

Lapsing policy

Overview

The following policies are due to lapse in December 2015.

- (1) Lower Accommodation Prices
- (2) It's #TimeToTalk Mental Health
- (3) No Platform Policy
- (4) Transgender Participation in Sport 2014

The Executive Committee are asked to discuss the policies and agree if any should be submitted to the Student Council on Tuesday 24 November.

Policy Title: Lower Accommodation
Prices

Proposer name: Grace Anderson

Secunder Name: Kathryn Younger

Union Notes:

- Anglia Ruskin is a university that tries to support its students in every area possible
- There is often a large gap between University accommodation prices and student loan amounts
- Higher fees alone have led to 17% decrease in students progressing to university (BBC)
- Student's studying in Cambridge don't get the extra help that London students get, despite being in one of the most expensive cities in the country

Union Believes:

- If students can't afford university accommodation, dropout rates will increase
- Money worries often cause stress by impacting on physical and mental health, which effects wellbeing and student's education

Union Resolves:

- The SU should work with students to find out if there are hidden costs in our accommodation
- The SU should support students in trying to get accommodation costs lowered

Policy Title: It's #TimeToTalk
Mental Health

Proposer name: Alexander Rider
(Disabled Students
Rep, Cambridge)

Seconder Name: Douglas Norton

Union Notes:***CONTENT WARNINGS: References to Suicide and Self Harm***

- 20 percent of Higher Education (HE) students consider themselves to have a mental health problem, with only half of these students having a current diagnosis. [1]
- 92 per cent of students have experienced feelings of mental distress during their studies. [1]
- The most common feelings of mental distress are; stress (80 per cent), lack of energy or motivation (70 per cent) and feeling unhappy or down (66 per cent). [1]
- 13 per cent of respondents reported having had suicidal thoughts during their studies and 14 per cent had had thoughts of self-harm. [1]
- The main causes of these feelings of mental distress were reported to be course workload and deadlines (65 per cent), exams and revision (54 per cent) and balancing study and other commitments (52 per cent). Financial difficulties also featured prominently (47 per cent). [1]
- Just 21 per cent of students experiencing mental distress shared this with their institution or students' union, with only 17 per cent having accessed support services available through their place of study. [1]

- On August 2014, an Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) alumni had been reported missing after reporting poor exam results to the worry of parents, siblings, and members of the ARU community. It is unknown whether they were receiving support for mental health at this time. [2]
- We know that there are huge problems with mental health services across the nation - individuals with mental health issues have been reported to be put in jail cells during times of crises with untrained police forces, mental health services are being shut down by austerity and budget cuts [3], and other horror stories within the system [4]
- The Student Union (SU) Academic Officer Aisha D'souza stated in their manifesto that as part of academic welfare, one of their points was to "have a focus on mental health and overall happiness" and "organise activities aimed at happiness such as: puppy therapy". [5]

Union Believes:

- People with mental health conditions and/or issues face stigma within society - in line with our Student Union values, to not take action in supporting students in our community with mental health issues would violate our own Student Union values of being **Inclusive, Accessible and Supportive**.
- The Student Union, and all its associated clubs and societies, have a duty of care to its membership. We already cover the physical health aspect through the provision of optional First Aid Training for students. Mental Health is and should be equally important to overall happiness and wellbeing.
- Whilst studies do show that puppy therapy is positively correlated with reducing stress, it is an overused gimmick (Many doge, such reductionism, wow). It is a simplified approach to 'treating' mental health issues, trivializes the actual complexities of mental health, and is not logistically viable in the long term mental wellbeing of students on our campuses. We need to encompass a wide range of mental wellbeing support strategies.
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an approved course developed in Australia (2000) and internationally recognized in twenty three countries. MHFA training can be applied to any aspect of daily life, and has a course to train instructors. [6]

- By having students have some form of training in MHFA, not only does it cover all bases in securing the welfare of our membership, but it also promotes personal development and is something to positively reference on a CV.

Union Resolves:

- To lobby the university in providing funding specifically designed to provide both university staff, SU staff and executive officers the option to engage in MHFA training, either as learners or as future instructors.
- To lobby the university to actively encourage University staff to become trained in MHFA, either as learners or as future instructors.
- For Executive Officers to be advocates of MHFA training and to encourage SU staff to take part in MHFA training.
- To actively develop MHFA training session(s) similar in structure to the current physical first aid course provided to club and society committee members, and non-committee students.
- To develop a toolkit of resources that assists clubs and societies in supporting students with mental health issues alongside other standard procedures (such as informing the student of the Wellbeing and Counselling Service).

