nus NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Trustee Board report

If you need this document in another format contact NUS on 0845 5210 262 or email events@nus.org.uk

NUS UK Trustee Board

Author:	Shakira Martin
Date Produced:	9 March 2018
Chair	Shakira Martin (elected 2017)
Officer Trustees	Amatey Doku Hareem Ghani Rob Young Jess Bradley
Student Trustees	Tom Phipps Ruth Titmuss (resigned January 2018) Jack Mably Mollie Kneath (Resigned October 2017) Amanda Chetwynd-Cowieson Jo Goodman
Lay Trustees	Alistair Wilson Andrew Westwood Dianne Nelmes Kate McKenzie
Action:	National Conference will be asked to vote to approve this report

Introduction from the Chair

Welcome to National Conference and to this report from the NUS UK Board. The Boards and Committees are an important part of the NUS governance processes. They ensure that our organisation is legally and financially secure, so that we can continue to campaign on the issues that affect our students the most.

To achieve this, the NUS UK Board oversees our Student Voice work. At each meeting the Board will receive updates on the progress and actions against project100 and other key projects, to ensure the continued effectiveness of NUS in tackling key student issues. Other powers are delegated by the Board, and we also receive reports from the Audit and Risk and the Human Resources Subcommittees.

This report provides a summary of the updates and decisions made at this Board and the attendance of the Trustees. My report further highlights some key things that have happened over the past 12 months.

This report is on behalf of the Trustee Board. National Conference are asked to note its contents and approve this report.

What does the Trustee Board do?

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the management and administration of the National Union and may exercise all the powers of the National Union as set out in these Articles of Association and the Rules. Subject to Article 69 the Trustee Board's principal function in exercising its powers, duties and functions shall be to serve the aims, objects and wishes of the National Conference, National Executive Council and committees in line with Policy set out by those bodies.

No alteration of these Articles or the Rules shall invalidate any prior act of the Trustees which would have been valid if that alteration had not been made. A meeting of the Trustees at which a quorum is present may exercise all powers exercisable by the Trustees.

The Board of Trustees' powers under Article 67 shall include but not be limited to ultimate responsibility for the:

- management and administration of the National Union;
- the Detailed Internal Budgets of the National Union; and
- in conjunction with the National Executive Council, the formulation and proposal to the National Conference of the Budget of the National Union as presented by the National President.

The Board of Trustees shall only have the power to overrule administrative implications of decisions of the National Conference, the National Executive Council, the Nations, the Liberation Campaigns, the Student Sections, the Zones and/or the Democratic Procedures Committee on the following grounds:

- financial risk; and
- legal requirements;
- and the Trustee Board shall seek appropriate external advice before exercising its power to overrule and shall report every exercise of its power to overrule the National Conference in line with the Rules.

The Trustee Board does not have any power to overrule or amend Policy and it does not have the power to overrule Rule changes made by the National Conference. In addition, the NEC can with a two-thirds majority remove members from the Trustee Board, or the whole Board except the National President.

When has the Trustee Board met?

Since National Conference 2017 the Trustee Board has met four times, on the:
16 June 2017
20 September 2017
5 December 2017
6 February 2018

The Audit and Risk (A&R) Sub Committee has met on the:
18 May 2017
22 August 2017
25 October 2017
11 December 2017
20 February 2018

There was an additional telephone meeting held on 10th January 2018

The Human Resources (HR) Sub Committee has met on the:
18 May 2017
8 November 2017
9th March 2018

The NUS SU Charitable Services Board has met 4 times on the:
6 June 2017
5 September 2017
21 November 2017
30 January 2018

The NUS Services board has met 4 times on the:
8 June 2017
7 September 2017
23 November 2017
1 February 2018

