

Policy Outcome Pack

- Term 2, 2017 -

Adoption of a policy of solidarity with University College Union (UCU) - Rejected
YUSU's policy and actions on domestic abuse - Accepted
Review of the original YUSU Election Rules 2016 Section F Clause 36-41 in advance of YUSU Election 2017 - Rejected

Comments from the Policy Coordinator

Having been submitted to the policy coordinator and fed through consultation, an Idea to adopt a formal policy and actions on domestic abuse has been accepted. An Idea to adopt a policy of solidarity with University College Union has been rejected as well as an Idea to allow societies to endorse candidates in YUSU elections.

This cycle saw four policies being sent out for consultation with one regarding supporting a boycott of the National Student Survey being picked up immediately for a referendum. This was subsequently excluded from the consultation. Having been sent to all Full Time Officers, Part Time Officers and College Presidents, there was a two week period to generate feedback on whether policies were supported or not. Regrettably, there was not a huge degree of returned feedback and of those returned some gave indications of support or lack of support but did not substantiate with reasons.

Ultimately the Policy Review Group unanimously agreed on what was to be taken away from the feedback on each policy with a consensus rejecting the adoption of a policy of solidarity with UCU, accepting a policy which would see a position and action taken with respect to domestic abuse and a rejection of allowing society endorsements of officer candidates. The outline of feedback along with PRG comments is detailed below. Feedback from groups were quoted verbatim and as such may contain spelling errors.

The Policy Review Group consists of James Humpish (Chair), Henry Harrison, Joe Bowen, Rohin Sharma and Lizzie Nuttall.

Adoption of a policy of solidarity with University College Union (UCU)

College welfare reps (fed through by Dom Smithies - Community and Wellbeing Officer)

- It's a risk to be bound

- Conflict of interest with what YUSU exists to do
- Can offer solidarity without being bound
- Confusion and doubt over claim in the policy that "That UCU has engaged in multiple industrial actions over the past few years, and that YUSU has been unable to put out statements of support for those actions because YUSU does not have an active policy on the matter."
- It is good to align with lecturers & staff
- Ideally we would like to be aligned but YUSU has to focus on student interests.
- Solidarity & support should be offered on a case by case basis.

Decision: DISAPPROVE

International Students Association (fed through by Roberto Avelar, International Students Officer)

We abstained from the first policy (not the NSS one) mainly because no one new what was being talked about

Women's Network (fed through by Lucy Robinson and Mia Chaudhuri-Julyan, Women's Officers)

No (amendment suggested: remove point about "unequivocal support" and instead suggest that YUSU align itself with UCU whenever they agree and make more of a significant effort to work with them. Just disagree with a blank cheque of unequivocal support)

(Note: result was unanimous)

Alex Lusty

- Doesn't particularly support the policy as it restricts freedom. UCU problematic because it's a tie to NUS and UCU itself isn't big on campus.
- Mild apprehension

PRG Comments

Clear consensus in feedback that this isn't something wanted. (JB)

In feedback there's a recurring theme of concerns about unequivocal support for UCU (HH)

- Unanimous agreement from PRG that feedback rejects policy.

YUSU's policy and actions on domestic abuse

College welfare reps (fed through by Dom Smithies - Community and Wellbeing Officer)

- Yeh, good
- We tend to do stuff anyway so it's good to have policy as well to ensure Union backing
- It should mention that men can be victims too

- It's good to focus on women, as that is accurate, but it should definitely make note of the fact men can be victims as well.
- Should also mention relevance within particular liberation groups, e.g. LGBTQ & domestic abuse
- Good to have YUSU compelled to do more
- Expand the scope and it'll be perfect

Decision: AGREE, but scope should be widened to be more inclusive and all-encompassing

International Students Association (fed through by Roberto Avelar, International Students Officer)

All members bar one voted for YUSU to campaign regarding abuse (I didn't count actual numbers just noted one person was against it because YUSU takes on a lot of other stuff already and it didn't make them to take charge of this)

Women's Network (fed through by Lucy Robinson and Mia Chaudhuri-Julyan, Women's Officers)

Yes

(Note: Result was unanimous)

Alex Lusty

- Completely for the women's rugby club. Good aim, well put-together, substantial, really liked it.

