice all or some of their social life in order to study and provide care
8. Student carers who were in receipt of Carer's Allowance did not feel the benefit was adequate, but the fact that full-time students are not eligible for Carer's Allowance was considered unfair and contributing to their financial hardship.
9. Student carers were three times as likely to have taken on high-risk debt as students without caring responsibilities, even though they were less likely to have taken out low-risk debt.

Conference believes:

1. Access to education is a key social justice issue and it is important that within the context of austerity cuts which are decimating public services including support for carers, that women who care in particular are not denied or deterred from entering apprenticeships, further and/or higher education.

2. That due to patriarchy, the nature of caregiving in the UK is gendered, with women expected to be the primary caregivers and as with other areas of work which are dominated by women this work is devalued in society.

Conference resolves:

1. That NUS-USI should conduct research on the number student carers in further and higher education in Northern Ireland, their experiences in education and what institutions should be doing to support them.
2. To work with Carers Northern Ireland to ensure that support for student carers is on the political agenda in the run up to the forthcoming elections.

Student housing (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That the majority of students are forced to find accommodation in the private rental sector. Particularly in student areas, this accommodation often extremely expensive and of a poor quality.

Conference believes:

1. That this problem is greatly exacerbated by the lack of university-owned accommodation.
2. That students need to organise to fight for better conditions in housing and that NUS-USI has a vital role to play in this.

Conference resolves:

1. That NUS-USI campaigns for statutory rent controls in areas where large numbers of students live.
2. That NUS-USI will support the establishment of a tenants' union to enable students to work together to tackle slum landlordism and abuses by landlords.
3. That NUS-USI will campaign for universities to significantly invest in affordable, high quality accommodation for students.

Cyber-bullying (2019)

Conference notes:

1. The lack of policy in the area of Cyber-bullying. Given the increased use of social media, there are more risks for young people to become targets or victims and even aggressors of Cyber-bullying.

Conference believes:

1. There is a lack of awareness and understanding on the topic of Cyber-bullying.

Conference resolves:

1. That NUS-USI:

- Provide guidelines on this issue
- Adopt and promote a Cyber-Bullying Charter
- Work towards ensuring all officers, SU staff and student representatives are appropriately trained and informed in relation to the issue
- Ensure that information and resources on the identification, prevention, reporting and response of cyber-bullying are made available and promoted

LIBERATION ISSUES

Reproductive Rights (2017)

Conference notes:

That it is only legal to perform an abortion in Northern Ireland, if the mother's physical or mental wellbeing will be endangered as a result of the pregnancy.

Conference recognises:

That abortion is an extremely stressful process; and having to visit Great Britain or other European countries in order to have access to safe abortion procedures, adds to this stress. This is coupled with the stigma associated with abortion that may leave many women in Northern Ireland unable to talk to their family or friends about abortion for fear of judgement and thus have to go through everything alone. This may lead to serious mental health problems which could last a life time.

Conference believes:

That on these grounds, the Abortion Act 1967 should be extended to Northern Ireland, and adequate provision be made to ensure women's safety and mental health needs are met throughout any choice regarding pregnancy termination.

Conference mandates:

The NUS-USI President and NUS-USI Women's Officer to continue to lobby the government and campaign for women's right to choose, under medical guidance, to terminate a pregnancy without having to leave Northern Ireland and to support the sentiments of the Pro Choice movement.

Core Issues (2017)

Conference notes:

The offensive nature of the extremist organisation 'Core Issues,' which claims to 'cure' gay people of their homosexuality.

Conference also notes:

That a Core Issues conference took place at Union Theological College in Belfast last year.

Conference resolves:

To oppose any HE and FE institutional involvement with Core Issues and to support LGBT groups in fighting the damaging, inaccurate and offensive disinformation spread by Core Issues, wherever it may occur in Northern Ireland.

LGBT Rights and Israel (2017)

Conference notes:

1. That the State of Israel engages in Human Rights abuses against its minorities and those it occupies in the Palestinian Territories and Golan Heights
2. Israel partakes in the phenomena known internationally as "Pink Washing" which is the calculated flaunting of LGBT rights in an area, region or State that is designed to cover up or "wash" human rights abuses.