Attendance

	NUS UK Board Meetings attended since National Conference 2017	Attendance at A&R Subcommittee	Attendance at HR Subcommittee	Attendance at NUS SU Charitable Services Board
Officer Directors				
Shakira Martin (elected 2017)	3/3			
Amatey Doku	3/3	1/1		
Hareem Ghani	0/3			
Jess Bradley	3/3			
Rob Young	1.5/3		1/2	3/3
Student Directors				
Tom Phipps	3/4			
Ruth Titmuss	Ruth resigned due to work commitments on 3 January 2018.			
Jack Mably	2/4	0/1		
Mollie Kneath	Mollie resigned in October 2017			
Amanda Chetwynd-Cowieson	3/3		0/1	
Jo Goodman	1/3		0/1	
Board Members				
Alistair Wilson	4/4	4/4		
Andrew Westwood	2/4			
Dianne Nelmes	4/4			2/4
Kate McKenzie	3/4		3/3	

Overview of work and decisions of the Trustee Board

Main Priorities	Progress (what has been achieved since Conference 2017)
Administration & Appointments	Appointed Dianne Nelmes as Vice Chair of the NUS UK Board. Appointed Kate McKenzie as the lead trustee with responsibility for HR issues. Appointed Rob Young and Amanda Chetwynd-Cowieson to the HR sub-committee. Appointed Kate McKenzie as the Board's Diversity champion. Appointed Alistair Wilson as chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Appointed Alistair Wilson, Amatey Doku and Jack Mably to the Audit and Risk Committee. Appointed Dianne Nelmes and Amanda Chetwynd-Cowieson to the Nominations Committee. Appointed Rob Young, Jess Bradley and Ruth Titmuss to the NUS Students' Union Charitable Services Board. Re-appointed Alistair Wilson to supervising trustee for code of conduct. Approved a cycle of business over 4 meetings in the year. Re-appointed Jules Mason as Chief Returning Officer
Reports	Received reports from the Chief Executive and Leadership Team. Noted the work of the National Executive Council and Zone Conferences. Received reports on the poverty commission campaign.
Strategy	Received updates on the NUS Democratic and Governance review. Approved and then received updates at every meeting on the Race Equity plan. Discussed and approved the Brexit plan. Received updates on NUS Extra and Commercial performance from the Services Board. Approved the Audited accounts and Estimates. With the NEC the NUS UK board propose the Estimates to National Conference for the 2018/19 financial year.
Audit and Risk	Oversight of finance and risk are delegated to the Audit and Risk Subcommittee. In order to monitor the work of this committee the Board receive minutes and reports following each meeting. The Board also has representatives of the Board making up the membership of this committee. Approved the Detailed Internal Budgets 2017/18. Approved Hardship and Abatement claims for students' unions. Monitored at each meeting the Risk register for the Group. Reviewed and approved the statutory Accounts for 2017 for all seven entities.
Human Resources	Areas of Human Resources are delegated to the HR Subcommittee. In order to monitor the work of this committee the Board receive minutes and reports following each meeting. HR Subcommittee scrutinized the race equity plan, approved it and continue to monitor it.

	HR Subcommittee monitored the people statistics and approved a number of policies. The committee discussed and approved Executive team pay and Leadership team restructure. The committee scrutinized and approved the trade union agreements.
Corporate Governance	Approved the Terms of Reference and delegated authorities. Appointed Counter Culture as the company secretary for all entities. Discussed and agreed Corporate Governance structures and timeline for implementation as per 2017 National Conference.

Report from the Chair of the Trustee Board

NUS100

NUS100: Manifesto for a Just and Sustainable Future launched in July 2016. It is a six-year framework which sets out what we want to achieve and how we want to achieve it.

This section of the report provides an update of some of the activity we've undertaken against the key themes in the strategic plan since NUS National Conference 2017. This is not an exhaustive workplan but it gives an overview of some of the work of NUS. These four areas of our plan are:

- Everyone can access and excel in post-16 education
- The learner voice creates change in education
- Wellbeing and welfare are central to the student experience
- Students have confidence to engage in civic life

We achieve these by:

- Supporting excellence in students' unions
- Developing a strong and influential collective voice
- Putting data, evidence and digital at the heart of our work
- Attracting and retaining outstanding people

NUS UK is explicitly responsible for the four areas of our plan as well as Developing a strong a influential collective voice. The other areas of work are directed by other entities within the NUS Group.

