



nationalunionofstudentscotland

The funding of higher education: the students' perspective

NUS Scotland ESRC abstract | May 2013

This presentation by Robin Parker, President of NUS Scotland, will focus on the student perspective of education funding, and what the consequences of this are as a result of the independence referendum. He will consider the context of education today, questions which remain for the competing sides of the debate, and where he would like to see the future of education lie. He will stress the need to recognise that students are Scotland's future, and make the point that it will therefore be vital to ensure that students of all ages and backgrounds are supported and encouraged to engage fully in the constitutional debate and the referendum.

He will highlight the context which makes this particularly acute, not least the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill, currently making its way through – a bill which would grant 16 and 17 year olds a vote in the referendum – and what the implications of this are for all sides of the constitutional debate, and how we should seek engage these first voters.

Just as importantly as looking to where we want to go, Robin will spend some time considering where we have come from – the campaigning wins of NUS Scotland on funding, student support and widening access, and the policy context of Scottish further and higher education today. He will consider the divergence of education policy across the UK, and what this has resulted in, on both sides of the border.

In looking ahead, to 2014 and beyond, Robin will consider the opportunities and challenges we face, and the questions which remain unanswered on what education would look under either eventuality. He will pose questions to both sides of the debate, on the solutions they would want to see implemented, and what they think should happen. He will highlight student concerns on

university and college funding, student support, university research, immigration, and welfare reform.

Robin will conclude by highlighting the need to ensure that the debate focuses not just on the constitutional changes we might see. Instead, the focus leans towards what future do we want to see for our country, regardless of constitution. And that is a key questions both sides of the debate should be addressing. Robin will urge both sides to recognise that is the debate we need, the conversation students and young people deserve, and the choices we should be encouraging both sides to start making.