Conference believes:

1. LGBT rights are a fundamental part of any equal and diverse Society
2. That LGBT rights in Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories should not be detremented because of the Palestinian cause however LGBT rights should also not be used to hide Israel's Human Rights abuses.
3. The State of Israel's LGBT Rights record should be commended and celebrated.
4. Israel uses malicious and manipulative rhetoric to shift focus from the plight of the Palestinian people in order for the International community to focus on the LGBT rights record of the Palestinian Authority and Terrorist Organization Hamas which is then used to create a false judgement of the Palestinian people as a whole.
5. Use of "Pinkwashing" for any purpose should be condemned, particularly in regards to the Israel - Palestine conflict

Conference resolves:

1. To declare solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine and work with Al Qaws (the rainbow) for gender and sexual diversity in Palestinian society.
2. To oppose the use of "pinkwashing" by the Israeli State and Foreign Ministry.
3. Condemn the abuse of LGBT rights within the occupied Palestinian territories by the so called "Palestinian Authority" and the Terrorist organisation Hamas
4. Progress a dialogue to discuss the merits of Israel's LGBT rights whilst maintaining a firm stance against the Human Rights abuses of the State of Israel.

Engagement with LGB and T People (2017)

Conference notes:

There are an increasing number of transgender people studying in Northern Ireland.

Conference further notes:

There is a lack of understanding between LGB and T people.

Conference believes:

That transgender student issues are different to mainstream LGB issues, as it is gender orientation, not sexual orientation.

Conference resolves:

For NUS-USI to promote and raise awareness of transgender issues and recognise the need for transgender student peer support within LGB and T societies.

NUS-USI Equality Officer (2017)**Conference notes:**

In recent years significant progress has been made in Northern Ireland in furthering the equality agenda, in the past NUS-USI played an integral role securing major wins for equality for students. However in recent years within NUS-USI, liberation campaigns have moved away from the forefront of the movement.

Conference further notes:

The lack of a dedicated member of staff working on this area, whilst the workload and lack of time for the part time officers translates into difficulties in both creating impact on the ground and affecting policy change.

Conference believes:

That the trend of lack of development in equality and liberation areas cannot continue, and must be addressed.

Conference mandates:

NUS-USI to investigate as a matter of urgency the means of securing additional funds for the Liberation and Equality campaign to address the declining lack of liberation engagement in NUS-USI.

Conference further mandates:

NUS-USI to examine the feasibility of a part time paid officer role, with a referendum between constituent members to determine which students and officers would prefer; a part time Deputy President, a part time Equality Officer or a FEUD Officer.

DUP and the Blood Ban (2017)**Conference notes:**

In September 2011 the NHS in England, Scotland and Wales announced that regulations banning the donation of blood by Gay and Bisexual men would be lifted, and allow for implementing a one-year deferral period instead. This decision comes after the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (Safty) carried out a review and found it could no longer support the permanent exclusion of men who have had sex with men from blood donation. The European Commission has stated that any ban on the basis of sexual orientation breaks EU laws.

Conference further notes:

That the DUP and Health Minister Edwin Poots have refused to apply or accept the evidence

of the report leading to the removal of this ban in the other areas of the UK.

Conference believes:

That the DUP are a consistently an anti LGBT party, and have continued to block or create counter policy and legislation around LGBT rights in Northern Ireland.

Conference mandates:

NUS-USI to actively campaign and pressure the DUP and The Health Minister around the Blood Ban and hold them to account for their horrendously homophobic track record in relation to LGBT students and people.

Conference Further mandates:

NUS-USI and its officers to abide by the commitments in its policies to equality and diversity and therefore take a militant stand against the DUP's anti Liberation stance, and actively encourage member unions to do the same.

Discrimination in Societies & Sports Clubs (2018)

Conference believes:

1. That societies and sports teams are commonly places where LGBT Students regularly feel uncomfortable- particularly in Further Education.
2. The culture within some sports clubs and societies excludes LGBT students by the nature of their activities.

Conference further believes:

1. That the NUS LGBT campaign has a commitment to creating inclusive environments for all whilst studying. They recently launched the Out In Sports research and campaign with very worrying evidence regarding the discrimination LGBT Students face in these instances.
2. That negative perceptions of LGBT people are common amongst the sporting environments at university and colleges.

