

UCU NEC elections: Vote Paul Blackledge for North East member (Higher Education)

Elections
run from
February
3rd-28th

Defend education, defend pay – Stop cuts and marketisation

UCU is at a crossroads. The NEC's recent decision to drop the previously agreed programme of escalating action in the pay campaign risks squandering all that our union has achieved since its formation in 2006.

In a context where the government and UCEA are playing hardball, for us to push back the marking boycott from January to April whilst moving to a series of two-hour strikes is potentially disastrous.

If the vast majority of UCU members can agree that the government's education policy is reactionary and frankly idiotic, the real test of leadership is not what our union leaders say about this but what they do. In this respect the majority on the existing NEC are failing.

Escalating

Both in Congress and through a national ballot, UCU members have voted to fight the cuts through a focus on pay.

Beyond this, last year we agreed on a strong strategy of escalating action in the pay campaign. And then in December, after two solid national strikes, the majority on the NEC made the inexplicable decision to de-escalate the action.

Fortunately the widespread anger that greeted this decision forced UCU leaders to support UNISON's call for a one day strike in February.

Nonetheless, it remains the case that the decisions neither to escalate strike action nor to implement a marking boycott have weakened the campaign. Quite simply those responsible for these decisions should be removed from the NEC.

By contrast, we need an NEC that not only recognises the unprecedented scale of

the threat posed by this government to the education system but also the potential we have to defeat them.

Indeed, the pay campaign is important for reasons beyond its nominal demands. As UCU Branch Secretary at Leeds Metropolitan University I see new cases on an almost daily basis.

These demonstrate the increased levels of stress experienced by our members as a result of marketisation and its corollary increased managerialism. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts we only deal with the tip of the iceberg of isolated and unconfident members.

This experience convinces me that while casework must remain the essential bedrock of our activities, because it often amounts to sticking plasters over gaping wounds it cannot be the be-all and end-all of what we do. It is essential that we also take up the fight against cuts and marketization collectively.

Confidence

Our experience at Leeds Met is that when we have taken strike action this has helped give our members a renewed sense of self-confidence whilst simultaneously increasing recruitment.

When colleagues see us acting rather than merely talking they join UCU and get involved. Indeed, the strikes of 2011-12 helped renew our branch committee at Leeds Met, and we again saw a significant



increase in membership around the strikes in October and December 2013.

The failings of the majority on the existing NEC show that to carry through on the action we've voted for it is important not merely to stand against the Tory-Liberal cuts, it is also crucial that our leadership is independent from the Labour Party.

As a supporter of UCU Left I believe we can win if we stand up to the cuts, but only if we have a democratic, accountable leadership rooted in strong branches – in other words we need NEC members that are prepared to be as resolute in defending education as the current government is at attacking it.

**In the North East region election (HE)
Vote Paul Blackledge 1,
Mike Lammiman 2, Jeff Fowler 3**

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

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

North East region

I joined NATFHE in 1999. Prior to this I was active variously in COHSE and CPSA (now parts of UNISON and PCS respectively) and in numerous campaigns.

I became a NATFHE rep in 2003 and joined the Leeds Met Branch Committee in 2004. Since then I have served as branch vice-chair, chair, press officer, site convenor and since the autumn of 2010 branch secretary.

I have been a delegate to UCU Congress each year since 2006, a delegate to Yorkshire and Humberside UCU regional council, and a UCU delegate to Regional TUC. As the Leeds Met UCU delegate to Leeds Trades Council

I helped co-ordinate joint action with other trade unions and the students' union during the strikes of 2011. More recently I helped co-ordinate the rallies and marches in Leeds as part of last year's strikes. I was elected onto UCU NEC last year.

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
**Umit Yildiz,
Lee Short**

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

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

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

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

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