Everyone can Access and Excel in Post-16 Education

We believe whatever education pathway a learner chooses, their experience must be equally transformative and valuable. We are committed to breaking down the barriers that vastly reduce access and we are committed to ensuring our education system gives every learner the chance to reach their full potential.

In September 2017 we launched The Poverty Commission. The Poverty Commission aims to address the barriers working class students face in regards to access and success in post-16 education. The Poverty Commission has now met to gather evidence with a view to returning with recommendations for work in the year ahead.

Getting into class can be a barrier to achievement. Most students receive no financial support for the cost of transport. This is a particular issue for apprentices who rely heavily on transport. This year we launched #myFEjourney to campaign for better, cheaper, transport for FE students and apprentices.

The inconsistent application of attendance policies in FE, in Scotland, leaves many students facing financial penalties for absence from studies. This year over 1500 students completed NUS Scotland's fair attendance survey so we could better understand their experience. The survey helped form the basis of our campaign to challenge the punitive 100% attendance policy for FE students.

The Learner Voice Creates Change in Education

We believe that learner voice and partnership with students drives positive change and innovation in teaching and learning.

In January we launched our new Learner Voice Framework. The Learner Voice Framework is an online self-assessment and development tool based on five sector-shaped principles; Partnership, Empowered Learners, Inclusive, Embedded & Valued, and Being Invested, Strategic and Sustainable. The framework is a development tool as well an assessment which supports our aim to build a fairer education system for students; one that is inclusive, accessible and successful. This work is particularly important when we consider recent research of ours which suggests there is a large divide in resource capacity between Higher and Further Education to deliver sustainability objectives.

The new regulatory framework for Higher Education was published on February 28th and lays out the ways in which the Office for Students will regulate higher education providers in England. The introduction of a new governance clause means registered providers are fully required to carry out meaningful student engagement activity. In 2018, we will continue to lobby for full representation on the Board. In Wales, our commitment to meaningful engagement saw us join the Wales HE Future Generation Group to lobby for putting students at the heart of implementing the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

In January we launched a survey to examine the experiences of Muslim students in education, from the everyday interactions in classes to their participation in extra-curricular activities. We also wanted to understand the different ways Islamophobia manifests for people who experience multiple oppressions. This research will inform recommendations we make to students' unions, colleges and universities on how they can better support their Muslim students both on and off campus.

Through collaboration between Women's Campaign and The 1752 Group, a non-profit research and lobby organisation, who specialise on issues of sexual misconduct and harassment by university staff on campuses, we carried out research into staff-student sexual misconduct on our campuses. This research is the first of its kind in the UK since the 1990s and scopes what kinds of behaviours from staff are appropriate, and what behaviours students find uncomfortable.

Wellbeing and Welfare are Central to Student Experience

Evidence shows that individuals must feel safe and well before they can learn. Students' unions have been central to pushing for improvements to the welfare and wellbeing of students across the UK. We are committed to reducing hate crime, fostering a constructive space on social media, and creating a positive vision for mental health in post-16 education.

Mental health continues to be a priority across campuses and the work of NUS. Student Associations across Scotland signed up to take part in Student Mental Health Agreements working with NUS Scotland's Think Positive project. The Project provided resources aimed at tackling stigma and discrimination attached to mental health amongst students. NUS Scotland research previously revealed a 47% rise in students trying to access mental health support services at universities and colleges across Scotland. Also in Scotland, our Reclaim Black Stories Campaign, was shortlisted for a Herald Diversity Award.

