Policy Proposal: Champion inclusive education and a decolonised curriculum

To be discussed at: Education Zone

What would you like the Union to do?

There is no one-size easy fix for problems and awarding gaps and the over-emphasis of "best practice" and standardized "evidence" become a reason for inaction. Only a varied and holistic approach that covers all forms of education inequality at their root will work.

-Students' Union UCL should champion quality education that doesn't perpetuate harmful and inaccurate stereotypes about racial, ethinic, religious, disabled, LGBTQ+ groups.

-Students' Union UCL should be at the forefront with students pushing for curriculum change, an accessible holistic liberated education and an education free of discrimination, prejudice and hateful speech.

-Students' Union UCL should take an active role ensuring the Eugenics history of UCL is taught to all students

-Students' Union UCL should help students make positive changes to their education (e.g. decolonising education) and advocate on behalf of students.

-Students Union UCL should support students and academic reps to learn about the importance of inclusivity in education, decolonising education and discriminatory biases within science and research through training, resources and campaigns.

-Students' Union UCL should push for students to be paid and fairly compensated for their work towards the championing of inclusive education and the decolonised curriculum project

-Students' Union UCL should survey students their perspective on the inclusivity the education and welfare at UCL and report the information to the all relevant parts of the UCL community in relevant formats for each audience

-Students' Union UCL should then act on the findings of this survey and commit to a long-term vision to support and organise students to demand an accessible liberation education

Why would you like to do this?

The "Why Is My Curriculum White?" campaign was started at UCL, with the desire to draw attention to eurocentric nature of teaching within the UK and the stark presence of racism within education and the stark absence of non-Western and non-white staff, knowledge and histories within our education. This work has transformed into the 'Decolonise' movement across the UK.The lack of BME teaching staff and welfare staff in our institutions, institutional stagnation, marketisation and the devaluing of quality teaching all make curriculum change much harder and reduces the support that students receive from their educators.

'Decolonising education' is also often misunderstood as being about the tokenistic addition of non-white authors to reading lists. Decolonising acts us to teach

different, think beyond the Western tradition and canon, tackle eurocentrism and support students that need it. It calls for an accessible holistic education.

The same specificity, rigour, time and respect given to 'traditional' Western thought is not given to knowledge from elsewhere. This major imbalance upholds oppression and leads to othering and marginalisation that benefits no one.

In order to make real change we must understand that racism, sexism, classism, queerphobia and ableism are woven into the way our education is structured. It is in this context that we see awarding gaps and education inequality.

How will this affect students?

Through the eugenics inquiry, it became clear that even students who study biological science or genetics lack an informed understanding of race, ethnicity and eugenics. Leaving many students parroting and replicating harmful attitudes and behaviours not just to other students, but in research or medical practice, negatively affecting BME students and patients.

In arts, humanities and social sciences, students have reported their lectures lack the ability to speak confidently on race or facilitate discussion on sensitive issues, many insisting on repeating slurs for 'historical accuracy' or devalue the experiences of their students.

There have also been numerous cases of racism, islamophobia, classism, ableism, queerphobia, etc. that students have reported have had a negative impact on their mental health.