Conference resolves:

1. To mandate the NUS-USI REC to support HE and FE students unions in equipping LGBT Societies with the tools to challenge exclusive behaviour.
2. To mandate the NUS-USI REC to support the other liberation officers to campaign on mandatory training for leader of sports clubs and societies in unions.
3. To mandate the NUS-USI REC to work with Northern Ireland sporting authorities such as Sports Northern Ireland and groups such as the GAA to campaign to promote diversity and tolerance in sport.

Yes, that's Consent (2018)

Conference believes:

1. The majority of sexual assault victims are women
2. PSNI statistics show that around peak student times such as Freshers in September and Halloween in October- reports of sexual assault increase.
3. There has been a rise in the number of websites such as HolylandLAD and Spotted, which are counterproductive to the safe space ethos that students unions strive to achieve and promote behaviours which are harmful towards women.
4. That traditional campaigns to reduce rape and sexual assault statistics often focus on the survivor and not on the rapist (ie telling women to get taxis home rather than walk as opposed to telling people not to rape)
5. The recent "don't be that guy" ad campaign in Vancouver aimed at telling people not to rape resulted in a 10% reduction in sexual assaults in the area, out of sync with neighbouring areas which experienced a 22% rise in sexual assaults.

Further believes:

1. Consent is complicated and is more than simply not saying no - sometimes "maybe" and "yes" can actually be "no's" when people feel coerced into situations. Consent can be affected by all sorts of power dynamics; gender, sexuality, class, race, (dis)ability, etc.
2. Active consent is the idea of seeking an enthusiastic YES! as "best-practice" with regards to consent.
4. "Rape culture" is a term to describe how acts like victim blaming, placing emphasis on potential victims rather than perpetrators in anti-rape campaigns, etc. leads to a culture of legitimising rape and sexual assault.
5. Most people see consent as simply "not saying no": education at all levels on consent issues would be useful at combatting this element of rape culture.

Conference resolves:

1. To lobby the Northern Ireland Executive to require schools and colleges to teach about consent in schools, echoing the sentiments already laid out.
2. To mandate the NUS-USI REC to support the Women's Officer and LGBT Officer to campaign on addressing the lack of understanding around consent.
3. To condemn all media that promotes such behaviours and attitudes that contribute towards the systemic rape culture faced by Northern Ireland.
4. For NUS-USI to continue working positively with the PSNI to tackle these issues.
5. To advocate for similar campaigns to the "dont be that guy" campaign here in the UK.

Take back our Campuses, and stop the victim blaming (2018)

Conference believes:

1. The NUS Hidden Marks report found that one in seven survey respondents had experienced a serious physical or sexual assault during their time as a student.
2. The report also showed results that 'more than one third of respondents reported they sometimes felt unsafe when visiting their university or college buildings in the evening'.
3. That every woman has the right to feel safe on their college or university campus.

Conference further believes:

1. That even with positive action taken by students' unions across the UK, there are still instances of sexual assaults on campuses.
3. That all too often, campaigns focusing on safety can place the responsibility on the victim of a sexual attack and not the perpetrator.
4. That victim blaming perpetrates a culture in which women do not feel supported enough to report sexual offences, especially on campuses when far away from home and family.
5. That the NUS-USI Women's Campaign must take action to tackle the abhorrent culture of victim blaming.

Conference resolves:

1. For the NUS-USI Women's Campaign to launch a campaign focusing on busting rape myths and tackling the victim blaming that is endemic on our campuses.
2. For the NUS-USI Women's Campaign to produce briefings for all officers so that they feel enabled and confident in tackling these issues in a college and university environment that is often dominated by men.
3. For the NUS-USI Women's Officer to ensure there are strong links between institutions, student unions, the police, local Health Trusts, and special voluntary services, and to support student unions in building these links.

Take back our boardrooms! (2018)

Conference notes:

1. That believing in equality is about recognising privilege which exists in society and being proactive in taking measures to redress imbalances and structural inequality which still have a disproportionately negative impact on women.
2. That men still dominate in every sphere of power in society, and that this is shamefully reflected in the gender make-up of university and college boards, which barely even reach 5% of boards in some cases.
3. That university and college boards also fail to reflect the society that they serve in a number of other ways, including in terms of class, race, age, profession.
4. Boards that fail to reflect the diversity of society that funds them will fail to adequately serve the needs and aspirations of that society.
5. In Northern Ireland, there is currently only 1 Woman Principal (BMC) within all 6 of the FE Colleges, and 1 Woman VC (Stranmillis) within our Universities sector, and no women chairs of either HE or FE Governing Bodies.

