

UCU NEC elections: Vote Mandy Brown

for UK-Elected Members (Further Education)

Defend jobs & education

I am asking for your support for a place on our union's National Executive Committee. I believe it is important that our NEC reflects the views and experience of local union activists and representatives who are on the front line of the defence of further education. Government cuts are having a devastating impact on poor and vulnerable community groups.

As an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) lecturer at Lambeth College, where I've been teaching ESOL to adults and young people for the last 9 years, I see this first hand.

Action for ESOL

As a leading campaigner for Action for ESOL I work alongside students, practitioners, trade unionists and community organisations to raise awareness of ESOL and multiculturalism, both locally and nationally, through speaking at meetings and at UCU Congress, speaking to MPs, letter-writing campaigns and organising protests.

Last August this resulted in a major government U-turn on plans to cut funding for those on benefits. The alternative would have meant up to 70% of learners, mostly women from Black and minority ethnic groups, being unable to afford to learn English to improve their lives.

As a result of the U-turn, thousands of ESOL students were able to continue their studies and gain the language skills they desperately need.

I would like the opportunity, with your support, to help ensure at a national level that UCU remains central to the fight to defend ESOL and access to further and Adult education in general.

I joined NATFHE (one of UCU's two predecessor unions) as soon as I started teaching and have been on Lambeth UCU committee since 2008. As joint Branch Secretary at Lambeth



since 2010, I have helped to build a strong, democratic branch which has successfully resisted compulsory redundancies and worsening conditions, struck solidly to defend pensions, and overwhelmingly supported the IfL boycott.

Pensions

This autumn will hopefully see public sector unions renewing action over pay and pensions.

I believe we must continue our action to defend the Teachers Pension Scheme and ensure that we do not end up paying more, for longer, to get lower pensions, which is this government's aim.

I am currently working hard locally to build maximum support for the TUC's march against austerity in October and also as secretary for London Region FE, to ensure that the combination of industrial action and the TUC demo is as effective as possible in pushing back the government's attacks on our living standards.

Over-worked college staff are under huge pressure as we are pushed to work even harder, for less. Funding cuts mean closed courses and lost jobs, while the government attacks pensions and pay and our real incomes are dropping.

Teaching staff are being further undermined by increasingly punitive lesson observation policies and Ofsted

inspections which do not support students or staff but are being used by the current coalition government to downgrade colleges and pave the way for further privatisation.

If you elect me to the NEC I will campaign for an alternative to the robotic and unsupportive regime of Ofsted and lesson observations.

Democracy in the union

I supported the election of a Democracy Commission from this year's annual congress to look at our NEC and other democratic structures in the union.

I believe that the principle agreed by the majority of delegates of 'discussion first, change after' was the right approach.

I also strongly believe that lay members' voices, particularly those representing various Equality characteristics and other special interest groups in the union, must remain central to our constitutional and democratic processes.

As a UCU Left supporter I believe a democratic, accountable and member-led union is essential in order to effectively defend our pensions, pay and conditions and to defend Further and Adult Education.

If you elect me I will campaign for:

- Adult and Further Education to remain free and accessible, especially for those who need a second chance.
- Reduced workloads and fair conditions for all staff, including hourly paid.
- An alternative to the punitive Ofsted regime.
- An end to marketisation, student fees and loans.

Find out more at
www.uculeft.org