# **Vice-president NUS Liberation Conference Report**

Personally, I thought the participants made the conference really interesting. I had numerous beneficial conversations with a range of people and found out that the main work people are focusing on is decolonising the curriculum. When we were in the main room, it was hard for the speakers to engage as participants had their cameras off, and at times, made it quite dull. In breakout rooms there was a lot more energy as people felt more comfortable to talk and give their opinions. I couldn’t attend as many events as I hoped for, but we have access to a range of resources which I am sure will be useful for us. I didn’t attend any of the re-energise sessions which included sessions like chair yoga. I just felt like I could have been doing something more productive.

Below I have noted the policies I was eligible to vote for. I have attached a short summary from NUS (in black), as well as the reasoning behind my votes (in orange).

**Singular sexual violent and misconduct policy- VOTED FOR**

*“The first step is to tackle the inequalities in support and preventative measures across the whole body of higher education institutions in Wales. Introducing a singular policy for all Universities to follow as a guideline to creating the same standard of procedure. Due to the obvious variances in finances across higher education sectors the benefits for students is the confidence that their University will be held to account on their actions towards Sexual Misconduct – they will be assured they will be a system in place to best support them if they have ever experienced Sexual Misconduct. Additionally, for the NUS to lobby the Government for additional funding to be provided to the UK Higher Education sector to support these initiatives on a case-by-case level.”*

**This builds on the conversations the SU have been having around sexual violence. I believe the SU & University should/could have released a statement to support the students who may have been affected by certain issues. By asking the government for additional funding, we can use that money to fund initiatives that protect our students even more.**

**Make Inclusive and Accessible Environments Standard- VOTED FOR**

*“We propose that universities need to move away from the medical model and towards the social model. A hybrid model may be beneficial in which universities offer an inclusive and accessible environment across the board but still pays attention to the individual needs of their students in the form of bespoke learning plans.*

*By committing to an inclusive and accessible environment as standard practice we can begin to ensure students with additional needs can still access some support without having to disclose, therefore increasing degree classification, employability and overall student experience.*

*We believe that the NUS should lobby for universities to move to an inclusive and accessible environment as standard practice. This can include innovations such as:*

*·      Access to course materials before lectures*

*·      Provision of accessible software open to all students*

*·      All lectures to be recorded with subtitles*

*·      Remove the need to provide medical proof to access additional internal support “*

**I love the idea of lecture captures with subtitles, as it supports students even more. According to other officers, the process is quite easy and shouldn’t take the lecturers too long to set this up. Having access to course materials is important too, especially for students with additional needs. For our students on block learning, it is crucial they digest the content before attending lectures. We should be doing more to be making our environments more inclusive and accessible because it is currently not, in my opinion.**

**Candidate votes**

At Liberation Conference, a committee is elected to support the VP Liberation and Equality in delivering on Liberation Campaigns. These members facilitate and sustain the Liberation Student Campaigners Network for each liberation group, where students, Sabbs, and SUs can share with, learn from, and support each other in their work.

There were five positions available one from each Liberation caucus representing Black\*, Disabled, LGBT+, Trans and Women students. In order to vote you must be an NUS Liberation Conference delegate and self-define into the caucus position.

For each candidate I was eligible to vote for, I have attached a short summary of their manifesto, as well as the reasoning behind my votes.

**Liberation steering committee**

**Black place - Sara Bafo**

*“With all my grassroots activism experience, such as organising tuition fee strikes, rent strikes, and mutual aid projects, I will ensure NUS is unapologetically radical, more vocal, and connected to memberships at grassroots levels, so organisers/campaigners and officers can engage with the movement. Vote Sara Bafo #1 for NSC, and let's create structural change!”*

I felt that Sara had already accomplished a lot and showed that she genuinely cared for students by being on the frontline of tuition fee and rent strikes. By her vast experience, Sara had built a great network which could help in achieving specific manifesto points.

**Open place – Roshini Joseph**

*“Helping students have their voices heard.
• Build our relationship, at multiple levels, with the University.
• Build our credibility with main University stakeholders.
• Equip our student leaders to influence effectively.
• Be the trusted source of information on student trends in the University.
• Showcase the work of the SU and the change we make and make student life easier and beautiful for one and all.”*

**Roshini’s manifesto is current and relevant to students and SU’s, especially when building relationships with the university. It is these relationships that really encourage change for the better. Although we currently have a good relationship with our university, it may not always be like that. Additionally, showcasing the work of an SU is crucial as sometimes, people are not aware of what has been achieved. When something goes wrong, people are always held accountable, so we should look to congratulate and praise people for their amazing work.**

### **Liberation Campaign Committee – Lily Mitchell**

*“My focus is on improving mental health provision for black students, as trying to succeed in white-dominated spaces can be damaging for many of us. Diminishing feelings of isolation and impostor syndrome can be revolutionary, and I believe that students can work together to make University a more enjoyable place for black students”.*

**This is extremely relevant also. Imposter syndrome is a real thing, especially for black students in a predominantly white university. Mental health provision for students from a BAME background could support students and improve social and academic experiences at university. Black students will also be affected with the current issues around racism in society so it is pivotal, they are supported.**