

UCASU MOTION

Motion Name: Introduce Student Network Platforms at UCASU

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UCASU notes:

1. UCASU currently has four pre-existing liberation groups; these are BAME, Disabled Students, LGBTQ+, and Women. These are based on the National Union for Students' liberation campaigns - <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/liberation/liberation-networks>
2. UCASU also notes there has been some recent inactivity regarding promotion of our liberation groups, alongside the acknowledgement that attempts to utilise the liberation in the groups in the past has had a lesser outcome than expected. (the union's website currently states "Coming Soon" with no further update of as-to when the resuming of these will be re-established.) <https://ucasu.com/activities/>
3. NUS has been in the process of addressing their liberation collectives and democratic processes, with them passing a restructure of their democratic systems at their 2024 National Conference. We also note that NUS was receiving proposals based upon a liberation policy that was passed in 2022. (<https://www.nus.org.uk/conferences>). UCASU also notes that we can get into contact with the Liberation officer for the NUS, allowing for feedback and comments on how to appropriately address this implementation.
4. We also have multiple clubs & societies across the three campuses that are for different representative groups, i.e. Farnham African-Caribbean society, Canterbury Queer Student Alliance and Epsom Indian Society.
5. Several other student unions nationwide have implemented Liberation networks; such as KCLSU (King's College London), LTSU (Leeds Trinity), Keele SU, and LMSU (London Met)
6. Even though there is the existence of clubs & societies for different representative groups, some students may not want to join these, and may rather prefer an alternative form of representation. Even though a student wants to meet like minded individuals or other students that they can relate to, they may not want to join a club or society that may run on a purely activity based premise. This can help further encourage alternative forms of engagement.
7. If a student were to join a community network, they get to choose how heavy their involvement would be with the rest of the community. This is something for them to decide for themselves, without any assumed involvement and engagement from others.

UCASU believes:

1. The students that may prefer an alternative form of representation, without the potential politicisation of their identity, might still want to get involved or meet fellow students through different formats or via different methods of getting involved.
2. Through having a platforming outlet, it can be beneficial for the Union regarding collaborative events throughout the year (Black History Month, Disability History Month, Pride Month, etc.). This also allows for students who may not be members of clubs and

societies to also get involved with the Unions planned activities & events during these periods of time.

3. The implementation of these platforms can assist to further develop a sense of community amongst students during their time at the university. This can also aid the strengthening of our relationships with the university itself, local organisations, and also introduces potential collaborative events with other student unions.
4. Due to NUS implementing a restructure of their democratic systems, whilst addressing their liberation collectives and democratic processes, we believe that it's a correct time to start following suit and evaluating how we do ours.
5. Through effective communication and marketing from the Union, this can appeal to a larger audience compared to the pre-existing clubs and societies. Whilst we acknowledge that pre-existing members of clubs and societies may be eager to join these networks and further promote this, the increased engagement can still be beneficial to the Union as a whole in terms of engagement.
6. These networks do not necessarily have to be done through the form of online chats; as this will add the further requirement of moderation from the union for this. This then interrupts the proposal of having these networks be student-led.

UCASU resolves:

1. The Union will work alongside students before implementing or modifying how to appropriately represent liberation groups alongside disengaged groups. This allows for students to give their opinions and input on how to feel represented by the union and how we can appropriately.
2. The Union will also collect feedback on how **not** to represent liberation groups, and use this alongside the previous resolution to discover the best overall solution of how to address this.
3. Through the implementation of networks, we can also have multiple networks for further representation groups i.e. Mature students, postgraduate students, international students, carers, etc.
4. We will encourage blurred borders between network groups and clubs & societies, allowing for further student collaborations without heavy input / influence from the Union.
5. The establishment of networks is for students, and by students - the Union is there to support and encourage students to start up and join these networks, and further encourage engagement with this.
6. The Union will push heavily, in-terms of marketing and communication, ensuring that students across all three campuses will be aware of networks as an extra outlet to allow themselves to communicate & collaborate with other students that may fall under the same representation groups / liberations.

Resolution financial impact:

Through the implementation of this policy, there are multiple considerations to factor in regarding the cost of this policy:

1. Costs regarding running prize draws for students who give feedback
2. Expenses that may follow the support for further representation of these network groups, i.e. events, external speakers.
3. Expenses that can follow from advertising + marketing i.e. posters, flyers, etc.