

*Report of Education Officer
2nd National Executive
4th April*

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1. National Days of Action

1.1 Campus NDAs

This year campus actions were held in the lead up to the central NDA on 25th. These were intended to build momentum for the campaign on campus and get two media cycles.

These were very successful and meant that a lot of campuses who do not usually participate in NUS campaigns did. I will just briefly list what happened on each campus and let state branch presidents expand further.

1.1.1 Queensland

This year for the first time in a while, NUS has had a presence at Griffith with S and R officer, Chaye, organizing a petition signing with activists from Griffith.

QUT had a petition signing and a forum in the morning of the 25th.

UQ had a very successful student poverty BBQ, with petition signing and an obstacle course of higher education.

JCU also had a petition signing on the cross campus day.

1.1.2 NSW

University of Sydney held a fake auction of degrees, food and credit cards etc.

UNSW had a tent city and a grave yard of courses.

UTS did similar on campus actions around income support.

University of Wollongong had a clash of dates and therefore were not able to participate.

Macquarie had a petition signing.

UNE held a forum on higher education on the cross campus day.

1.1.3 Vic

Melbourne University held a banner painting.

Monash Clayton held a speak out.

RMIT had a petition signing.

La Trobe held a petition signing, speaker and BBQ.

VCA prepared a banner to take to the cross campus NDA.

Monash Gippsland held an income support day.

Monash Caulfield held a BBQ and student income focused stunt on the cross campus day.

Monash Berwick had a BBQ and petition signing.

1.1.4 WA

Murdoch were on study week, but had numerous stalls etc in the lead up to the NDA.

UWA had their Ed Week in the week of the campus NDA and had events such as speakers all week.

Curtin had things happening all day such as 'Honk if you hate HECS', a student income support obstacle course and BBQ.

1.1.5 ACT

UC had lecture bashing for the first time and held a petition signing.

ANU also had a petition signing for the NDA.

1.2 Cross Campus NDA

Cross campus NDAs were held in every state except the NT, these were very successful in raising the profile of our demands with media coverage continuing through to the weekend. Again I will be brief and allow the state branch presidents to go into further detail.

1.2.1 QLD

Queensland held a speak out and then march to Centrelink followed by a sleep-out for student poverty at the Centrelink head office in the city. Particularly the sleep out was very successful, getting lots of local media as well as coverage in the weekend Courier Mail.

1.2.2 NSW

NSW held a very successful march at which there was a presence of many campuses including Macquarie and University of Newcastle. This was covered by Channel 9 news and ABC news.

1.2.3 VIC

In Victoria a speak out was held that was intended to be followed by a rally, however the police didn't approve the route and threatened NUS with massive fines if we marched. Unfortunately due to rain most of the morning it had a smaller turn out, however was still successful in gathering local media attention.

1.2.4 Tas

At UTas a petition signing was held, which its good to see states that don't have a state branch getting more involved.

1.2.5 SA

At the University of Adelaide a marriage for centrelink was held. And at Uni SA a petition signing was held.

1.2.6 WA

In WA a march and speak out was held, this was very successful and was covered by Tripple J and various print media.

1.2.7 ACT

In the morning a marriage for Centrelink at Parliament House was held- which was very successful and gathered much media attention.

After this actions on each campus were held which were very successful. Both campuses had a BBQ and petition signing.

Things that worked:

CAMPUS AND CENTRAL NDA: This was very successful in getting two weeks of media, rather than just one day. It also worked well to build momentum for the campaign on campus and involve disengage students who will never get on a bus to attend a central NDA.

FLEXIBILITY: Continuing from last year, allowing flexibility within the campaign- ie. not demanding that every state have a rally. Having media stunts such as the sleep out in Queensland and the marriage for centrelink in the ACT and SA demonstrated that these can be equally successful and acknowledge that each state has a different 'activist culture'.

MATERIAL: From all reports on campus students responded well to the material designs. Also having t-shirts distributed by NUS meant that states that don't usually have the resources to have t-shirts did- I would hope that in the future NUS continues to produce t-shirts. Also having the template for flyers was helpful to campuses to produce campus specific material.

Things that could have been better:

ORGANISATION: Many states were quiet late to put in place final details of the NDA, consequently the details of some cross campus NDAs were only up on the website a week prior to the NDA. I will attempt to emphasis to state branches the importance of having details prepared well before the date of an event.

SOLIDARITY: It was very disappointing to see some (supposedly) left groups actively work against the campaign on campus by doing things such as placing posters for their factional events over NDA posters and using speak outs at the NDA to hack on other factions. This was mainly an issue in Victoria and NSW. I hope in the future we can all put aside that fact that we don't like each other and some of us might be annoyed over how little we got at NUS Conference. I hope for the rest of the year we can work together for the NUS campaigns.

2. Activities since last national executive

Since the last national executive I have visited more campuses and worked with other OBs start up our 'Obama' style campaign.

2.1 Campus Visits

La Trobe:

Visited La Trobe on the 3rd of February and again on the 11th of March. On the 11th of March I spoke at a campus action against the plan of the university to decrease the semester from 13 to 12 weeks. Thanks to the hard work of the President Lachlan Batchelor, ed officer Jesse Marshall and

Gen Sec Kat Long Davidson this campaign was successful and La Trobe still has a 13 week semester.

I also visited to the 3rd of February to speak at their officer bearer induction about the campaign and discussed the campaign with many of their office bearers whilst there.

University of Canberra:

I met with the President, VP for Education and Gen Sec of the UCSA. We discussed building for the NDA and trying to build more activism at UC.

ANU:

On the 7th of February I met with the President and Secretary of the ANUSA. We discussed strategies for the campaign. The education officer was overseas when I was in Canberra, however I have had extensive telephone contact with her.