Conference resolves:

1. To lobby the government to force universities and colleges to make arrangements so that at least 40% of governing body members are women.
2. To work with students' unions that have two student representatives on governing bodies to find methods of ensuring that at least one of those representatives is guaranteed to be a woman.
3. To make it clear that we will push for longer term penalties for boards who do not meet the diversity competency requirements.
4. To lobby universities and colleges to take action to make their governing body membership better reflect the diversity of Northern Ireland society.
5. To support students' unions in widening the background in particular of the 'independent members' of university and college governing bodies.

Supporting student parents to stay in education (2018)

Conference believes:

1. In 2009 NUS completed the first study into student parents, the Meet the Parents Report
2. Since Meet the Parents was published NUS has produced a series of briefing for unions on the subjects it covered
3. The vast majority of student parents are women
4. Education cuts are hitting the most vulnerable the hardest
5. The changes proposed by the welfare reform bill will have a disproportionately negative impact on single mothers
6. NUS' Meet the Parents Report showed that 60 per cent of survey respondents having thought about leaving their course. This figure rises to 65 per cent for lone parents.
7. When asked what one thing would most improve their experience as a student parent, half of the responses to Meet the Parents related to funding

Conference further believes:

1. For decades the women's movement has campaigned for better access to childcare
2. Cuts to support services and nurseries are seen as soft cuts
3. The government's economic changes are reliant on a social model that sees women do the majority of childcare

Conference resolves:

1. To produce a resource for education officers and students unions on the impacts cuts to budgets are having on student parents
2. Work with unions to ensure there is flexibility in courses for those with caring responsibilities
3. Work with unions to ensure that childcare is available over holidays
4. Continue to campaign for childcare funding in FE to come from a dedicated pot and not be discretionary
5. To continue to work with groups in the third sector such as Gingerbread.
6. That the NUS – USI Women's campaign will empower and provide students' unions with resources to improve the representation of student parents on their campus

Reclaiming the F –Word, That's right I'm a FEMINIST (2018)

Conference believes:

1. Patriarchy has been quite successful in back lashing against feminism and turning feminism in popular culture into a dirty word
2. There are a lot of women students who believe that regardless of our gender identity we should be treated as equals and that women deserve to have equal access to power, decision making and an equal stake and influence in our education and in society but would not define as a feminist
3. Discussions on feminist principals are often prefixed by 'Im not a feminist, but' indicating women are not comfortable associating themselves with the term but sharing the values

Conference further believes:

1. That one of the problems that women's groups have in attracting members to the group is women having the perception of feminism as man hating female supremacists
2. That this is simply not true
3. In order for the women's campaign to empower even more women students to understanding feminism and building and developing feminist activists as well as introducing feminist principles into the mainstream of student's association culture it is important that the women's campaign fights against the patriarchy and the misrepresentation of feminism in media and popular culture
4. Feminism can be used as an empowerment tool to recognising injustice exists and the first step to engaging a wider group of women in the women's campaign

Conference resolves:

1. For the NUS-USI women's campaign to provide materials and an activity and campaign resource pack about different ways in which student's unions can 'reclaim feminism' through campaigning for change
2. For the NUS-USI women's campaign to support students unions in educating students about feminism and how this can be incorporated into the curriculum and within core work and training of the student's association

Women and work (2018)

Conference notes:

1. There are now over a million unemployed women in the UK – the highest rate in 20 years.
2. Women's unemployment is currently rising at a disproportionate rate to men's – 78% of the increase in redundancies that occurred April-June 2011 was a result of women losing their jobs.
3. Just 16 of the FTSE 100 companies have female executive directors.
4. In Northern Ireland, women are paid significantly less than male counter parts and comprise the largest section of the unemployed and part time workers.

Conference believes:

1. Many women may be put off starting up businesses or aiming for high-level positions in industry because they see so few examples of successful businesswomen.
2. The Fawcett Society's recent research, entitled Sexism in the City, highlights the numerous barriers women face in the workplace, including harassment and discrimination

against them for becoming pregnant.

Conference resolves:

1. That the NUS-USI Women's Campaign should invite a speaker from Fawcett society to speak at next year's conference, or Activist Training Days, specifically about their Sexism in the City report, and how the situation for women in business and the workplace is changing and could improve.

