

LSESU Should Lobby the School to revise the Ethics Code

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Seconded: Ellen Lees

This Union notes:

1. The Ethics Policy Committee was established in June 2012 with a remit to oversee both the Ethics Code and the School's wider ethical framework following the Gaddafi controversy. This includes an Ethics (Grants and Donations) Panel which assesses whether the sources of funding coming in to the School via prospective grants or donations referred to it are ethically acceptable.
2. The Ethics Policy Committee oversaw the streamlining of the Ethics Code in 2013.
3. The Ethics Policy Committee has moved the following paragraphs from the Ethics Code into a guidance document yet to be released: S2.2 on anti-bribery, S2.6 Human Rights and S2.3 on restricting parental and student donations. The guidance document will not legally bind the school to act in accordance to it.
4. The definition of sustainability has been changed under the streamlining policy, and no longer mentions the responsibility for future generations.
5. Members of the Ethics Policy Committee are required to sign a contract of confidentiality with regards to investment decisions and information relating to individuals or organisations who donate to the school.
6. The Sub-investment Committee, which is part of the Finance Committee, refers to the 'The Socially Responsible Investment Policy' (SRIP) when making investment decisions. The SRIP requires the school's investments to comply with the 2012 Ethics Code.¹
7. According to the SRIP, 'The School is concerned to conduct investment management in a socially responsible and ethical manner that takes into account relevant environmental, social and governance issues.'²
8. Council members, Committee Members and School Officers are required to comply with the school's new 2014 Ethics Code.³

This Union believes:

1. That the new Ethics Code is legally insufficient due to its simplification for LSE's ethical and sustainable standards and values.
2. That the SRIP is inconsistent as it refers to the old Ethics Code (2012), which no longer exists.
3. That confidentiality contracts which bind members of the Ethics Policy Committee is not a transparent process and dangerous to the reputation of the school.
4. Students were insufficiently consulted on the changes made to the Ethics Code.
5. That the SRIP is not legally binding and therefore permits the LSE's Finance Committee to invest in unethical and unsustainable funds.

¹ E-mail from Chief Financial Officer, Andrew Farrell dated 05/01/2015

² LSE's Socially Responsible Investment Policy 2013

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/socResInvPol.pdf>

³ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/ethCod.pdf>

6. That the new guidance document (yet to be released) should be legally binding and therefore would ensure LSE's Ethical Policy Committee only allows ethical and sustainable investments.
7. That the delay in the release of the guidance document which holds core ethical and sustainable principles is unacceptable as the 2014 Ethics Code was released in April 2014.
8. LSE is a leading research institution in the UK and should therefore promote ethical and sustainable values throughout the school, including its investments.

This Union resolves:

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1. That we mandate the sabbatical officers to lobby for the paragraphs from the previous Ethics Code: 2.6 on human rights, 2.2 on anti-bribery, 2.3 on restricting parental and student donation, as well as the previous definition of sustainability, to be immediately returned and incorporated in the decision making process within a legally binding LSE Ethics Code.
2. To mandate the sabbatical officers to increase the transparency of all committees of the school and to pursue an end to the use of confidentiality contracts on all members.
3. To lobby the School to increase student involvement in ethical investment decisions by permitting the Ethics and Environment Officer to sit as a member of the Ethics Policy Committee and on the Investment Sub-Committee.
4. Mandates the ethics and environment officer, if they gain a place on the committee, to hold an Ethics Assembly inviting all major societies and campaign groups involved in ethics updating us with a report as to proposed changes.
5. To mandate the LSESU General Secretary to release the guidance document associated with the 2014 Ethics Code immediately.
6. To create a more coherent and coordinated approach to ethical investments by centralising the guidance document and the Ethics Code into a single legally binding document.
7. For the Ethics Policy Committee to immediately begin a student consultation with regards to its new 2014 Ethics Code and any relevant documents (recommendation for ethical investments/ the guidance document), especially with the LSESU Divest Society and LSESU Palestine Society.
8. In light of the changes that have been made with regards to the removal of paragraph 2.6 human rights we mandate the sabbatical officers to ensure that LSE prevents and does not engage in investments in any illegally occupied territories.
9. Mandates the General Secretary to lobby the School to bring the Ethics Code back to the Academic Board immediately
10. That LSE Students' Union provides support towards a high profile campaign and provides support on how to influence the school.

Passed, 13.2.2015

Undecided: 15

Yes: 338

No: 30