

Re-elect

# SHAKIRA

No.1 for NUS National President



## Time to get REAL

I have been humbled and honoured to be your National President for the last 8 months. I have always been honest about my story, the journey that education took me on and the huge changes we all want to see in our education system. **I was elected to listen, learn and lead; now it's time to get real about what that means both for all forms of education, and what it means for NUS.**

It's not been easy. We've had a hostile Government obsessed with all the wrong things, and I inherited a broken NUS, stuck in the past and doing things the old ways, but I have done things differently, reconnecting with SUs and the bodies you pay us to represent students to.

We still spend too much time arguing about what divides us rather than what unites us- and we miss out on opportunities where we could strike when the iron is HOT!!! So next year, re-elect and join me in rebuilding our movement- one that's open, tolerant, and diverse- fit for the future, fit for the fight and ready to get real on the issues that matter.

## Boom. Shakira x



It's been an honour and a privilege to be your National President for the past year.

## My NUS is: 1. GETTING REAL ON STUDENT POVERTY



We know that **money** is the number 1 barrier to getting in and getting on in education, but for years your NUS let Vice Chancellors and Principals set the funding agenda- and whilst their salaries rocketed, we let the press the public and parliament all but ignore the **scandal of student hardship**. But this year our **Poverty Commission** has started to re-write the rules on NUS Campaigning- swapping tired tactics for listening to **real** student voices that are facing barriers to education, and learning from partners and experts about policy ideas that will end the scandal of students struggling to afford housing, food or books.

**Now it's time to switch things up**, taking evidence, ideas and demands to decision makers from the classroom to the cabinet - involving course reps, activists, volunteers, student officers and partners - **calling for**;

- A Minimum Living Income for all students and securing the return of Grants;
- Regulation that forces Unis and Colleges to reduce costs;
- Quadrupling the dehumanising apprentice minimum wage
- Demanding universal discounts on student travel.

"I couldn't feel prouder to be supporting Shakira, the first black woman President of NUS, for a second term. As her Deputy I've seen how **she has transformed and rebuilt NUS's reputation and re-electing her will see this work go from strength to strength**. She's got a clear sense of purpose, she keeps it real and she is who we need to win for our members now.

**Amatey, NUS**  
**Deputy President**  
**& VP Higher**  
**Education**



## 2. GETTING REAL BY GETTING ELECTION READY

Last year just two weeks before NUS Conference the government called a general election for most campuses' holidays or exam times, cynically hoping students would stay away from the Ballot Box. But together through #GenerationVote we proved her wrong- and in two weeks we got 2 million millennials registered to vote, breaking all records for student power in the process.

Now all the parties are **running scared**- scrabbling around to appoint ministers for students and young people, devising fag packet policies to tackle our issues and promising reviews and commissions to court our vote. I say bring it on- because there's never a bigger opportunity to win for our members than when they want our vote - and it's why we need to be **election ready right now**.

Re-elect me and I'll immediately put our movement on non stop election watch:

- Demanding automatic voter registration of students.
- Getting students and their SUs involved in a **massive programme of lobbying**, influencing and engagement with MPs, candidates and think tanks on our vision for education, diversity and opportunity.
- Making sure that student issues dominate the debate when an election is called.





When I was struggling, I made a choice. I went back to college- a way back to work and independence and away from crime and abusive relationships. I want my daughters to realise the value of education- enabling them to be the leaders and entrepreneurs of the future.

When I stood, it was to change NUS and Education for my girls, promising to listen, learn and lead - and to rebuild our relationship with SUs and students.

I said that NUS would be fun, vibrant, and a welcoming environment to take part in. I said we'd take action on social media. And I pledged that we would enable our members to be part of something bigger, empowering them to control their destiny and the world around them.

My NUS is:

### 3. GETTING REAL ON STUDENT RIGHTS

SUs know what students care about- things like the cost of books, affording the bus in, mental health, getting a good result, being healthy and getting their marks back. But to listen to ex-education minister Jo Johnson you'd think that their new Office 'for' Students should obsess over Freedom of Speech and VC Pay instead of the real worries we know students face.

So just like SUs do every day, this year we've been out and about getting in the face of the big agencies- doing things like getting change at the disaster stricken Student Loans Company, lobbying for bigger block grants across FE, arguing for student voice in the UK Quality Code and demanding that the OfS delivers **real** change on mental health, student contracts and closing attainment gaps so that students can get in and get on.

But it's not enough to shout about issues- now it's time for a big push on student rights, supporting SUs and activists to win minimums and standards in every part of our education system. So together next year we will:

- Build and launch a **national student rights framework** on everything from academic appeals to eduroam.
- Give you the tools, tactics and arguments to agitate for change on campus.
- Not let a single sector bigwig off the hook on our positive agenda for student success.



“Shakira is an empowering, passionate and genuine leader. As President she has valued, contributed and represented voices from all learning journeys. As NUS Wales Deputy President I have felt that our concerns and decisions in Wales have been respected, listened to and never dismissed by Shakira as President. I'm **backing Shakira for re-election as our UK President for an NUS that is listening, learning and leading!**

**Carmen, Deputy President, NUS Wales**



My NUS has:

- Done the largest commission on student poverty ever, getting grants on the agenda
- Driven work on Race Equity internally
- Reached out to sector contacts and influencers
- Pioneered work on street safety and knife crime for young people

Next year my NUS will:

- Work to bring the next generation of young Black student leaders into our Unions
- Bring more students from colleges into discussions and campaigns that can transform their lives.
- Research into boosting the budget for the National Society of Apprentices and including Degree Apprentices
- Continue to lobby UCAS to anonymise the application system

### LISTENING, LEARNING, AND LEADING:

### 4. GETTING REAL ABOUT NUS

4.

Being a part of NUS is supposed to be **brilliant**. You all put some money in the middle to make it **easier** to transform students' lives locally and nationally. But last year I promised you some real talk - and right now NUS is slow and intimidating, full of infighting, and spends too much time and money on the wrong things.

So just like SUs all around the country do every year, we've started making **big internal changes**. We're cutting back on **costs**, starting to gather proper **intel** on real student and SU priorities, and thinking hard about how to **boost block grants** and SU income so you can do your job for students.

But now we need some **real change** - and we'll only do it together. Re-elect me and I'll put you in the tent on NUS' turnaround, involving anyone that cares about our movement in the big decisions we will need to take on structures, democracy, services and campaigns to survive, as well as:

- Deliver a proper **services and benefits statement** for SUs.
- Develop a new way to **develop and debate issues and policy** constructively.
- Nail a proper **support briefing and training offer** for everyone involved in the student movement.

“Shakira has been incredible in her first term as National President of NUS. She has spoken boldly and fought honestly for students both on the ground and on a wider level. She has supported FE, HE, and inspired me massively as an Officer; so I can't wait to re-elect her at Conference.

**Chuchu, VP Community and Welfare, Roehampton SU**



**students4shakira.org**

see accessible versions of my manifesto on my website or facebook page, or if you need another format get in touch! Drop me a line at [shakira.martin@nus.org.uk](mailto:shakira.martin@nus.org.uk)