Misogyny is not just for men (2018)

Conference believes:

1. LBT women are often forced to feel like they should embrace gender stereotypes
2. Outdated perception of the concept and necessity of butch/femme is a product of patriarchal assumptions of passive women and masculine men
3. Women can have very misogynist attitudes towards other women
4. The dominant discourse of LBT women as sex objects, particularly the role of gay women fulfilling male fantasy, is detrimental to our community and should not be tolerated

Conference Resolves

1. To challenge patriarchy and misogyny perpetrated by women, by confronting any misogynistic comments and producing educational material
2. To combat discourse of gay women as sex objects by running a 'hands of my sexuality' campaign in conjunction with the LGBT campaign

Getting back to basics (2018)

Conference believes:

1. That Feminists in the 1970s created these 7 demands for women:
 - Equal pay for equal work
 - Equal education and job opportunities
 - Free contraception
 - Free 24-hour community-controlled childcare
 - Legal and financial independence for women
 - An end to discrimination against lesbians
 - Freedom for all women from intimidation by the threat or use of male violence. An end to the laws, assumptions and institutions which perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women
2. All of these demands were seen a basic rights.
3. None of these demands has yet to be achieved.
4. The strength of feminism is that it is a movement that spans generations.

Conference further believes:

1. Over the past decade the women's movement has made great strides, but we are now fighting to hold on to what we've got, not moving forward.
2. The government has vested interests in maintaining the status quo
3. There is a need to re-examine some of our most basic demands and use the as the basis for our campaigns.
4. The original 1970s list of demands should be used as a basis for our work.

Conference resolves:

1. To create a list of women students' demands which provides the backbone of our work.
2. To create this list using conference policies and the original demands of the women's liberation movement as a basis.
3. To produce policy guides on these demands that also support women to make the case for them on campus

Winning women's representation (2018)

Conference notes:

1. Women remain significantly under-represented in positions of power throughout society.
2. There are more millionaires in David Cameron's cabinet than women.
3. Only 22% of MPs are women and just 31 per cent of elected councillors are women. At the current rate of progress it will take women decades to achieve equal representation in the most powerful political institutions in Britain. If the rate of change does not speed up, baby girls born this year will be drawing their pensions before they see an equal number of women in Parliament.
4. A Guardian report in December 2011 revealed that 78% of newspaper articles are written by men, 72% of Question Time contributors are men and 84% of reporters and guests on Radio 4's Today show are men.
5. Only 16 FTSE 100 companies have female executive directors.
6. Despite forming a majority of students in higher and further education, women are under-represented in powerful positions in universities, colleges and students' union.

Conference believes:

1. NUS-USI Women's Campaign has an important role to play in defending and extending women's representation in universities and throughout society.
2. Guaranteed women's representation in universities and students' unions, including women's officer's elected by and accountable to women, is vital to women's equality and to overcoming the bigotry, inequality and discrimination we face.
3. There have been many attempts to abolish Women's Officer positions in Student Unions across the country in recent years. In many cases it is proposed to replace the Women's Officer with an 'Equality Officer' – which cannot properly represent women, or other groups who face discrimination.

Conference resolves:

1. To launch a priority campaign for 'A Women's Officer in every Students' Union' – aiming to defend and extend women's representation throughout the student movement. This should include producing a briefing and action pack equipping women students to establish women's representation in their Students' Union and providing workshops and speakers at the Sister ACTivist training days on how to win women's representation.
2. To campaign on increasing the number of women who run for all sabbatical positions, all councillors and voluntary roles within FE students unions.

Representation of LGBT Women (2018)

Conference believes:

1. Women are chronically underrepresented in all aspects of public life. Students' Unions and the National Unions are no exception.
2. Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans and Queer women are even more underrepresented in Student Unions and the National Unions
3. Change begins within our on movement, in order to be inclusive we must encourage and support LBT and queer women to stand for elected roles

Conference further believes:

1. That many women, particularly in Northern Ireland, feel they need to hide their sexual orientation of gender identity/expression when running in elections.

