

**Action Group – Anti-Racism, Anti-Fascism
Meeting Date: 08.04.24****Present**

Dean Turner, Welfare and Community Officer **(DT) (Allocated Officer)**

Scott Dawson, Student Voice and Representation Manager **(SD) (Note Taker)**

Harry Brooks, Activities and Employability Officer **(HB)**

Fern Warwick, Welfare and Liberation Committee Member **(FW)**

Robin Hayward, Welfare and Liberation Committee Member **(RH)**

Idea for Discussion:**Current Policy**

The Guild believes in an active opposition to fascism, racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia and so should use its resources to build a strong anti-racism/fascism campaign on campus and in the wider community.

Minutes from meeting 08.04.24

DT: Suggested to being with there is some tidy-up to do with wording and terminology.

FW: Would we include providing resources to support student groups and societies in their activity? Including a note of the broad inclusion of relevant student groups to support their work?

HB: Noted that it feels a little bit vague in terms of 'use of resources'. Do we need to specify this more, is it educating students etc..?

DT: Asked if it could also include financial support?

RH: Noted that if possible, to separate the resources section so it is a part of action and call to create change? The vague element does allow flexibility, but this specificity could help with accountability?

DT: Highlighted this could be specified through student groups and other elements. Turn to two paragraphs, a stated belief and remove 'use resources' and turn it into something more tangible, supporting groups directly and providing financial support?

SD: Highlighted that in a previous action group around discrimination, it was noted by the group that some elements in this policy on anti-racism/antisemitism are now covered in other ideas and policies. Does the group want to consider focusing on a specific anti-fascist point?

DT: Noted there is a link between this policy and that of the discrimination belief and commitment.

HB: Asked for clarity on where this focus on anti-racism and anti-fascism together may have come from?

DT: Noted is likely tied to the old role Guild anti-fascist and anti-racism PTO officer.

RH: Confirmed the above point by DT.

RH: Highlighted Fascism does bring in broader bigotries. It is worth considering if we do want to move it more towards anti-fascism but ensure the wider bigotries are noted? The elements of anti-racism and anti-fascism are linked but fascism does have additional elements beyond this. Maybe a general note of 'other bigotries' connected to this?

DT: Reflected on how fascism has manifested through the use of antisemitism and islamophobia to progress and justify those aims.

DT: Suggested we want the policy to have a more anti-fascist focus. Do we want to therefore highlight this more clearly?

SD: Highlighted that a change such as the above would likely be a significant change that would require an All Student Vote for approval.

HB: If it is just a focus on anti-fascism given this change – does this mean it is still relevant to students?

DT: A question of on relevant given other belief and commitments. Worth considering how this might impact other freedom of speech activity, this could then move onto freedom of speech involve

[To Note the Meeting was Briefly Interrupted by a fire alarm at the Guild at this stage]

FW: Continuing the conversation, FW noted fascism is on the rise and rooted in several different elements and areas. It is important to note that increase and an increase on a new element.

DT: Noted we could highlight these situations being on the rise. Would we need to highlight what Fascism is? And also, a definition of what anti-fascism is as well?

SD: Discussed the distinction here between a policy and idea. A policy is to commit the Guild to a stance on a particular topic. Ideas are about what student may want to see change at the Guild or University.

FW: Noted it may perhaps be an idea rather than a policy? What consequences does that mean for societies etc..

DT: Highlighted we want to ensure it is connected to the right wider Guild and National policies where appropriate.

HB: Flagged that we would support student groups either way, but within the limits of the law we should make that clear.

DT: Summarising, DT asked the group the following questions:

Q: Any there any other wording changes?

Q: Are we changing the title so it's just anti-fascism and not just anti-racism?

HB: Noted more specific element in relation to support. Would we remove islamophobia and islamophobia?

RH: Suggested if we keep the point around racism in the current policy, then the other two should be included. The resources line is good, but it should be about specifically supporting student campaigns?

DT: Felt currently the idea is it just binding to a Guild specific campaign, which is not accurate to the reality. Change the wording to reflect "resources to support student groups and student led campaigns in this area". Again, asked if we keeping all of the wording or removing all three references to racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia?

RH: Highlighted the worry about this change and the impact it may have on students.

SD: Suggested we could share a possible amended version and dependent on feedback across the next week, it may be that the policy stays as is, slightly changed or re-framed to just focus on Fascism, in which case it would need go to an ASV.

DT: Supported this action and suggestion for next steps.

The Group discussed who should be contacted regarding the revised version of this policy, that included, black voices – ethnic minorities, all other PTO's. And liberation associations. J-soc, I-Soc.

Agreed Actions:

The group unanimously agreed on the following actions:

- That a suggested amended version of the Belief and Commitment will be circulated to this Guild Action Group for review by SD.
- This amended version would be shared to a series of relevant student groups and associations to seek further views and opinions prior to further action being taken.
- That the group would meet again following an opportunity for student feedback and involvement in the next action group on Friday 19th April, 2pm.

Any questions regarding approval, next steps or requests for further information can be submitted to: studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk