

Referendum on NUS affiliation sparks debate



By [Rose Troup Buchanan](#), Deputy Editor (2011/12)
Friday 20 May 2011



Susan Nash, NUS Vice President Society and Citizenship, has defended YUSU's affiliation with the National Union of Students (NUS) stressing that "unity is strength" when speaking at the UGM on Thursday.

Support towards disaffiliation at the meeting was mixed, with the majority of participants siding with YUSU and the NUS delegate.

Nash stated: "From lobbying for student rights at a national level, to supporting union officers and staff, that is the difference the NUS makes every day for York students. For 44 pence a student you remain a part of a national movement."

However Peter Spence, a second-year Economics student, spoke out against continuing affiliation questioning whether investment in other areas might not be of more benefit to the student population.

Although labelling NUS "good in principle," he claimed the average student was disinterested in NUS politics and its policies.

"Ask the average student out there who your NUS delegate is and I bet you they won't be able to name a single one." He also called for "greater autonomy for York students ... especially in light of NUS's poor reputation."

YUSU's continued affiliation with NUS is to be put to a referendum with a turnout of 6.75% of students (around 800) needed for the outcome to be valid. YUSU is constitutionally made to do this every three years.

Emma Brownbill, LGBT Officer, strongly defended the affiliation saying: "Maybe Peter, and all those who are against this, should come back with a properly sounded budget and a viable financial alternative."

But Alan Belmore, arguing against the motion, took a swipe at NUS members, labelling them as "interested only in their future careers on the green benches" and suggesting that the NUS was "concerned only with itself."

Reacting against this Tony Richards, former ENTS Officer, commented: "Don't just come here and slag off

the entire organisation, of which you know very little about.”

Finally, Sam Westrop cited the “irrelevant” motions and policies that the NUS has adopted.

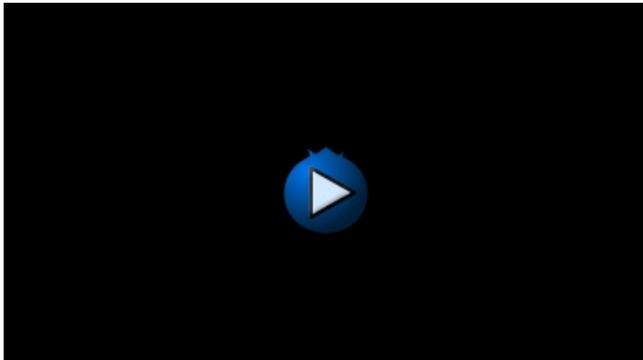
“The NUS decided to endorse institutions linked to Hamas, the gay-hating, Jew-murdering terrorist organisation; as well as the shocking decision to endorse sending students on the next flotilla to Gaza.”

Westrop was immediately criticised for not being factually accurate by Nash; however, she was then forced to admit that they [the NUS] had endorsed the motion and Nash ended by acknowledging some of the failings within the NUS.

Voting will open on the [YUSU website](#) at 12pm on Friday and closes at 12pm on Wednesday 25th May.

YSTV Reports: NUS Affiliation Referendum

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