**MORNING ALL!**

**Here is your weekly digest of the pertinent issues in HE that may impact Students’ Unions. If you’ve read anything of interest that’s not here, please share it with us! These will be released every Wednesday and provide an overview of HE Policy, research and other interesting factoids. If you have any questions, pop me an email.**

**Development of a NSS style survey for Postgraduate students**

Currently the satisfaction surveys open to Postgraduate students (PTES and PRES) are poorly responded to, and therefore it is difficult to draw real conclusions and compare postgraduate experience across institutions. Institutions have to ‘opt in’ to these surveys, therefore we cannot guarantee that Leicester will take part, and even Leicester does, there is little resource or incentive available to promote the survey.

The Office for Students (OfS) has released an invitation to tender (who will run the survey) for a new survey that will not only focus on satisfaction, but gather the views and opinions of Postgraduate students much like the NSS does for Undergraduate students. If successful, the first round of this survey will provide a broad overview of Postgraduate experiences across the UK, with a potential for Institution-specific results in the future.

*What does this mean for us?*

We will be able to use the general data to get a clearer picture of the issues Postgraduate students across the UK are facing. In the future, this could be a useful tool to look at the Postgraduate experience of Leicester students specifically, and how that compares to the experiences of their peers elsewhere. It also means that Postgraduate students in future will be better informed about which University will suit their requirements, so results could be used to lobby the University to improve Postgraduate provision, with the incentive that it could improve PG recruitment and retention.

**Reform of the Gender Recognition Act Consultation closing 19th October at 11pm**

If you haven’t done so already, I’d encourage you to fill out the consultation on the Gender Recognition Act. This is a fantastic way to share with the Government how to improve the rights of trans people within the UK.

You can fill out the consultation here:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/government-equalities-office/reform-of-the-gender-recognition-act/consultation/intro/>

You can find guidance on how to fill out the consultation here:

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/stonewall_gra_response_-_final.pdf>

and

<https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/43614/9d6f51dba8993b819565ea229abf31e5/GRA_consultation_guidance.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1539720347&Signature=mBwRSH8xiPa8NhFhHuJLhnR6VJI%3D>

**AMOSSHE Sexual Misconduct Survey results released**

Top level findings include that a significant proportion of participants were reluctant to report sexual misconduct to a member of University staff, and that the most important thing to be prioritised following any disclosure is their emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, there is a lack of a clear route for students to disclose sexual misconduct or to receive support, leading to inconsistencies within and between HE institutions.

You can find the results here:

<https://www.amosshe.org.uk/insight-2016-17-disclosures>

**International student experience in the UK**

Research released by The International Alumni Job network suggested that 1 in 4 International students who responded to the survey would actively discourage their peers not to study in the UK, compared to 40% actively recommending their country of study overall (this included students who had studied in the US, UK, Canada and Australia amongst other places.)

Article - <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/the-lure-of-an-overseas-education/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The%20NUS%20HE%20Daily%20-%20Wednesday%2010th%20October&utm_content=The%20NUS%20HE%20Daily%20-%20Wednesday%2010th%20October+CID_ca3130580cb02b88b2e756e0a31cd091&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=the%20findings%20of%20a%20report%20from%20the%20International%20Alumni%20Job%20Network%20that%20details%20the%20experience%20of%20overseas%20students>

Full report can be requested if you wish, but I don’t think we need it.

**Student retention rates increase if they attend lectures**

No surprises here – if students have more 1:1 and person on person contact at University, they are less likely to drop out. What we can perhaps work on is facilitating more appropriate, supportive and accessible content for students who struggle to attend lectures, e.g. those with caring responsibilities, commuters, those with accessibility requirements. Furthermore, we can use this to lobby for a more personal aspect to Distance Learner courses – often the feedback we receive (NSS etc) is that they can lack a human element.

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/students-less-likely-drop-out-if-taught-lectures-study-finds>

**Sheffield SU offers drug advice**

Sheffield offers support in ensuring if students do take drugs, they do so safely.

Others have said that this is normalising drug use, and other Universities such as Buckingham take a zero tolerance approach, going as far to introduce contracts that students sign that confirm they will not use drugs.

Whether this is realistic, as NUS research shows that 2 in 5 of the students surveyed used illegal drugs, so it’s not a problem that is going to disappear either way.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45703499>