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Hi, I'm Lydia!

Hi, I'm Lydia, and I'm running for VP Welfare and Community because I think we deserve to have a strong students' union that will stand up to management in this unprecedented crisis. I promise that if elected, I will be outspoken and fearless in pursuing better learning and working conditions for everyone in this institution! I'm an experienced community organiser- I'm part of my local cop-watch network, and anti-raids network, I volunteer at the Feminist Library in Peckham, and I'm part of the Institute of Contemporary Arts' Queer Youth Artist Collective.

Management operates with very little transparency or accountability from students, staff, and communities impacted by their decisions. I want to hold KCL management accountable for this institution's complicity in harm to communities worldwide. King's College London's history is enmeshed with colonialism, and to this day, KCL continues to have deep links with the military and border industrial complexes. Our university has received over £25 million from arms companies in the last five years, they have over £1 million invested in companies complicit in the occupation of Palestine, they cooperate with racist government policies such as Prevent, and they collaborate with the Home Office in enforcing border violence by reporting international students with low attendance. As students, we have endured the pandemic, we are living through a cost-of-living crisis, our education is barely functioning because of strikes, and to top it off, we are leaving with thousands of pounds of debt.

It's time to fight back and demand change. Lets's Liberate KCL collectively and organise to build a university premised on care instead of profit and exploitation.

And this is how we're going to do it;



SET THE STUDENTS UNION FREE
DEMOCRATISE
FROM MANAGEMENTS GRASP

PUT UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS
DIVERSIFY
IN THE DRIVERS SEAT

TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO
DECOLONISE
END THE ATTAINMENT GAP FOREVER

DEMAND FREE & ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION
DEMARKETISE
WITH FAIRLY TREATED EDUCATORS

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LIBERATE THE UNION!



MY TOP THREE PRIORITIES IF ELECTED

Rent Reductions

If elected I would work with other students to organise a rent strike in student halls to secure much needed rent reductions! In my first year, management recklessly promised in person teaching during the pandemic in order to lure students into King's Residences. I was part of the team which organised a rent strike and we forced the university to allow students to pull out of our contracts early. I also have close connections to organisers in Manchester and Nottingham who have been successfully rent striking this year; I have the skills and experience necessary to secure real concessions for us during this cost-of-living crisis.

Education for Liberation

I will work with students, Decolonise KCL, the Decolonising Working Group, and staff right across the university to demand the immediate decolonisation of our curriculum. We are miseducated about how our world really works; we need to be taught the truth about racial capitalism and looming ecological collapse. We must demand to be taught the practical skills we need to use our education for liberation!

Sports for All

Sports societies have poor quality, off-campus facilities and outrageous membership fees. Sport is essential to wellbeing; these societies should be accessible for working class students! I would work to implement an inclusion fund to subsidise membership fees for less financially privileged students.

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LIBERATE THE UNION!



PUT SET THE STUDENTS' UNION FREE
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“A cardinal tenet of democracy is that people must be free to choose freely whom they want to support.”

– Archbishop Desmond Tutu

At King's, we no longer have an elected Black students' officer. Nor do we have an elected LGBT officer, nor an elected disabled students' officer. These officer positions have been replaced by liberation network chairs who aren't elected by the student body. KCLSU is a registered charity that employs significantly more permanent members of staff than it does student representatives. As a result, student officers are often told by permanent staff members, as well as management, what they can and cannot do. The SU is unrepresentative, undemocratic and is structured so as to quieten the radical student voices!

Restructure the Students' Union

- Replace liberation networks with officer positions, elected by the entire student body, and make them paid positions.
- Introduce a trans officer role alongside the LGBT officer.
- End the consideration of criminal records of SU officers. BME communities are disproportionately targeted by the police. The SU is therefore engaging in racial discrimination by taking into account criminal records. Arrests alone—regardless of whether they result in convictions—create criminal records!
- End the requirement for SU officers to accept forced interruptions. This disproportionately affects applicants from marginalised backgrounds who are more likely to have already needed to take time out of education.
- Introduce a working class student network.
- Separate the union from management. Prevent management from sitting in on and influencing SU discussions and members meetings.
- Challenge regulation by the Charity Commission, which prohibits the union to campaign on certain political issues. When KCLSU passed policy to become part of a campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel, the union's trustee board overturned the motion. When KCL hosted David Petraeus, a war criminal, SU officers were told not to support the anti-Petraeus protest organised by students and staff. These are just a few examples of how managers and trustee boards use legal means to censor student activity on campus.
- Demand an SU GTA audit. Graduate teaching assistants have been failed by their students' union that has thus far neglected to represent their interests. The union has remained silent about the precarious working conditions of their members and has failed to support any of their campaigns.
- Hold the SU accountable, especially amid low voter turnout, through an elected student committees that oversees the democratic process and counter any attempt by management to interfere in the political direction of the union.