Our Disabled Students' Campaign has been working to try and stop the rollout of a particular form of privatised youth mental health service, and to fight for the rights of service users in Birmingham where the pilot, Forward Thinking Birmingham (FTB), is already in place. As part of wider activity around University Mental Health Day we urged our students to take the debate further; from other societies who also have an interest or stake in local campaigns, to trade unions, to community activist groups

In 2017 NHS England put forward new proposals for the delivery of specialised gender identity services for adults in England. We provided resources to Unions to put forward their own responses to this consultation. In this we argued that the proposals which described a 'shared decision making model,' did not go far enough to provide autonomy for trans people, and that we would prefer to see a model of de-pathologised informed consent.

In April 2017, NUS published a report which showed that a majority of students in the UK felt their degrees would suffer if international student numbers dropped. The research aimed to find out what the impact of reduced numbers of international students would be on UK students – a direction we feel many policies are moving towards. This year we developed, The Great Education Exchange, a game to raise awareness of international student to all students, politicians and Vice-Chancellors that being an international student is already tough, when rules change seemingly at the roll of a dice, it makes things even more difficult.

Students have confidence to engage in civic life

Students are drivers of change in their institutions, their communities, and society as a whole. Equipping individuals with positive values, skills, and knowledge enables them to develop leadership skills, participate in their communities and create social change.

As a movement some of our proudest achievements have been where students have come together to affect civic life with confidence and in collaboration with others. NUS, alongside our partners in the Votes at 16 Coalition, campaigned to ensure that over 150 MPs turned up to the debate on the Private Member's Bill in support of "Votes at 16". In Northern Ireland, NUS USI joined the Seanadoiri proposers of the motion to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 in Seanad Éireann, at an event on the issue at Féile an Phobail plé agus diospoireachtaí/discussion and debate.

In Wales we joined the coalition of organisations supporting the ERS Cymru's Missing Voices project to encourage a new national conversation about politics in Wales, and champion the voices often missing from the big political debates.

Sustainability is a key issue for the movement. Our #Thelaststrawcampaign uses the power of our movement as staff, students, and consumers, to reduce the use of plastic straws. We've seen 700 students become ambassadors for our student switch off campaign, 18,000 students take our climate change quiz (in only two weeks), and launched our Student Eat fund to foster sustainable food growing and sustainable food social enterprise.

In Scotland, the Bin the Blood Ban campaign had a massive win in lowering the blood donation deferment times to three months from what was initially a lifetime ban for queer people, people from sub-Saharan African communities and sex workers.

We've continued putting on liberation activist training days to support officers and students to network and develop the skills to run liberation campaigns on their campuses. This included campaign-specific sessions including combatting sexual violence, tackling the black attainment gap, and fighting transmisogyny.

We achieve this work, amongst all our other achievements in the last year, through our key themes that will help us become an outstanding student-led campaigning and membership organisation

Supporting Excellence in Students' Unions

Quality Students' Unions has been developed by NUS to assure the quality, standards and overall effectiveness of students' unions. As more unions come on board we are committed to supporting our members to achieve accreditation, and become more effective.

Our training programme provides Officers and staff with the skills to make a difference in their Union. SU2017, Lead and Change, SUT and SUT + In Northern Ireland, and Ireland, Communities of Practice, as well as our many other training events, have continued to enable us to build resilient, collaborative students' unions. In Northern Ireland a new cohort of NUS-USI Stranmillis mentors have been trained and all received OCN level 3 accredition.

This activity has been supported by the introduction of new quality assurances processes for all of our events.

Developing a Strong and Influential Collective Voice

The collective power of students' unions is enormous. We harness this power to influence education and social change. At our best we are informed and inspiring. From our democratic events to our collective purchasing we believe that we are at our best when we work together, and when we are responsive to our membership.

This year we have launched our new membership satisfaction survey and we have tasked ourselves to achieve 80% membership satisfaction by 2020.

We are committed to generating income for the movement. We have continued to move toward a trading support model to realise our values of collectivism through purchasing. In the coming months we will also be in a position to launch our new vision for the NUS Extra Card.