Curtin:

On the 10th of February I met with the President and Education Officer at Curtin Guild, we discussed Curtin becoming more involved in the NUS campaign as a non-affiliate. This meeting was very successful and led to a great NDA at Curtin.

UWA:

I met with the President, Welfare Officer and Education Officer at the UWA Guild. We discussed the campus NDA and building actions on campus.

NUSWest:

Attend a meeting with NUSWest with education officers and campus Presidents. We primarily discussed the student services fee.

Murdoch:

I visited Murdoch on the 11th of February and met with the President and Education Officer to discuss the campaign, particularly the student services fee. I was also at Murdoch on the 13th of February for their O-Day, mainly running a stall for NUS and gathering signatures for petitions.

QUT:

I met with the President, Gen Sec and Education Officer of QUT Guild, we discuss the NUS campaign and the student services fee. I also was on campus for their O-Week from the 17th of Feb to the 20th of Feb, as well as their Market Week (23rd Feb to 26th Feb) at which I ran NUS stalls. I also met with the DVC Academic about teaching and learning and the student services fee.

I also met with the VC of QUT and chair of Universities Australia, Professor Peter Coaldrake on the 20th of March. In this meeting I raised NUS' priorities of student income support reform and ensuring NUS has a place on the newly announced higher education regulatory body.

UQ:

After my last campus visit at UQ and meeting with OBs from the UQU it was requested that I do not seek a meeting with their OBs- The UQU is primarily concerned that I may try to ensure that the rights of UQ students are protected through things like the scrapping of VSU and fair income support. Thus, I did not seek a meeting with OBs whilst I was in Qld in February.

However, at the Senate Inquiry held in March representatives of the UQU complained that NUS OBs came onto campus and did not meet with them. Thus I assume they have changed their initial stance that they did not want me to contact their OBs and hence will be sure to contact their OBs and set up meetings when I am in Queensland in May.

I did meet with activists at UQU who are interested in running the NUS campaign. We discussed how to run a campaign under a hostile union.

I also attempted to set up an NUS stall, however the UQU called security. An agreement was reached with security that we could have stalls everyday of the following week. So James Butches, the NUSQ Ed Ob, ran stalls everyday the following week.

I also met with the DVC Academic and representatives from the VCs office (as the VC was overseas). This was a very successful meeting, we mainly discussed the newly established Office of Undergraduate Students

Following my meeting with the DVCA, I met with the head of the Office of Undergraduate students.

Griffith:

At the Griffith O-Day myself and Jimmy Mentor ran an NUS stall. We had the assistance of a number of activists and Griffith. It was very successful in raising awareness of the NDA and countering the strong presence of the Liberals 'Stop Student Taxes' campaign. I hope that we will be maintaining a strong NUS presence at Griffith as this is a campus that in recent years has not been very engaged with NUS.

Monash Clayton:

On the 10th of March I met with the Education Officers at Monash Clayton. I assisted in the running of a stall and discussed with them how to effectively build the campaign on campus through lecture bashing, stalling and flyering etc.

Monash Caulfield:

On the 9th of March I met with the Welfare Officer at Monash Caulfield, as unfortunately the President and Education Officer were unavailable. This meeting was very successful with events planned for the 18th and 25th around the issue of student poverty.

Melbourne University:

Met with the President about the campus NDA and cross campus NDA.

I will be in NSW in early April and will be visiting campuses there and will be going to SA after the budget in May.

2.2 Contact with OBs

I have continued to have very regular contact with campus OBs, some may say too regular. In the lead up to the NDA I was contacting all campuses every second day and most campuses were getting daily calls.

2.3 Education Officer Phone Link ups

On the 5th of February I held our first Education Officers Skype link up for the year. This was very successful and was used to report back on plans for O-Week and building for the NDA.

I will continue to hold these throughout the year. Firstly as an ideas sharing forum so we are not constantly reinventing the wheel. Second to ensure that I am held accountable to campus education officers. Thirdly, to ensure constant communication and consultation.

2.4 Australian Youth Forum

Whilst in Brisbane I attended the first Australian Youth Forum with other Queensland activists. The topics were Violence and Society and Engaging in Democracy. We pushed progressive arguments such as opposition to the use of Tazars by the Queensland police force and that the age of voting should be lowered.

I hope that NUS activists will continue to engage with and push a progressive agenda within this forum.

2.5 Anti-Deregulation Actions

After the government's announcement that they will introduce a system of deregulated places and demand driven funding, snap actions were held in Victoria, NSW and Queensland. In Victoria and Queensland graveyards of courses were set up outside Gillard and Rudd's offices respectively. In NSW a speakout was held at UTS.

These were incredibly successful in getting media attention for NUS' opposition to the plan.

3. **DABF: Where to from here....**

Short term:

As I have previously articulated, one of my main priorities is to ensure that the campaign continues throughout the whole year and does not consist merely of NDAs.

The next major focus will be the Budget, details of which will be announced on the 13th of May. It is important that we continue to build pressure on the government to meet our demands of funding for higher education and particularly reform of student income support. Due to the global financial crisis it will be difficult to get reform of Youth Allowance in the budget, so we need to make sure we continue to build the campaign.

In light of this David and I have consulted campuses about holding a national sleep out for student poverty, this will be held three weeks prior to the budget (23rd April) and is intended to get media attention of NUS' demands for income support reform.

In the next few weeks we will also be organizing contingents of students to go to MPs offices to lobby for YA reform.

Long term:

NUS will also be running a campaign against the governments newly announced deregulation of places and demand driven funding. The goals of this campaign will be to persuade the government not to introduce the system, but if they do to at least ensure there is protection for funding of regional universities and national priority areas.

In the next few weeks materials such as posters for this campaign will be distributed and in Victoria a forum on the issue is planned.