

INCREASED EQUALITY FOR VEGAN STUDENTS POLICY

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| Title: | Increased equality for vegan students | Date of Student Council: | 05/12/2017 |
| Proposer name: | Sarah Gradidge | Role: | President, Vegan Society and Treasurer, Ruskin RAG |
| Seconder name: | Kirsten Cope | Role: | Administrator, Vegan Society |

Union Notes:

The Union has a responsibility to protect all students and to cater for the lifestyles of all different types of students. Veganism is a protected belief system under international human rights law (The Vegan Society, <https://www.vegansociety.com/resources/solutions>). However, vegans are still sometimes marginalised and are associated with many negative stereotypes (Burgess, Carpenter, & Henshaw). The Union recognises that vegan students and staff members should be protected from marginalisation, and providing vegan options can be seen as both a preventative measure and a solution.

However the provision of only one vegan option does not allow for choice and especially does not cater for vegans who may have food allergies. Moreover, in order to find the vegan options at the catering services in university, vegans often have to search among all of the non-vegan options.

Veganism continues to become more and more visible within the university environment (such as ARU's Vegan Society). In fact, the largest current population of vegans in the UK is the 15-34 age bracket (The Vegan Society, 2016, <https://www.vegansociety.com/whats-new/news/find-out-how-many-vegans-are-great-britain>), and a large majority of university students fall within this bracket, with most people entering university at the age of 18 (Department of Education, last updated September 2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/552886/HEIPR_PUBLICATION_2014-15.pdf).

Also, 1 in 5 16-24 year olds currently identify as vegan or vegetarian (Mintel, 2014, <http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health/517246/Vegetarians-are-on-the-increase-in-Britain>).

Union action will enable acceptance and protection to vegan students and staff members, who, despite currently being a minority, are an emerging group that deserve to be recognised.

Furthermore, the Union has demonstrated their commitment to the environment and sustainability, for instance providing the Society Green Fund and actively encouraging ARU societies to advertise ARU's Travel Survey. However, the consumption of meat, dairy and eggs has a direct effect on the environment, contributing to increased greenhouse gas emissions (especially beef, cheese and pork - Carlsson-

Kanyama, & Gonzalez, 2009), increased water footprint (Hoekstra, & Chapagain, 2007) and deforestation (Kaimovitz et al., 2004). Through implementing this policy, the Union can continue to champion for environmental issues through encouraging the university to promote and provide more environmentally-friendly vegan products.

Union Believes:

The Union believes in equality for all students and believes that all students have the right to choose. It will champion for options that increase equality and it will recognise differing lifestyles and belief systems of students. It will recognise the differing needs of various students and will implement steps to address these needs.

Further, it is the responsibility of the Union to be involved in the protection of the environment. This has already been demonstrated through ideas such as the Society Green Fund. By increasing vegan options throughout university, the Union can help to reduce the university's environmental impact.

Union Resolves:

In order to carry out this policy, the following actions will need to be taken:

1. More vegan options will be provided in the existing catering services around university.
2. All clubs and societies will be required to provide at least one vegan option at any event they hold or, if not possible, to inform their attendees that vegan options will not be available.
3. Vegan options within the catering services at university will be placed separately from the non-vegan options – this is to allow ease of access for vegan students.
4. Vegan options will be widely advertised and actively promoted throughout university.
5. The University's Environment Team will be encouraged to consider the impact of meat, dairy and egg consumption on the environment and to take steps to address this issue.
6. All catering services around university will be required to participate in "Meatless Mondays".
7. 30 day Vegan Pledge will be advertised throughout university

The proposer and seconders of this policy are happy to help with every step of the process of implementing this policy, such as by suggesting vegan foods. We are also happy to provide information on vegan statistics and through aiding those who take the Vegan Pledge.