Putting Data Evidence and Digital at the Heart of Our Work

By collecting data from multiple sources we can build a richer picture of student life.

Part of our commitment to collectivism means we must be led by evidence and data from our membership, and the wider environment in which we operate.

This means that this year we have committed to looking at where member insight can shape our services, provide us with a richer picture of student behaviours, and ensure we are always responsive to changing student demographics.

Attracting and Retaining Outstanding People

A diverse workforce is vital if we are to remain at the cutting edge of service delivery for students. The strength of our movement relies on attracting, developing, and retaining outstanding volunteers, staff, elected officers, and trustees from diverse backgrounds.

This year we have published the Race Equity Action Plan - a proactive body of work to help us to be a racially just organisation that is exemplary in leading the way for others. We are also in the process of delivering Race Equity Training for all NUS staff and volunteers.

The launch of our Employer Brand this year will also help us to ensure we are reaching beyond the current talent pool within students' unions and help us to attract a greater range of candidates from diverse backgrounds

The Learning Academy, launched in late 2017, the hub of learning and development for the student movement, created by NUS and expert training providers based on students' union priorities. This year we have provided training to the movement which we will develop as our engagement and understanding of unions' training needs develops.

All of this work was driven and shaped through our democratic structures. Over 2,700 participants attended our conferences and democratic events. Hundreds of volunteers participated in our zone, sections, and liberation campaign committees and events and we are grateful for all their work on behalf of students and students' unions.

Tackling Structural Racism

In July 2017, following an important review into institutional racism undertaken by the Runnymede Trust, we published a five year Race Equity Plan.

The plan sets out our commitment to dismantling structural racism within NUS, tackling any and all racial disparities that exist; and supporting students' unions to do the same. The Race Equity Plan sets out nine areas of focus which are:

1. dealing with incidents of racism
2. wellbeing
3. leadership and decision making
4. race equity knowledge
5. tackling Islamophobia and anti-Semitism
6. diversifying NUS
7. developing and career progression of Black staff
8. creating healthy NUS spaces
9. enabling the success of this plan

The plan covers the next five years. 8 months into the plan we have already begun to put steps in place to ensure the plan is a success. This work has so far involved but is not limited to:

- The introduction of an anonymous whistleblowing channel which was introduced in 2017 to help ensure that concerns don't go unreported.
- Factsheets on how to report incidents using a range of channels have been produced for NUS staff & officers and NUS volunteers

- Simon Blake ran a Dealing with Racist Incidents roundtable with Chief Executives from member students' unions to talk about examples of issues and incidents within NUS and SUs, what is zero tolerance and how we can work together to tackle racism

- Specialist counselling with NAFSIYAT funded by NUS for staff and officers who have experienced racism (inside or outside of NUS) continues to be accessed and feedback received from those accessing the service is extremely positive

- All Directors and Leadership Team role profiles now include specific responsibility around race equity and is proactively being assessed as part of the recruitment for these roles.

- Race Equity objectives for all leadership and management roles have been agreed.

- The interview process for each of the vacant NUS Director role included questions and a task focusing on race equity. There was also representation from the Black Staff Group and Trade Union on each stakeholder panel.

- We appointed a partner in November 2017 following a tender and assessment for the organisational culture development work on 4 priority areas from the Race Equity Plan (a vision for race equity, wellbeing, building trust, and creating healthier political spaces).

- NUS officers have received the Race Equity briefing session and an overview of the Race Equity Plan and the Creating Equity at Work Training as part of their induction

- Mandatory training for all NUS colleagues around creating equity at work has been rolled out to ensure everyone has a foundational level of understanding around liberation, equality, diversity and inclusion and how this links to the workplace

- Religious festivals and days have been scheduled into the calendars of our main events and governance teams to help ensure that major NUS events or meetings do not clash.