Democratise King's College London Council and Academic Board

- Reject the existing self-appointed council and replace it with one that is majority elected by staff and students.
- Remove Lord Geidt from the KCL Board of Directors. When he is not sitting on the board, Lord Geidt is a paid advisor to arms dealers BAE Systems and has links to war crimes committed in Yemen, Syria and Palestine.

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PUT UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS

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*“Never give nor take an excuse [especially from KCL management]”
- Florence Nightingale*

The inequalities at King’s mirror those in wider UK society. Instead of fighting against them, our university is upholding a racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and ableist status quo. We need to put underrepresented students in the driver’s seat for truly transformative change! The time for talking is done!

Make King’s Accessible

- Ensure our buildings are accessible to disabled students and staff.
- Force management to provide more funding for the disability service and the counselling service, both of which are so stretched they barely function.
- Make hyflex provision available to students who need it.

End the Attainment Gaps

- End the 10% attainment gap for Black students NOW. We will achieve this by attacking the structures that allow such gap to perpetuate and by supporting concrete action, from decolonising the curriculum to improving support services.
- Widening participation schemes should include LGBT students. Currently, they are not considered as a disadvantaged group and therefore there is a lack of data concerning attainment, absence and employment among these students.
- Demand a disability audit. No data currently exist on absence and employment among KCL students with disabilities.
- Close the disability attainment gap!

Represent Marginalised Students

- Weekly drop-ins with students from marginalised communities to hear their concerns and issues affecting each community.
- Campaign for KCL financial package around the cost-of-living crisis.
- Demand that KCL resists involvement in border enforcement. Currently, there is a requirement to report international student attendance to the Home Office.
- More Black staff and students! Offer Black students fee reductions and grants in recognition of systemic disadvantage and work with UCU and Unison to demand that ethnicity and race pay gaps (as well as disability and gender pay gaps) are closed immediately.

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VOTE LYDIA

For Liberation

TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO
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King’s is a colonial institution founded on colonial principles. KCL founders were slave owners and recipients of slavery compensation. It is time to dismantle colonial remnants brick by blood-soaked brick.

Tackle Racism on Campus

- Implement a strict ‘no cops on campus’ policy and resist securitisation and surveillance. The presence of police creates an unsafe campus environment, which puts students at risk of police brutality, sexual harassment and racism. Securitisation has become an effective way of intimidating and silencing dissent. I want the funds used for these practices to be reallocated to services and resources that actually support the well-being of students.
- Develop a swift and effective policy for tackling all forms of racism, including racist micro-aggressions which are currently poorly addressed.
- No more admissions criminal record checks. I demand a declaration from KCL that it will not engage with UCAS data around criminal history.

Decolonise Higher Education

- All university funding to the arms industry must be cut and the racist collaboration with immigration control and the military must end. Working with Serco, for example, means KCL is complicit in human rights abuses against migrants and refugees.
- Provide support for migrant students including accommodation support, healthcare support, legal support and academic support.
- Force management to recognise the university’s historical links to slavery and colonialism and its responsibility in the struggle for reparative justice. Reparatory measures should include raising funds for educational grants and scholarships; removing statues linked to enslavement, colonialism and racism; erecting new statues, monuments and sculptures; and inaugurating dedicated research centres.
- Push for the introduction of a Black Studies or Postcolonial Studies programme. What we learn should equip us to not only examine the world, but change it!
- Work together with King’s Decolonising Working group and Decolonise KCL to decolonise the curriculum and to tackle structural issues that affect students of colour at King’s.

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"When there is oppression, the only self-respecting thing is to rise and say this shall cease today, because my right is justice."

- Sarojini Naidu, Poet & Political Activist, Kings Alumni

The extortionate cost of a university degree means that those students who are financially disadvantaged before going to university are more likely to end up owing the most in student debt. The same students are also more likely to work part-time and full-time jobs during term-time and rely on food banks for their next meal. Education is a human right, which should be accessible to all members of society.

Free Education

Free and accessible education for all. I demand that tuition fees are replaced by state funding. This can't be achieved unless we organise and fight for it ourselves. So, I will call on student groups to come together and build a student movement at King's.

Compensation Now!

Campaign for the reimbursement of fees due to strikes. Management had had every opportunity to deliver a fair deal on pensions and working conditions in order to avert the current strike. They have failed to do so, which has led to the disruption of students' education.

Student Staff Solidarity

Support students who are also staff members (e.g. GTAs, RAs and hospitality staff) in their fight for secure employment.

Unite with all staff in the fightback against the marketisation of higher education. Successful campaigns at KCL have shown that we can win serious demands when students and workers take action together.

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