

Escalate to win on pay, defend the public university

Five years into austerity, when UCU members' real wages have fallen by some 13% and our pensions contributions have increased dramatically, the Financial Times (6 January 2014) reports George Osborne as insisting that "we've got to make more cuts".

It is not a cliché that governments try to shift the burden of economic crises onto ordinary workers.

Nor are we 'all in it together' in Higher Education. HE workers' five lean years have helped many universities to fill their coffers to overflowing.

Meanwhile, the VCs who have imposed wage restraint on us have lavished unrestrained largesse on themselves.

Actions speak louder

UCU Congress 2013 recognised that a union that was not prepared to engage in action over pay risked not being taken seriously by the employers for many years.

Congress was right to vote for a campaign of escalating action over pay. The decision to de-escalate the action in January 2014 was not only an insult to our union democracy but risked turning our solid if unspectacular industrial action into a serious defeat.

Needless to say, those who raise this danger with members will be doing everything possible to avert it.



Grave threats

Our public universities face grave threats to their integrity and social usefulness.

Students are saddled with debts on a scale that was inconceivable just a few years ago – while universities come under ever greater pressure to promote a narrow instrumentalism, to emphasise courses' vocational rather than intellectual qualities, and to fill the gap left by governments' retreat from the goal of full employment by helping students enhance their employability skills (did any university course ever not enhance employability?).

To achieve all this, over-worked academics (many on insecure casual contracts) juggle their commitment to their students with exponentially expanding administrative burdens.

It is five to midnight, but it is not

inevitable that the dangers our public institutions face will destroy them.

We can fight and win

Across Britain, UCU branches – including at Liverpool and Kings College London – have shown how management plans can be successfully challenged.

The same was true at my own university – London South Bank – where over recent years management proposals to introduce performance related pay were defeated, and a protracted struggle ended when LSBU returned to national pay bargaining.

UCU Left members played key roles in these local victories. Nationally, we need a member-led union committed to the defence of its members' interests.

These victories demonstrate that an active and campaigning union is able to harness members' energy and principled determination to meet the serious challenges education at every level faces today.

I am proud to be a supporter of UCU Left and promise that, if elected, I will do all that I can to help build such a union.

Vote Adrian Budd 1, Ioanna Ioannou 2, Sean Wallis 3

Please also vote Loraine Monk for Vice President

Lorraine's election blog is at:
<http://lorainemonk4vp.wordpress.com>

Please vote for these NEC candidates who are supported by UCU Left

We urge you to vote for the candidates in the order they appear below.

Vice President FE
Lorraine Monk

North East FE
**Umit Yildiz,
Lee Short**

North East HE
**Paul Blackledge,
Mike Lammiman,
Jeff Fowler**

London and the East HE
**Adrian Budd,
Ioanna Ioannou,
Sean Wallis**

Women members HE
**Sue Abbott,
Saira Weiner,
Nadia Edmond**

Women members FE
**Rhiannon Lockley,
Margot Hill**

UK-elected HE:
**Lesley McGorrigan,
Jelena Timotijevic,
Carlo Morelli,
Karen Evans,
Andreas Bieler, Eleni Michalopoulou,
Paul Blackledge**

UK-elected FE:
**Darren Tolliday,
Alan Barker,
Paul Pritchard,
Allister Mactaggart,
Margot Hill**

STV voting system

To maximise votes for progressive candidates we ask you to do the following:

- Please use your votes to **first endorse all UCU Left candidates** and only after that use lower preferences for other progressive candidates in each relevant list

- Give your highest preferences in the UK-Elected list to UCU Left candidate(s) **from your region**

Find out more at www.uculeft.org