- Recruitment training for managers has been updated to include creating more equitable recruitment processes and reducing unconscious bias. This training includes discussion of the Race Equity Plan and our targets to diversify the workforce

- An employer brand for the movement (including NUS) was launched in July 2017. The brand visuals and brand messaging included research with Black final year students and post graduates and includes suggested guidance for NUS to put into place around job adverts/imagery as well as language in adverts and role profiles to help us attract more black candidates.

- Black staff will also be able to sign up to the Black Talent Development Programme that we are offering to black staff in students' unions this summer. This programme will help people to develop their careers.

- Work is underway to promote guidance on social media and creating healthier political spaces.

- The Race Equity Steering Group was launched in September and is chaired by the National President. This internal group of staff and officers will help to steer the work on the Race Equity Plan

- In 2016/17 we established a briefing and training programme for all staff and volunteers. Colleagues participated in a briefing on race equity and we initiated a mandatory training programme- Creating Equity at Work- which was followed by the launch of Leadership on Race Equity.

Appointments Committee Report

There will be a separate appointments committee report. NUS has engaged an external agency to secure a diverse field of candidates for the Trustee Board. This has taken time which in turn has meant that the timetable for appointments has slipped. We are seeking advice on the most appropriate method for appointments to be ratified.

Membership Contribution 2017-18

Under section 2100 of the NUS Constitution, the Board is responsible for proposing the membership fee system for NUS in its report each year. We are required to do this according to the following broad principles:

a) Transparency

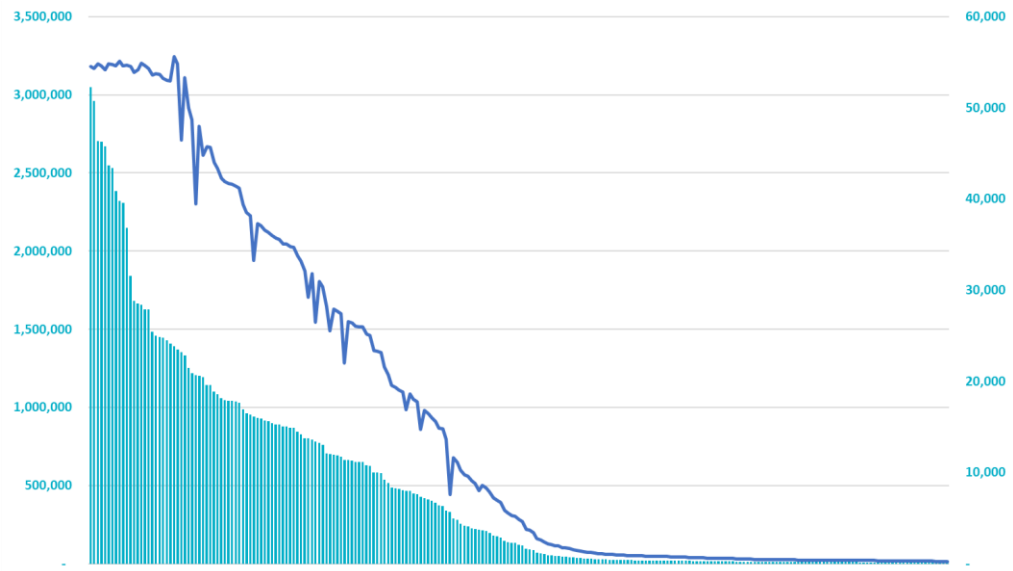
b) Ability of unions to pay

c) Fairness and comparisons of "like with like"

d) Flexibility for unions experiencing hardship

e) The system must be regularly reviewed

The NUS UK board report taken to National Conference in April 2017 supported a change to the pre-existing method of calculating the fee, to revise this to a simpler and more transparent calculation of 4% of block grant income with a minimum contribution of £250 and a maximum of £60,000.



This report was accepted. The membership fee for 2017-18 has been charged based on this new calculation and income was £3.9m (£4.0m prior year).