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NUS £1.1M LOSS SCANDAL

Photo by Alexander Duncan



**How cock-ups, bureaucracy
and a trip to the seaside
drained YOUR money away**

EXCLUSIVE

BY ADAM THORN

THE NUS LOST £1.1m of student money last year - with NUS Extra cards, designed to drag them out of financial turmoil, contributing a LOSS of £18k.

The information comes as part of a *Vision* investigation into NUS expenditure, which reveals damning evidence of financial mismanagement within the organisation. Our report reveals how:

- Their predictions of the income of NUS EXTRA were “**significantly overstated**”.
- They spend **£300k** of student money holding their annual conference in one of the UK’s premier locations.
- The NUS splashed out **£110k** on a business development manager during their loss-making year.

FULL STORY PAGE 4-5

STUDENT PRESS
 We read them...
 ...so you don't have to
 Lett-uce go!

LAUGHING ALL THE BEACH

Wadham is to become the fourth Oxford college to acquire a new mascot, in the form of a tortoise, reports *The Cherwell*.
 Students hope to enter their new pet in the annual Corpus Christi Tortoise Fair, in which different colleges place their tortoises, facing away from each other, into the middle of a circle of lettuce leaves; the first one to reach the edge is crowned victor.
 Wadham SU is also considering giving the tortoise the deciding vote in any tied motions due to the amphibian's alleged "revolutionary vision".

Pricey Fries

Curly fries are off the menu at Exeter University, writes *Exposé*. The popular snack has been removed after the rising potato prices in the UK left university canteens in financial difficulty.
 "Bring them back!" implored Exeter's students, desperate for the comfort food that eased their hangovers.
 However, with a European shortage and UK flood damage causing an extensive outbreak of potato blight their demands are unlikely to be met - unless they are prepared to pay £4 a portion!
 Any one fancy stocking up with a trip to Iceland then?

iMazing!

A Leeds University fresher was made a worldwide phenomenon as Apple Inc. picked up his home-made YouTube ad.
 Leeds Student reports that the first year student's simple home-made YouTube video was enlisted as the main focus for Apple's worldwide advertising campaign for the iPod Touch.
 The video, inspired by a line in a CSS song that says "My music is where I'd like you to touch", was created in one day, and has now been viewed over 711,000 times on YouTube.
 Apple emailed him expressing an interest, and shortly after flew him out to Los Angeles to work on a High Definition version of the advert, which has since been aired on a global scale. The next round of drinks is definitely on this fresher!

Bristol bobbies

Community service, up to £100 in fines, and possible expulsion are what Bristol students could be facing for any perceived misconduct, writes *Epigram*.
 New additions to the 07/08 Student Handbook grant Bristol University the right to inflict these outrageous punishments on their students if they prove too rowdy for neighbouring residents.
 The motion has caused a ruckus amongst staff and students who have accused the University of usurping the responsibility of the hall wardens and even local Police.
 Jasmine Phillips

BY ADAM THORN

A VISION INVESTIGATION into NUS finances reveals evidence of severe financial mismanagement within the organisation - which is draining students' cash through a series of cock-ups and overestimates.

The NUS lost £1,120,503 of students' cash last year with NUS Extra cards, costing £10 each, losing the organisation over £18k. The loss comes during a year in which the NUS blew over £100k on employing a business development manager to help the union.

Official documents obtained by Vision show how the NUS admit that income from their 'extra' cards were "significantly overstated" compared with their original predictions - despite spending £245k on their finance department. The cards cost the NUS £740k last year and that is due to rise by over 100k this year.

Money has also been wasted on expenses and bureaucracy. £120k alone was placed on travel, accommodation and expenses. The NUS admit the majority of this involved paying for accommodation for their annual conference. The total cost for holding the event stands at £300k - something that an NUS report states as giving "cause for concern". The NUS chose to hold it in the UK's premier conference location of Blackpool - despite their financial troubles.

Meanwhile the NUS released a governance review of their organisation - which delivered some harsh words on their internal workings. The review calls some recent changes made to the NUS' structure as "pointless". It also adds that: "Several mandates for the NUS' governance to be reviewed and reformed dramatically have been effectively ignored".

But in its most damning statement, the review reveals how the: "Cumbersome structures, procedures and policies of the NUS appear to be a barrier to rather than a tool for change and increased student movement." Plus it adds that many members feel that their policy making procedures are "flawed".

The NUS receive the majority of their funding through SUs who pay tens of thousands of pounds for membership - money that would otherwise be given back to students. Senior NUS officers have been receiving £22k a year salaries while overseeing horrific losses in income.

Responding to our investigation, NUS National Treasurer Dave Lewis defended the union telling Vision: "NUS finances are definitely on the road to recovery." Dave added: "We have recently undergone a comprehensive restructuring process, and we predict that by the end of the year, we will have reduced our deficit to £300,000. We are also committed to breaking even within three years".

