

Defend equality – for a campaigning union

I am Branch Secretary for UCU Croydon College Branch. I have worked as a lecturer in Art, Design and Creative Media at Croydon College since 2007. I am standing for election to the NEC for the first time.

My experience at Croydon College has been one that is shared by many of you: relentless pressure to drive down terms and conditions of employment, attacks on our professionalism, staff working over hours to cope with spiralling workloads, bullying and collective threats through setting of meaningless impossible deadlines.

The impact on women

These attacks impact on women in specific ways, for example: insufficient safeguards for part time working force us to restructure care responsibilities around timetables set by managers who pay no attention to so-called family friendly policies.

Shorter pension life can mean poverty in old age, cuts in time off provision and family friendly policies force us to work shorter hours for less.

Women members are taking a lead in many local branches, giving voice to these concerns.

It is vital to the life of local organisations that branches are built on discussion and debate, and shared experience.

Thatcher's anti-trade union laws



sought to move us away from collective practice to individualised atomised voting.

Resisting atomisation

We should not be seeking to extend that atomisation through overreliance on Internet polls and voting in place of real discussion and debate.

I am against the union reducing the powers and relevance of the Regional Committees as it is at this level that lay activists can meet, develop strategies and build support for initiatives and solidarity actions in defence of member's interest.

Weakening regional structures will

bureaucratize the organisation and make it less responsive to members' needs and the challenges we face.

Inequality and the Con-Dems

The Con-Dem government has done nothing to stop gender inequality.

In Con-Dem Britain women experience a full-time pay gap of 14.9%, 40% of ethnic minority women live in poverty and women's average personal pensions are only 62% of the average for men.

Cuts in Working Tax Credits and Welfare benefits are making a bad situation worse.

Women organised in trade unions are well placed to use collective strength to combat these attacks. Key priorities for UCU must be to not just campaign against attacks on the welfare state but where possible to initiate action.

When we fight for wages we fight against cuts. When we fight for jobs we fight against cuts.

Women in unions like ours are uniquely placed to resist. We need to use that power, and our leadership needs to encourage us to do so.

Vote Margot Hill 1, Rhiannon Lockley 2

Please also vote Loraine Monk for Vice President

Loraine's election blog is at:

<http://lorainemonk4vp.wordpress.com>

Please vote for the following candidates in the national officer and NEC elections

Vice President FE
Loraine Monk
North East HE
Paul Blackledge, Mike Lammiman, Jeff Fowler

North East FE
Lee Short, Umit Yildiz
London & the East HE
Adrian Budd, Ionna Ioannou, Sean Wallis

Women members HE
Sue Abbott, Nadia Edmond, Saira Weiner
Women members FE
Rhiannon Lockley, Margot Hill

UK-elected members HE
Andreas Bieler, Paul Blackledge, Karen Evans, Lesley McGorrigan, Eleni Michalopoulou, Carlo Morelli, Jelena Timotijevich

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

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; and

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

Find out more at www.uculeft.org