

# End the defeatism of our union's leadership

**I AM THE PAST PRESIDENT AND currently Assistant Secretary of Dundee University UCU. I am employed as a senior lecturer in economics in the School of Business.**

Over the past three years we have seen our union retreat from defending our pensions, attempt to bring in compulsory redundancies for staff and most recently it has failed to follow our agreed strategy on the pay campaign and instead is developing an approach which weakens us in the face of our employers' refusal to make a sensible pay offer.

I have opposed each of these developments and strongly believe we need to reinstate the agreed strategy of escalation.

Our union's leadership is dominated by a politics of defeatism which thinks we can only fight locally and cannot challenge employers collectively.

As a result our employers become emboldened and our members face worsening prospects for pay, pensions and workloads.

This politics stems from a view that we have to appeal for a progressive (Labour) government to protect members at work rather than use our own strength to bring about change.

It is not enough for us to fight over a series of single issues. We need to develop a coherent strategy and mobilise our union's resources in fully defending our members.

My starting point is to recognise that this government is weak and vicious. The changes it seeks to bring about in

Higher Education, including privatisation, are a product of the crisis facing wider society.

We need a union that recognises and responds to the ideological onslaught that education faces from governments intent on opening up the public sector to the market.

UCU needs to become a stronger trade union in both the traditional sense of building grass root branches with representatives and democratic committees fighting for pay and conditions and as a trade union which recognises its role as part of a wider struggle for social justice and equality.

## Inequality and discrimination

The idea that we simply fight for our own pay and ignore the inequality and discrimination of others in Higher Education is not a basis for strong trade unions.

The imposition of the monitoring of foreign students and staff is just one example of the most disgusting ways in which institutional racism and discrimination is driven into education. We must resist becoming an arm of the Border Agency, for example.



We need a union which supports *all* workers in their fight against inequality whether they are in UCU or not, students or staff. As the saying goes 'Unity is Strength'.

## Union democracy

UCU's NEC has recently amended rules and standing orders for branches and regions. These have not been subject to discussion by the UCU Congress or the branches themselves. Their effect is to undermine our democracy by weakening the role and autonomy of branches and regions. I believe they should be resisted.

## War and academic freedom

It is not acceptable that the cuts in education and the introduction of fees for students arise because money available to fund education is squandered on the government's wars or the replacement of nuclear missiles.

*I ask for your support in this election. I have many years experience as an activist in the union serving on my union executive and the Scottish Executive UCU and I am a member of UCU Left.*

**Please vote Lesley McGorrigan 1, Jelena Timotijevic 2, Karen Evans 3, Andreas Bieler 4, Carlo Morelli 5, Eleni Michalopoulou 6, Paul Blackledge 7**

**Please also vote Loraine Monk for Vice President**

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

national

## 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  
**Loraine Monk**

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

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, Karen Evans, Andreas Bieler, Carlo Morelli, 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](http://www.uculeft.org)**