

# OUTRAGE AS FAT CAT PRINCIPALS WIN INJUNCTION TO BLOCK LECTURERS' FIGHT FOR A DECENT LIVING WAGE



The Association of Colleges (AoC), through the Principal of Westminster Kingsway College, London, has won an injunction preventing FE branches from taking action on Tuesday. This is a disgrace. We had a clear mandate from our ballot last year, (which delivered an 80 percent majority for action) and the e-consultation in September, which voted by a large majority to reject 1 percent.

The Tories are always keen to use the anti-trade union laws to tie up unions in the courts, but the behaviour of the college principals in the AoC is hypocritical and mendacious. They have paid themselves salaries five times a main grade lecturer and annual rises of up to 13 percent while we are offered a 1 percent pay cut against a background of a 16 percent decline in our pay in five years - around £5,500 for most lecturers. Then they see no problem in scurrying to the courts to stop us fighting to defend our living standards.

They lecture us about mandates and democracy yet who ever elected them? Who elects college governors? What hypocrisy! Where is the democratic governance in today's colleges where the voices of staff and learners can genuinely be heard?

The AoC have utterly failed to stand up in defence of the FE sector as the Con-Dem government has savaged it during the recession. This is at a time when there are a million 16-24 year olds without work, education or training and 15% of 16-65 year olds without any qualifications at all. These principals tell us not to 'externalise' the problems that we face in the colleges by blaming government policy and the cuts. Instead, they demand that we work harder and longer, accept pay cuts, and put up with further erosions of our work/life balance.

What more evidence is needed that they are hugely out of touch with their staff, the students in FE, and the communities we come from?

Their world of mega-salaries, vanity projects and empire-building is very different to the world we and our students face.

It is quite clear that the AoC and the Principal at Westminster Kingsway College are doing the bidding of the government. Rather than join their staff to campaign for decent pay and more funding for the sector they chose to side with a discredited and shambolic government with no mandate for cuts.

In light of the anti-trade union court ruling the union's Further Education Committee meeting on 17th October must immediately call a re-ballot of FE members and recommend a vote for action. Make sure you vote Yes.

**We need to put our campaign for fair pay and FE funding back on track and we also need to be part of building the rank and file networks which can make our fat cat principals (and vice-chancellors in HE) think twice about running to the courts as well as prevent any backsliding or timidity by union leaderships in the face of these attacks. We should join with the tens of thousands of others this Saturday on the TUC 'Britain needs a pay rise' demonstrations, and we should get to the UCU Left conference on 25th October, 'Education, The Market and Resistance'.**

Come to the UCU Left conference on *Education, the Market and Resistance* in London on 25<sup>th</sup> October. There will be speakers and workshops on a variety of key issues. Book online via the UCU Left website, [www.uculeft.org](http://www.uculeft.org) There will be a pooled fare.

Unite the Resistance conference on 15<sup>th</sup> November ([www.uniteresist.org](http://www.uniteresist.org)). UCU is affiliated to UtR and a number of branches and regions have sponsored this conference and are sending delegates.

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