Our investigation comes just a day into a York referendum on NUS membership. Southampton University disbanded from the NUS three years ago, and current president Sarah Moore tells Vision that the university has "no plans" to rejoin. She added she thinks the current NUS is

£1.1 MILLION

£300K BLACKPOOL CONFERENCE

£110K 'BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT' MANAGER

£18K LOSS ON NUS CARDS

Socs: HOW WOULD YOU SPEND THE DOSH?

The cost of affiliation to NUS is around £36,000 per year. If that money was reinvested into societies, what would be done with it?
 Email yorkvisioneditor@googlemail.com.

Images by Matt Kirman

"pretty unstable at the moment". Sarah argues that the university has benefited from disaffiliating and that Southampton was: "not getting anything back" from membership. The university used to be paying around £40k a year to continue to be affiliated and now reinvests that money back into the

union. However Edinburgh's association president Josh MacAlister defended the NUS after the university joined 3 years ago - arguing that many of the "scare stories" surrounding membership aren't true.
 Dave Lewis added that, while the NUS are in trouble, individual

unions have benefited from their investment. He said: "Last year NUS Extra brought in over £1million of new income for students' unions - York alone received £20,000 of new income. And already this year we have seen NUS Extra put £750,000 into students' unions".

However these individual unions still contribute £3.6m to the NUS - meaning unions are still losing nearly £3m in affiliation fees based on last years estimates. The NUS predict that this year the organisation will lose a further £675k but has set itself a savings target to reduce that deficit to £300k.
 NUS president Gemma Tumelty was unavailable for comment over the weekend.

Socs: HOW WOULD YOU SPEND THE DOSH?

Drama Soc: "We've got massive problems with the drama barn at the moment as a venue. We'd invest in renovation, securing our future, buying a projector, or some Shakespeare originals!"

University of York Boat Club: "The cost of a new racing shell is massive, up to eighteen thousand pounds. Even a six year old boat is about ten thousand. But that's what we need to race."

THE WAY TO

- EXTRA CARD SALES MASSIVELY OVER-PROJECTED
- £300k BLACKPOOL WASTE

SOCS: HOW WOULD YOU SPEND THE DOSH?

URY: "We would always like more money! I reckon we'd put on a fab fab gig, try get someone good to come play and establish it as a regular feature of campus life. We'd love our listenership to increase and students get more aware of the station as well as our output."

Tennis: "We currently haven't even got enough money to train indoors - a bit of extra cash would mean we'd use decent facilities."

York Sailing and Windsurfing Club: "£36k could buy us six new Fireflies, the boats we use. So three grand is about half a boat."

Vision: "An excellent new computer. And fairy lights and a piss up."



BLACKPOOL FUN: NUS President Gemma Tumelty

DISCOUNT CARDS: DO YOU NEED ONE?

A QUICK trawl around high street businesses that 'only offer an NUS Extra discount reveals that guile gets you further than a card alone in blagging money off.

YORK UNI CARDS ONLY



NUS EXTRA NEEDED



NUMBER CRUNCHER

What could £36,000 buy York students if we weren't part of NUS?

5,142 Durex vibrating cock rings (one for every male undergraduate)

9,000 11" Margheritas from Efes. Laid end to end, the junk food would stretch from campus to the river.

14,400 entries to Toffs on a Tuesday night, if they ditched the NUS-Extra discount.

900 copies of the Rocky box set for Derwent JCRC.

42,000 pints of White Lightning, enough to fill the lake to 0.03% of its normal level

37,000 Australian Open Tennis Balls, which would completely cover five courts.