PRG Comments

Note everyone asked agreed but welfare said that it should be more inclusive (HH)
Agree, might be worth thinking about focus but feedback seems clearly for it in any case (RS)

- Unanimous agreement from PRG that feedback supports policy.

Review of the original YUSU Election Rules 2016 Section F Clause 36-41 in advance of YUSU Election 2017.

College welfare reps (fed through by Dom Smithies - Community and Wellbeing Officer)

- Good
- Good for democracy
- Support happens anyway, this just makes it less cloak & dagger
- Gives a voice to societies
- Process of majority committee vote is fine
- Risk of promoting popularity contest perception

- Suggestion that endorsements can't be released until after the 1st week of campaigning, i.e. when voting opens
- Would be good to force societies to consider all candidates
- When societies endorse they shouldn't be able to say anything about the other candidates, i.e. risk of putting some up and others down. Should just focus on endorsement and a simple statement of support, other candidates don't need to be mentioned.

Decision: AGREE, but additional rules can be put in place to make it a bit fairer and to mitigate the popularity contest element of elections.

International Students Association (fed through by Roberto Avelar, International Students Officer)

Most people abstained on this, three voted against due to fear of it becoming a popularity contest. No one voted for society endorsement

Women's Network (fed through by Lucy Robinson and Mia Chaudhuri-Julyan, Women's Officers)

No (vote was unanimous)

Societies Committee (fed through by Alex Lusty, Activities Officer)

Overwhelmingly against the idea of endorsing. Of the societies committee those that were there were against it 4-1. (Outside

Reasons various:

- 'If it ain't broke don't fix it' – system seems to be functional at the moment. Seemed unnecessary. Formalising the current in-house system could lead to misrepresentation. Saw that there would be scope for malpractice. Could make deals with societies for endorsements? More power for larger societies.
- Didn't like where it was going with media. Not an adequate dealing of what media's place was?
- Would probably make elections more engaging, potentially centralise it. Politicise elections (in an ideological sense). We have a much less political sense in elections but get a higher turnout.
- Would give greater scope for nastiness?
- Something like this could hurt smaller societies.
- Worry that societies themselves could be politicised.

Alex Lusty

- Extra stress on candidates? Between societies and sports teams over 200 bodies. As a candidate would want to try and seek as many endorsements as possible.
- Need to be very careful when looking into media. Undermines what the media is about and does.
- People who have nothing to do with the position they're running for could win through endorsements.

Peter Sequeira

- Don't think it's a good idea. No need for societal endorsements. Don't see what they add. Won't change participation levels. Better to have individuals voting for their preferred candidates.

PRG Comments

Points of interest in feedback: people could win in positions that they have nothing to do with? (HH)

Note that the strongest opposition comes from group with greatest stake (JB)

Rules outline a process regarding committee vote which guards against it (JB)

Think naturally the way that groups work, someone shouldn't be able to automatically get more endorsements (RS)

Think about improving the policy to make clearer as some of the feedback doesn't seem to take full account of the specified rules? (HH)

Seems to be quite heavily against (LN)

Suppose that if societies don't want to endorse people, then they don't want to endorse people (HH)

May need to look at the objections and review more carefully as to what people find an issue and amend it accordingly if someone wants to pick it up (JB)

Feedback mostly opposed.

Would need to be clearer how it mitigates being a popularity contest if it wanted to go forwards to address feedback issues. (HH)

With respect to societies committee, interesting how feedback is from elected representatives who have potentially benefitted from being in a bigger society (JB)

Interesting that there's nothing in the feedback about how this would balance the influence colleges have in elections. (JB)

- PRG think that there's insufficient feedback but at the moment there's a clear weighting against the policy. PRG note that some of the feedback doesn't seem to have taken account that it would be through committee vote that a group would endorse. PRG would be interested in greater development on politicisation being issue.