



**James Morgans – LGBT+ Students' Rep (Cambridge)
NUS LGBT+ Conference 2017**

Introduction

Part of my job as an LGBT+ officer for ARU SU is to represent my students not only at a local or campus scale but also at a national and to an extent international scale and thus by attending the NUS LGBT+ conference (Hereby written as conference) I was able to perform this duty. The conference lasted over two days with myself being in Sheffield for 3 days. By voting in policy; connecting with other SUs and their delegates and also attending caucuses of which I identified with (Trans+ and Women's) I was able to make sure our students we're represented within the national student body.

Policy

NUS policy is separated into different zones: Strong and Active Unions, Welfare and Student Rights, Society and Citizenship and Education all of which are targeted at making sure policy stretches through to all areas of the university body system. Another part of conference is working all Rule revision to make sure NUS rules make all delegates feel protected and that conference is a success. Due to the fact that it would take a long and extended report to fully explain every policy passed in detail I will not be writing out every policy but if anyone wishes to talk to me more in-depth about the results of conference they are more than welcome to make an appointment with me.

In the Strong and Active Unions zone there was policy discussed regarding making resources for society committees; creating training materials for staff; focus on all 4 nations within the UK; noise accessibility for all students particularly those with disabilities such as autism or hearing requirements and finally a breakdown of university data to include the LGBT population. I am happy to announce all policies were passed and I am also happy to say that I was able to support all policies with genuine belief they would help the Students Union.

The second zone, Welfare and Student rights, an area dear to me was another area with several interesting and diverse discussions and policies including discussion on the support of students suffering from HIV and AIDS; accessibility for Trans+ and Intersex students within sport; Regarding online harassment; A focus on an asexual campaign and also policies on violence towards women; health research towards LGBT Students and finally a sensible drug policy. Yet again I am delighted to announce all of the above policies passed and I am currently writing my own versions of policy with particular focus on ARU SU's needs.

Society and Citizenship's policy was focused in five different areas: Saying no to pink washing within governments around the globe; regarding combatting hate crime rises since the EU

Referendum; Uniting LGBT+ Students across Europe; putting policy in place to help LGBT+ peoples of faith and finally regarding the freedom and defence of expression. This is the first time in which a policy didn't pass which I can confirm was the final policy argued this is due to the fact that it may have allowed Transphobic speakers into campuses and with the hate crime rates so high towards this group in my opinion it is rightly so that the motion was shot down.

The last area education also had many different areas of discussion that was brought up and every policy was yet again passed with direct support on all policy from me. These were: Let me choose who I am which was all about making sure people could change their names on their educational certificates; Queering the life sciences; Making sure that students would have the option of studying abroad and if mandatory LGBT+ safe spaces would be available and finally a boycott of the NSS on a national level. I understand this may be controversial due to the most recent student council but I stand by my opinion that this will help the students of our SU.

Overall on a policy front it seems to me that it has been a very progressive year in regards to the NUS and I look forward to trying to implement as many of these policies within ARU within the next 3 months as possible. Policy is very important in making sure that we have targets to reach for and make sure that there is an end goal in sight for us carry on being a progressive organisation and I look forward to presenting these at the next Student Council in April.

Caucuses

I attended 2 different caucuses at conference to make sure that my students of the women's and Trans+ communities were properly represented though sadly due to time constraints I was not able to attend the Polyamory caucus which I would've loved to have attended, I can also announce that as of next year the NUS will have a polyamorous Rep in place which is incredibly important in making sure that this group is properly represented.

The Trans+ caucus was an important part of the conference as it allowed for us to vote for the officers who will be representing us next year. One of these was Tobias Woolf currently on the committee who has already done a great amount of work and who I believe will represent students across the country in continuing to do so.

The women's caucus was although controversial also incredibly gratifying as with the election of Beth Douglas there will now be more campaigning towards an issue dear to my heart, the end of the blood ban stopping LGBT+ people from donating blood to the local blood banks unless they have followed a lot of in-depth rules and regulations.

Caucuses and elections of the right officers at national level are so key as without them we would not get the support we require at a local level to continue to evolve and increase our democratic values of representation towards the safety and increased solidarity and awareness of LGBT+ students across the university.

Building Bridges with other SUs across the nations.

Another key part for me of conference was making sure that I built up relations between ARU SU and other SUs across the country which through the use of intense discussion, oral communication and less formal socialising I was able to make relations with a variety of unions across the nations, particularly across the entirety of England. These included Sheffield Hallam, Leeds Beckett, and Bournemouth Arts all of which are polytechnics; Edinburgh, Plymouth, Warwick and Southampton who are all seen as Redbrick/Russell Group universities and also importantly I was able to speak to delegates from Further Education colleges such as Leeds City allowing me to understand their needs and hopefully put in place policy or at least advise the union on the needs of potential future university students.

I am also delighted to announce that I will be meeting with these Students Union's in May to continue to build bridges between our separate SUs and also make sure that we carry on pooling ideas and pumping each other for policy and resources that will help to increase the quality of life for LGBT+ students within the university. Although it will not be an official conference it will be similar in the style that there will be both formal and informal discussion between us all. I have also already discussed the idea of duplicating a policy already at Sheffield Hallam and hope that this will be able to come into place after next Student Council.

Conclusion: How conference impacted me and helped me feel I could better represent you?

Conference for me was an emotional rollercoaster. With heated debates occurring every day and a lot of tiredness occurring within the entire delegate group. However it was also three of the best days of my life and helped me realise both my sexual and gender identity and I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I learnt how to perform public speaking and how to build relations with strangers and turn them into close friends within a few days and I really hope that the contacts I made will be friends of ARU in the short and long term futures since I believe they will be great for us to network with whilst helping us establish our position as a union even further.

I also want to say a massive thank you to all the delegates and NUS staff I met with at conference for helping to make me feel welcome and a part of the NUS organisation particularly Ben, Goda, Alex, Kai, Han, Kat, Ellie, Matty, Connor and Charlie.