Conference resolves:

1. Reaffirm the women's movements commitment to strengthening LGBT women's representation
2. Ensure the inclusion of LGBT specific content at I WILL and Sister ACTivist training days

Fighting government and institutional ignorance on rape (2018)**Conference believes:**

1. It is vital that an understanding of the facts surrounding rape and rape culture are embedded throughout our criminal justice system and our government.
2. A current lack of understanding in the justice system and in society is still preventing the appalling rape conviction rate of 6% from rising.

Conference further believes:

1. Proposals from government ministers such as Ken Clarke's proposal to give rapists shorter jail terms in return for early guilty pleas are a dangerous threat to women's safety.
2. Feminist outrage and lobbying by women's organisations played a part in the scrapping of this proposal for convicted rapists shortly after it was announced, as it also did with the earlier proposal to grant anonymity to people accused of rape.
3. Proposals such as this and the subsequent comments made by MEP's are part of a wider lack of understanding of violence against women from a deeply sexist government.
4. The Northern Ireland Executive and the PSNI have demonstrated a number of times that they have dangerously ignorant and misinformed attitudes towards the crime of rape, which have resulted in outrageous information leaflets and campaigns being displayed across the country.
5. Similar proposals are likely to emerge in the future, and in the face of such ignorance, women's organisations need to stand together and be a strong voice against the government.

Conference resolves:

1. For the NUS-USI Women's Campaign to respond strongly to any future government proposals on rape that would be damaging to survivors' wellbeing and women's safety, and to be prepared to organise a national campaign against any such proposals.
2. For the NUS-USI Women's Campaign to join with other women's rights organisations to

call on the government to change its attitude towards rape and rape survivors.

3. For the NUS Women's Campaign to produce resources on the myths surrounding rape, and to encourage women activists to lobby their local MLA's and MPs to recognise and oppose ignorance over rape in the Executive and Westminster.

4. To lobby the PSNI to create an informed and victim sensitive set of resources and campaign that will stamp out the rape blame culture that is so prevalent within the law and institutions.

Reclaiming the Word 'Feminism' (2018)

Conference believes:

1. Feminism has been transformed by popular culture into a pejorative and negative term or word.
2. There are a lot of women students who believe that regardless of our gender (or non) gender identity we should be treated as equals and that women deserve equal access to power, decision making and an equal stake and influence in our society – but would not define as a 'feminist.'
3. Discussions on feminist principals are often prefixed by 'I'm not a feminist, but' indicating women are not comfortable associating themselves with the term but sharing the same values.

Conference further believes:

1. That one problem women's groups have in attracting members to the group is women having the wrong perception of feminists as 'men haters'
2. This perception is false and misconceived
3. Feminism should be used as a tool for recognising injustice exists and the first step to engaging wider groups of women.

Conference resolves:

1. For the NUS women's campaign to provide materials and information in order to educate both male and female students on real feminist issues.
2. For NUSUSI to run a campaign to 'reclaim feminism.'

Women representation (2018)

Conference believes:

1. That women are still significantly underrepresented in Students Union politics as well as nationally.
2. That only 38% of Sabbatical Officers in the UK are women. Only 21% of UK Students Union Presidents are women.
3. That female representation in Students' Union Council, and at national conference is worryingly low.

Conference further believes:

1. That women's issues are less likely to be considered in discussion in a sabbatical team when women are not present.

2. That less women stand for positions than men, this reflects stereotypes of men dominating in these areas.
3. That women have been hit hardest in the period of austerity and it is crucial that the movement has a strong voice in the face of these threats.

Conference resolves:

1. For NUS-USI to run a national campaign and create a support network in order to encourage more female candidates to run for election.
2. To empower and educate females in elected positions through feminist activist training, so they can lead on women's issues.

End violence against women (2018)

Conference believes:

1. For years women have been the target of violence and harassment.
2. On night's out it is not uncommon for females to be touched inappropriately.
3. This should not be tolerated at any level, especially not in our Students' Unions.

Conference further believes:

1. Many individuals, both male and female, do not realise what actions actually define 'harassment.' They may not realise their actions actually constitute harassment.
2. Education and reasonable enforcement is needed.

Conference resolves:

1. That Students' Union's throughout Northern Ireland should strive towards the NUS 'Zero Harassment Accreditation.'
2. For NUS-USI to provide the information and resources in order to strive towards this.

Women's Campaign (2018)

Conference notes:

The strengths and successes of the NUS Women's Campaign.