References:

[1] Points 1-6 taken from the NUS 'Time to Change' report: <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/open/healthcare/NUS-Time-to-Change-guide/>

[2] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/11013759/Student-goes-missing-after-warning-parents-of-failed-degree.html>

[3] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-26453052>

[4] <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/ng-interactive/2014/oct/08/scandal-mental-health-care-uk>

[5] <http://www.angliastudent.com/elections/manifesto/2139/>

[6] <http://mhfaengland.org/>

[7] <http://www.angliastudent.com/represent/campaigns/>

Examples taken from the 'No Platform Policy': <https://www.angliastudent.com/pageassets/represent/councilsandforums/policy/No-Platform-Policy-14-11-2013.pdf>

Policy Title: No Platform Policy

Proposer name: Daryl Sharpe

Secunder Name: Megan Bennett

Union Notes:

- That the Union has a responsibility to protect the welfare and security of all of its members.
- That the NUS has a 'No-Platform Policy'

Union Believes:

- That debate and discussion is a valuable asset to the educational and cultural experience provided at the university and should generally be maintained and encouraged.
- That freedom of speech is an important right and should be respected.
- That there is a difference between preventing freedom of speech, and avoiding the promotion of speakers who are very likely to incite hatred on the grounds of religion, race, sexuality or along other lines.
- That therefore, freedom of speech can respected and maintained, whilst actively not giving a high-profile platform to an individual who is very likely to incited hatred or has been known to have incited hatred on the grounds of religion, race, and sexuality or along other lines.
- That race-, sexuality-, or religion-related hate crimes increase when speakers with extremely racist, homophobic, or fascist views are actively given a high-profile platform and this presents a very real risk to students.

- That all students have the right to study in a safe environment in which they do not feel threatened on the grounds of their race, sexuality or religion.
- That organisations that provide a platform to these speakers, could be seen as endorsing their views.
- That permitting these individuals and organisations to have a platform on our campuses undermines our responsibility to the welfare and safety of our students and our commitment to opposing racism, fascism and homophobia.

Union Resolves:

- To actively campaign against any organisations that seek to provide a platform to groups and/or organisations that pose a threat to the welfare or security of our members.
- To organise a memorandum of cooperation with the University Secretary to ensure that both are in agreement with the types of organisations that are likely to cause a threat.
- To create a list of organisations that should be placed on that will be campaigned against and not allowed to take part in Union events.
- That this list may be added to and organisations removed from time to time by Union Council in order to be kept up to date.
- To widely distribute the No Platform Policy and make copies available from all our offices and the Internet as well as making all employees of the Union aware of it.
- That if an individual is likely to incite hatred and has been known to have incited hatred on the grounds of religion, race, gender identity or sexuality or along other lines then action can and will be taken against them if there is significant evidence to expect this.
- To produce a report titled “Anglia Ruskin Students’ Union – Equality Counts” to explain the importance of both no platform and fighting against prejudice in all its forms

- To create an initial list of organisations to include:

- i. Hizb-ut-Tahrir
- ii. The BNP
- iii. The National Front
- iv. The White Wolves
- v. Combat 18
- vi. The Storm Front
- vii. Al-Muhajiroun
- viii. The EDL

Policy Title: Transgender Participation in Sport
2014

Proposer name: Daryl Sharpe

Seconder Name: Megan Bennett

Union Notes:

- Anglia Ruskin Students' Union supports recreational clubs across three campuses.
- Active Anglia supports competitive clubs across four campuses.

Union Believes:

- Students' Union to allow and encourage the participation of transgender students in sports teams.
- There is no current policy within Active Anglia in place which makes transgender students aware whether or not they are allowed to join their sports teams
- Sport is an excellent way to improve fitness and get active and to make friends and boost confidence
- LGBT people are a protected minority by the NUS and should not be discriminated against when it comes to participating in sport, or discriminated against at all for that matter
- Despite much resistance, transpeople have competed successfully in professional sport; this is a crucial step towards trans-equality
- Anglia Ruskin University is known for being a diverse and accepting university and by putting this policy in place it would be deserving of that reputation

- Other universities, such as the University of Derby already have a similar model in place which encourages transgender students to join their sports teams and live an active lifestyle, the same as any other student.

Union Resolves:

- To provide readily accessible information on transgender participation in sport within the Students' Union.
- To ensure Students' Union sports teams
- To lobby Active Anglia to ensure their sports teams actively include transgender students in sport.
- To work with Active Anglia to come up with a set of principles and sign a charter whereby all teams are aware of and implementing this policy.