

Motion to continue to oppose Islamophobic attacks on students

Proposer: Camilla Royle
Secunder: Hannah Heyenn

This Students' Union Notes:

- 1) A dress code was introduced in College last year "in the light of security concerns".
- 2) This decision was opposed by the Students Union and council resolved to take action against it.
- 3) Imperial College was named in last year's Glee's report. This report released late last year suggested that universities are likely recruitment centres for Islamic extremists, supported college's clothing policy and suggested limiting applications by black and Asian students to 8%. It was dismissed by many people as racist.
- 4) Bill Rammell, higher education minister, recently supported college's decision to ban the full Muslim veil in light of the comments made by Jack Straw.
- 5) The department of education has published a document suggesting proposals whereby British universities record information about students' background, race, religion and society involvement and forward it to special branch.
- 6) This document is to be sent to universities for use by staff and lecturers by the end of the year.
- 7) The Universities and Colleges union (UCU), National union of students (NUS) and Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) have all opposed these proposals.

This Students' Union Believes:

- 1) All of these measures will disproportionately affect Asian and Muslim students
- 2) They do not help increase security.
- 3) All students have a fundamental right to debate and discuss ideas and to organize in societies. Students can form opinions which may be considered "radical" or "political" without being seen as terrorists.
- 4) Students have the right to express their individuality by dressing however they choose.
- 5) That Jack Straw asking constituents to remove the Niqab is unproductive, misguided and has led to a dramatic increase in Islamophobia. It also condemns actions taken by British Airways against an employee wearing the crucifix on similar grounds.
- 6) Racist attacks on members of the student body are more likely to occur if certain groups are victimized by the authorities.
- 7) College has a responsibility to make its students feel safe and welcome on its campuses- spying on them will not do this and will only increase sectarianism.
- 8) The issue of Islamophobia is a serious one that is becoming increasingly familiar to us as students and as part of a wider community. It is something that could potentially disrupt the welfare of students throughout Britain and swift action is required from student unions in order to curb it.

This Students' Union Resolves:

- 1) Continue its opposition to Islamophobia on campus and inform its students of the issues where appropriate by the use of action such as a poster campaign.
- 2) Mandate the president to discuss the government's proposals with the rector, find out whether he intends to send our details to special branch and if not to lobby him to act against the proposal.
- 3) Send out a statement to other Students' Unions explaining the situation in full, confirming that Imperial union opposed the dress code, Bill Rammell's comments and the education ministry's proposals and expressing solidarity with other unions affected by such issues.
- 4) To suggest united action nationally to oppose the government's schemes.