Conference believes:

If NUS-USI were to work closer with the NUS Women's campaign we could also achieve the same successes here in NI.

Conference resolves:

NUS-USI to be in frequent contact with NUS Women's Campaign and implement the same campaign strategy in NI.

International Women's Day (2018)

Conference notes:

That international Women's Day is marked on the same day every year

Conference believes:

This day needs to be celebrated throughout the student body.

Conference resolves:

That NUS-USI holds a networking event for International Women's Day to celebrate this occasion.

Women in Leadership (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Women make up the majority of the student population but are underrepresented in positions of power and decision making in the student movement.
2. This includes course representatives, sabbatical officers, and delegations to national decision-making conferences.
3. Despite accounting for 45% of the academic workforce, women make up only 20% of professors in UK universities and only 17% of vice-chancellors.
4. Black, LGBT and disabled women are marginalised further, with only 1.4% of professors in the UK being black and minority ethnic women.

Conference believes:

1. The issue of women's inequality and underrepresentation will not be solved simply by getting more women into positions of leadership.
2. This is particularly important when talking about the underrepresentation of women in university management positions – a vice-chancellor who supports an increase in tuition fees or outsources to private companies who use zero-hour contracts is not a vice-chancellor who works for the betterment of and supports women students, even if they happen to be a woman.
3. Women in leadership is fundamentally about radically altering the structure of power, how we conceptualise power, and how it is used.
4. There are several strands to tackling the underrepresentation of women in students' unions. Structural barriers such as reserving places for women and further marginalised women in democratic structures and conference delegations are extremely important; as is changing the organisational culture, which includes (but is not limited to) tackling lad culture and everyday sexism, in addition to ensuring students' unions are accessible and child-friendly; and individual capacity building for women students, including public speaking workshops are run and protecting (and creating) women-only spaces on campus. These are all ways to start tackling the issue of women's underrepresentation in positions of power.
5. Black, LGBT and disabled women face further oppression, and any policies, schemes and programmes aimed at increasing the representation of women must take this into account and target these women in particular.
6. Intersectionality is at the core of the NUS-USI Women's Campaign. The first ever NUS-USI Women's Committee has been elected, and is proudly intersectional. We must ensure that any work we do on women in leadership has intersectionality at its core.

Conference resolves:

1. To support students' unions in improving their democratic legitimacy by improving the number of women in leadership positions as well as the diversity of women in leadership.
2. For a women-only session at NUS-USI summer training to be compulsory, where women officers can share their experiences with one another whilst having the political experience of the power of a women-only space.

Liberation Training (2019)

Conference notes:

1. There are a number of Liberation Officers both within NUS-USI and member union but there is currently no role specific training in Northern Ireland for new liberation students.

Conference believes:

1. Fledgling Officers may not previously have the relevant experience or contacts when beginning their office and can take a while to find their feet.

Conference resolves:

1. NUS-USI should work alongside NUS UK and USI to introduce a new, overarching campaign for liberation and to offer appropriate training to Students Union Officers.

Recognising Diversity (2019)

Conference welcomes:

The continuing diversification of the student population through the growth of groups such as international, mature and disabled students entering both FE and HE institutions.

Conference notes however:

That NUS-USI, many member unions and institutions have failed to fully engage with what have been traditionally under-represented groups.

Conference recognises:

The work being done on student diversity issues by the Liberation Campaign, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Equality Challenge Unit and that a more diverse student population enriches and adds value to the education experience of all students.

Conference mandates the Regional Executive Committee:

1. To produce a report and guidelines for member unions highlighting areas of excellence and successful initiatives in students' unions, colleges and universities, to be used as a guide for student officers of member unions.
2. This report shall cover (but will not be limited to) student parents and carers;

students with disabilities; students from various political and religious backgrounds; international, Great Britain and Republic of Ireland students; women; and part-time, postgraduate, mature and LGBT students.

Marriage Equality (2019)

Conference notes:

1. Conference notes that the Marriage Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 states that there is a legal impediment to marriage if the parties are of the same sex.

Conference recognises:

1. Conference recognises that the current Marriage Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 discriminates against LGBT people. Conference further recognises that changing to Marriage Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 to allow parties to be of the same sex does not weaken the institution of marriage – on the contrary, it strengthens it.