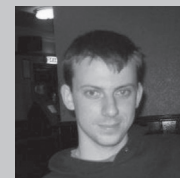
NUS REFERENDUM - WEEK 6

YES - TOM LANGRISH



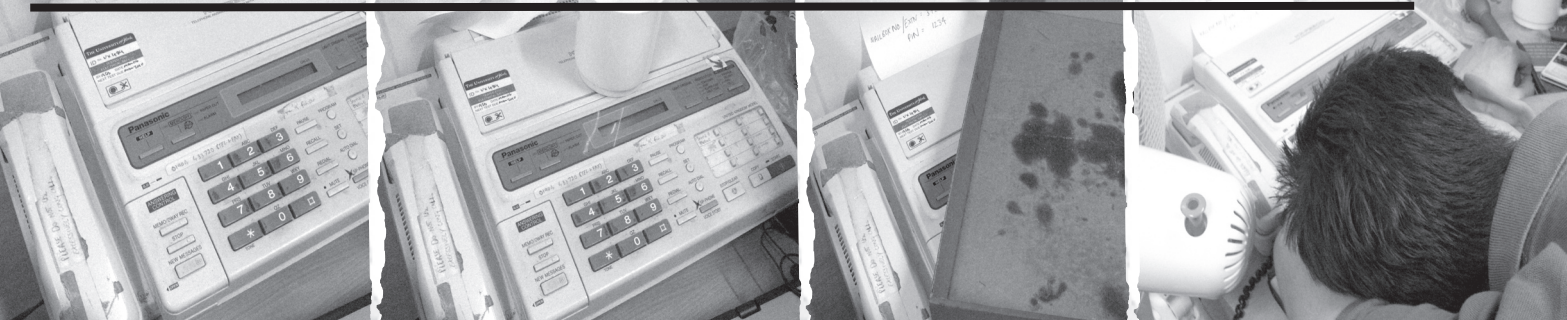
We acknowledge that the NUS is not in the best financial state – the NUS hasn't been perfect on some organisational levels, but things are improving. If we have an NUS that gets into deeper financial crisis it will be less effective at the services it provides. NUS Extra will be a gold standard for discounts in years to come – it is down to the retailer whether they check for NUS Extra. NUS Ltd supplies stock to Your:Shop up to £10,000 cheaper than its alternatives, ensuring cheap shopping for students. Staff support is the greatest asset the NUS provide, behind the scenes of what students typically see.

NO - ALAN YONGE



These figures are a stark reflection on the financial mismanagement of the NUS. Value for money is one of the key issues in this debate – why should the NUS go to Blackpool? Why not go somewhere significantly cheaper? We're conducting a survey on NUS Extra cards at the moment and so far after 50 interviews, 100% of respondents thought you should not have to pay for an NUS Extra cards. There is no good reason why York students should subsidise the career paths of a few exceptionally eager YUSU officers.

IS THIS HOW MUCH YORK MATTERS TO THE NUS?



>Despite assurances, with just one week to go until the most important referendum York students have ever faced, the NUS fails to get in contact

RAVING MAD

BY ANNA BEVAN

VANBRUGH ENTS Reps have accused Derwent College of poaching their rave idea and ruining their 'U.V.' event.

The Planet V, which was originally scheduled for Week 5, had to be moved to Week 9 after 'Rave D' posters were put up advertising an identical themed night to take place the week before.

Vanbrugh Ents Rep, Sarah Winter, said, "We're not too happy about it. If they'd done their job properly and handed in the forms when they should have, they would have known we were doing the same event."

Vanbrugh Chair, Ryan Bennett, admitted that the clash "could have been a coincidence", but said, "there are rumours going around" that it was deliberate.

Derwent Chair, Jamie Tyler, hit back at the accusations, insisting: "We knew nothing about their U.V. night and wouldn't purposefully go out to sabotage them."

Derwent Ents Rep, Sian Thomas, confessed: "I knew they originally had a U.V. night planned, but thought it had been replaced by Love Music Hate Racism. I don't think we did anything wrong."

Better Shack



BY EMILY HODGES

GOODRICKE COLLEGE is set to revamp its hall for their next event in a desperate attempt to escape the stigma attached to campus nights out and prevent further loss of money.

The JCRC voted to experiment with some changes to their 'Good-Shack' venue - such as dividing the hall into two rooms to create separate dancing and chill-out areas.

Fresher Luke Geraghty claimed: "The Fright Night event felt pretty amateur - you knew you were still in a dining hall."

Goodricke College Chair, Ben Wardle, said: "Campus based events are normally very cheesy, but we want to try something different."

The development, which includes a 'D' shaped stage in the centre of the room, is set to be unveiled at the College's Dark Chocolate Event in Week 6.

Wardle admitted that the idea might not work and that it may even reduce capacity for the venue. However, he insisted that the aim is really "to experiment with how far the current design can be expanded."

PROVOST LEAVES



BY TOM SHELDRICK

A MAJOR RE-SHUFFLE is to take place this summer after one of campus' longest-serving and most influential figures has revealed that he is stepping down.

Allen Warren, who has been Vanbrugh Provost for 24 years and College Coordinator for the past five, is leaving both posts next year.

Working alongside the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Warren has played a vital behind-the-scenes role, with the University praising in particular his "wisdom and experience".

Warren's resignation from his position as head of Vanbrugh will come as a shock to students. College Chair Ryan Bennett said the Provost will be greatly missed. "He's been here for over 20 years, and built Vanbrugh up to the college it is today."

Despite recent problems regarding the new Bleachfields accommodation, Warren promises to leave on a high after hosting Vanbrugh's 40th birthday celebrations in June 2008.

"It seems as good a time to leave as any. With the completion of the new residential blocks, the college renewal process is done. Yes, a bit later than would have been ideal, but I have very much enjoyed the project."