

BEING A ZERO TOLERANCE UNION

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Passed by Student Senate 03.02.2015

Student Senate Notes:

1. Students' Unions exist to improve students' experience of university. This involves advancing the quality of education and social welfare of its members, both collectively and individually, by providing them with representation, services, support and by campaigning on their behalf.
2. The National Union of Students (NUS) '*Hidden Marks*' report in 2010 found that:
 - 1 in 7 women students has been the victim of serious sexual assault or serious physical violence while at university or college;
 - Only 4% of women students who have been seriously sexually assaulted have reported it to their institution;
 - Only 10% of women students who have been seriously sexually assaulted have reported it to the police;
 - Of those who did not report serious sexual assault to the police, 50% said it was because they felt ashamed or embarrassed, and 43% because they thought they would be blamed for what happened.
3. The NUS '*Lad Culture and Sexism Survey*' in August/September 2014 also found that:
 - 60% of students asked said they were unaware if their Students' Union/University had a Zero Tolerance policy in place.
4. A report by Drink Aware, an alcohol misuse charity, in September 2011 titled '*Drunken nights out: motivations, norms and rituals in the night time economy*' found that:
 - Only 19% said they were surprised that sexual harassment had taken place on a night out.
5. Cardiff University Students' Union passed the Zero Tolerance Policy in February 2012. The policy covers the remit of the Union building and recognises the fact that sexual harassment should not be ignored, tolerated, excused in any way, stating that students should not have to accept the following behaviour:
 - Unwanted sexual comments/invitation;
 - Groping, pinching or smacking of your body;
 - Wolf-whistling or catcalling;
 - Having your clothes lifted without consent;
 - Someone exposing themselves to you without consent.

If, after investigation, sexual harassment is found to have occurred, the perpetrator will not be allowed to enter the Union building. Depending on the severity of the harassment, the police may be involved and it may be classed as a criminal offence.

Cardiff University passed its own Zero Tolerance policy in 2012 under the 'Dignity in Work and Study' policy. This policy covers all University property including academic buildings and halls of residences. The policy stipulates that any behaviour classed as sexual harassment would be investigated and dealt with as deemed appropriate

- In contrary to the Union's policy, procedures for reprimanding the perpetrator differ in that it is dealt with through the University's 'Procedures for the Resolution of Students' Concerns/Issues'.
- In contrary to the Union's policy, consequences for breaching the University's Zero Tolerance policy can vary depending on the severity of the offence. Consequences can include temporary exclusion, moving students from Residences (if the offence took place within Residences) and possible expulsion from the University as whole.

Student Senate Believes

1. That the Students' Union should challenge and condemn the idea that sexual harassment is to be expected as part of normal student life and night life.
2. Objectification and stereotyping women leads to a culture of sexual harassment and its normalisation. Therefore the levels of reported harassment, particularly that of sexual harassment, severely under-represents the true number of incidents due to normalisation of harassment, embarrassment of the individual and fear of repercussions.
3. That that statistics presented in the NUS and Drinkaware reports stated above severely under represent the number the incidents that have taken place. The normalisation of sexual harassment may mean that many students who were asked may not have realised that they have experienced sexual harassment or witnessed sexual harassment take place.
4. Although sexual harassment disproportionately affects women, it can happen to anyone of any gender. Therefore, any plan of action should be gender neutral in its language and approach as all students should be free from sexual harassment regardless of their gender.
5. That the Students' Union should dedicate itself to the safety and welfare of its students in the light of the NUS reports and other research.
6. The Students' Union has already worked on raising awareness of the Zero Tolerance policy, through use of television screens, promotional material and social media as well as emphasising the policy in Y Plas (formerly Solus) club nights and Freshers' Week. 'Guides' to the Zero Tolerance policy were also provided to all students who were moving into Residences in September 2014.
7. A lack of awareness of the Zero Tolerance policy can lead to students not reporting incidents of sexual harassment. Similarly, if information on the Zero Tolerance policy, in both the Union and the University, is hard to find and/or difficult to understand, this may also act as a barrier to students reporting incidents.
 - The Equality and Diversity manager (Catrin Morgan) and the Deputy Director of Residences at the University (Tracey Austin) has acknowledged that more could be done to raise the profile of the University's Zero Tolerance policy and ensure that students know about it.

Student Senate Resolves:

1. To continue to pursue the Zero Tolerance policy.
2. To liaise with the University to ensure that the University's own Zero Tolerance policy is clear and accessible to students.

3. To make a clear distinction to students the difference between the Union and the University's Zero Tolerance policies.
4. To continue to provide a summary of the Students' Union Zero Tolerance policy and also the University's policy on the website and in promotional material.
5. To confirm or adjust our current disciplinary and complaints procedures so that they are in line with the Zero Tolerance policy, including possibly updating contact details.
6. For elected committee members of the Residences Associations to be informed of the University and Union Zero Tolerance policy in both the University and Union and how to signpost students to the right services and support.
7. For Students' Union staff and student staff to receive full training on the Zero Tolerance policy, including security. At least 50% of Students' Union staff and student staff ought to receive training by September 2016. This training could be delivered internally or delivered by NUS.
8. To continue to raise awareness of the Zero Tolerance policy through social media, the Students' Union website and promotional material as well as holding events and delivering Equality and Diversity workshops to club and society committees.
9. To establish a Zero Tolerance policy pledge for students and Students' Union staff to sign online so that students and Students' staff can take a proactive stance on the policy. This has been very successful at Manchester University Students' Union as part of their 'We Get It' campaign.
10. To clarify in any promotional material, social media and training where students can go if they seek additional help and support (Student Support Centre, Student Advice in the Students' Union, Personal Tutor etc.)

Proposed by: Laura Carter
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RESOURCES

1. National Union of Students (NUS) '*Hidden Marks*' report 2010: http://www.nus.org.uk/Global/NUS_hidden_marks_report_2nd_edition_web.pdf
2. NUS '*Lad Culture and Sexism Survey*' August/September 2014: <http://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/nus-research-reveals-one-in-four-students-suffer-unwelcome-sexual-advances/>
3. Drinkaware '*Drunken nights out: motivations, norms and rituals in the night time economy*' report September 2014: <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/check-the-facts/effects-on-your-safety/sexual-harassment#research>
4. Cardiff University Students' Union website summary of the Union's Zero Tolerance policy: <http://www.cardiffstudents.com/your-voice/campaigning/zero-tolerance/>
5. Cardiff University's Procedures for the Resolution of Students'Concerns/Issues: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/sfs/regs/1213acadregs/3.05%20-%20Procedures%20for%20the%20Resolution%20of%20Students%20Concerns.Issues%20-%20NO%20CHANGES.doc%202.pdf>
6. Cardiff University's 'Dignity at Work and Study policy' which contains their Zero Tolerance policy: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/govrn/cocom/equalityanddiversity/dignityatwork/>
7. Manchester University Students' Union 'We Get It' campaign against sexual harassment, including the Zero Tolerance policy pledge: <http://manchesterstudentsunion.com/wegetit>