Conference resolves:

2. To mandate the NUS-USI regional executive to strongly campaign for marriage equality to ensure that the ban on same sex marriage and mixed sex civil partnerships in Northern Ireland is removed.

Women in STEM (2019)

Conference notes:

1. The demand for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills is ever increasing within Northern Ireland
2. There is a huge gender imbalance within the STEM subjects at all levels, with men making up 70% of STEM graduates
3. With funding from DEL, The Engineering Training Council in Northern Ireland (ETCNI) and gender diversity specialists Skills 4 have joined forces to support 20 small and medium sized enterprises and four large companies in developing 50 women in STEM careers, and will also be promoting STEM careers to 1,000 schoolgirls and establishing a network to mentor and support women and girls

Conference believes:

1. Girls continue to outperform boys at GCSE and A Level but are less likely to apply for courses in the STEM sector
2. STEM subjects are male dominated and are often stereotypically described as “mens jobs” leading to many women not fulfilling their potential within the sector or being put off by entering the industry
3. Women have few role models or representatives within the STEM subjects
4. Women and girls should be encouraged to pursue courses and careers within the STEM sector
5. STEM courses and businesses should ensure that women have full access to work/life balance facilities including maternity leave, parental leave and carers leave
6. The work being done by ETCNI and Skills 4 should be replicated/applied to students studying in FE colleges and universities

Conference resolves:

1. NUS-USI should work with organisations such as ETCNI and Skills 4 to bring promotion of Women into STEM and the support network to students FE and HE sectors
2. NUS-USI should lobby the Department for Employment to promote and encourage women and girls to study STEM subjects to reduce the gender imbalance within the sector
3. NUS-USI should promote research into why women are less likely to study STEM subjects and use the evidence to aid the encouragement and promotion of Women in STEM subjects

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Environmentalism (2019)

Conference notes:

That climate change poses a very real and severe threat to the future of our planet.

Conference notes with concern:

That prominent voices in Northern Ireland politics have recently been dismissive of this important issue and have irresponsibly denied that climate change is man-made.

Conference believes:

That urgent and radical action is required to stop climate change.

Conference resolves:

1. NUS-USI must provide strong leadership on environmental campaigning.
2. NUS-USI should emphatically challenge any future attempts by politicians to trivialise the issue of climate change.
3. NUS-USI must set an example by operating in an environmentally responsible way and support and encourage member unions to do likewise.

Environmental Awareness Committee (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That there is not a formal committee or student support system in place within NUS-USI or the colleges/universities in NI for the officer position of environmental awareness officer in order to plan and organise campaigns for unions.

Conference believes:

1. That in the coming turbulent months and years within the Environmental sphere a stronger environmental voice must be heard from within NUS-USI. This is in order to protect the students and their futures in Northern Ireland.

Conference resolves:

1. That an environmental committee should be formed with at minimum 3 members including one from an FE background and one self-identifying woman; at maximum it should have 6 members. They should meet at least once a semester in order plan and formulate what is needed for unions within NI.

Fracking (2019)

Conference notes:

1. That there are plans to begin using the controversial method of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in Northern Ireland to exploit shale gas reserves in the region.
2. That the process involves pumping huge volumes of water laced with hundreds of chemicals into the ground at high pressure poses a significant threat of water and air pollution and can release chemicals connected with various cancers, birth defects and our health problems.
3. That the fracking has been met with opposition across the world and is currently banned or legally halted in Scotland, France, Germany, Bulgaria, Tunisia, Quebec and Vermont.
4. That the main parties in the Assembly Executive have failed to use their veto to take the threat of fracking off the table.

Conference believes:

1. That, despite the claims of Stormont and the drilling companies, fracking doesn't provide sustainable employment but rather short-term labour that is low paid - not the jobs we deserve!
2. That because this gas will be extracted by big businesses for profit and sold on the international energy markets, ordinary people in Northern Ireland will receive no benefit from the so called 'shale revolution' but will be lumped with all the consequences of the destruction of our environment in the pursuit of profits.

Conference supports:

1. A ban on the fracking process in the interest of environmental protection and public health.
2. The building of grassroots opposition to fracking using a variety of tactics including education, protest, electoral challenges and peaceful direct action.

Conference resolves

1. To retain the Environment Officer position, as it will be essential in mobilising students to get involved in opposing fracking alongside local communities, environmentalists and the trade unions.