

Time to turn the tide

A senior lecturer in the School of Humanities at the University of Brighton, I have been a UCU membership secretary, branch chair, and now chair of the UCU Committee. I was recently the delegate from the SE to the UCU's commission on industrial action.

Last year, I played a leading role in an industrial dispute which fought off the de facto derecognition of the UCU at the University of Brighton.

We succeeded in defending our negotiating rights, getting the promotions procedure reinstated, winning backpay for demoted hourly paid lecturers, and preventing compulsory redundancies.

A fighting, member-led union

After a series of aborted pay campaigns in higher education in recent years, we failed to fight at all over pay last year. National industrial disputes have repeatedly been called off before they have had chance to bite, despite the membership showing a willingness to fight. Decisions on industrial action taken by delegates to Congress have not been implemented.

Accepting that the latest trade union law makes national action impossible would be disastrous for the UCU.

Already marketisation is fracturing the sector, leading to an end to national pay bargaining and the demise of the 2006 Framework Agreement if we abandon a UK-wide industrial strategy.

Postal workers have shown that it is still possible to win a national industrial action ballot. UCU members can do the same.



Political climate

There are signs that the tide is turning. We have a Labour leadership which encourages public sector workers to strike against the pay cap and in defence of public services.

There is a realistic prospect of a future government committed to repealing the latest anti-union legislation and abolishing student fees. This would transform the situation for the UCU and the HE sector.

Strategy

Our policy must focus on action that can prevent further destruction of post-16 education, restore real incomes, tackle the gender pay gap, halt casualisation, preserve pension entitlements, and revive academic governance of institutions.

This means determined campaigns to win members' support for national action over pay, and supporting individual branches when they find themselves defending their agreements against aggressive managements.

A beneficial consequence of successful action would be hastening the end of this anti-educational government.

We also need a union that will defend overseas colleagues from the rise of xenophobia and the threat to their residency, and is committed to resisting the rise in racist attitudes and attacks.

Biography

I teach international politics and research in aesthetics and musicology.

I'm for the democratic accountability of the union's leadership. I'm committed to free HE provision, and to education as a public good rather than a private and personal investment. I support the UCU Left.

STV voting system

Please note that all members can vote in the elections for Equality, Casually Employed members' and Trustees seats

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**

UCU Left is supporting the following candidates in the NEC elections

Vice President FE
Nita Sanghera

London & East HE
Paul Anderson
Rachel Cohen
Ioanna Ioannou
Sean Wallis

London & East FE
Julia Roberts
Sean Vernell

North East HE
Jeff Fowler
Mike Lammiman
Steve Lui (Sun Chong Lui)

North East FE
Saleem Rashid

North West FE
Carol Cody

N. Ireland HE
Peter Collins

UK-elected HE
Mark Abel
Sunil Banga
Elio Di Muccio
Julie Hearn
Jo McNeill

UK elected HE (casual vacancy)
Marion Hersh

UK-elected FE
Margot Hill
Naina Kent
Richard McEwan

Women members HE
Sue Abbott
Pura Ariza
Marian Mayer

Women members FE
Martha Harris
Elaine White

Land-based education
Eleni Michalopoulou

For a lay leadership that will:

- Fight to defend post-16 education
- Defend members' pensions, pay and conditions
- Respect democratic mandates
- Seek to build a campaigning, member-led union

More election materials can be found at: uculeft.org

Find out more: uculeft.org