

## **Statement by the National Union of Students (NUS) on the Rights of Graduate Teachers in the United States to Trade Union Recognition**

18 April 2005

On 13 July 2004 the US National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) withdrew the protections of US labour law for graduate teaching and research assistants to organize unions at private U.S. universities. This over-ruled a unanimous decision made by the Board over four years previously.

The judgment was clearly partisan. The decision was made after a split vote. There are five members on the NLRB, the three appointees of President Bush's party voted as a bloc, and struck a major blow to the freedom of association enshrined in the constitution.

The NUS is disappointed by the US administration's decision to disregard the internationally recognized human right to Trade Union representation. We believe this decision will prove counter-productive as our experience in the UK demonstrates that trade union recognition leads to higher standards - both for the staff delivering the service, and for those receiving it.

As the National Union of Students in the UK, we see it as our role to protect the highest educational standards, and to protect the internationally recognized human right to join a Trade Union. It is saddening and disturbing to see the Bush administration encroaching upon these fundamentally important values.

We applaud the actions of our colleagues in GESO and GSEU, the graduate teachers' unions at Yale and Columbia universities. We extend to them our support in their continued campaign to seek trade union recognition for their members.