

Accountability, inclusion and power

Election
runs from
29 January
- 2 March

UCU NEC elections: Vote Deepa Govindarajan Driver for HE South

Our institutions are being managed in ways that undermine the fundamental values many of us cherish. The Covid-19 pandemic, comes in the wake of a pandemic of poverty caused by ideological approaches that entrench structural barriers. These barriers are not just in education but in how our students and staff live their day-to-day lives; all this has been made very visible by the pandemic.

Those who do not benefit from inherited wealth and social status continue to be held back, despite working hard and being intelligent, knowledgeable and capable.

Within both FE and HE, decades of unsustainable student recruitment, excessive pay for senior management and consultants, focus on new shiny buildings, overseas campuses and expensive extras have been paid for by staff and students.

Foolhardy ventures have resulted in rampant inequality, stagnant pay and job insecurity for many workers. Marketisation, casualisation and financialisation have led to the erosion of education. The physical and mental well-being of staff and students has become all-too-expendable.

Meanwhile managers have been adept at spinning a false narrative of caring for the community, for our students and for us, through

dubious well-being programmes, all the while increasing workloads to unsustainable levels.

As a disabled, black, woman who has experienced casualisation first-hand, I can empathise with, and relate to, structural barriers our members confront.

My experience on UCU's NEC, and as a branch activist who has supported members and taken a leading role in my branch, mean that I am aware of the realities of grassroots work.

As an NEC member, I have campaigned and organised to address these issues nationally, and have contributed particularly to work on saving our pensions (an area of great structural inequality), on making the union more accountable and to amplifying grassroots activists' efforts to hold employers to account.

I will be your voice at the NEC and in negotiations. My background and experiences allow me to engage credibly with the issues plaguing our institutions and I stand committed to amplifying UCU's efforts to create a more sustainable approach to post-16 education.

Staff and students must be treated fairly. I will stand by you as we garner the solidarity and strength we all need when we are challenging inequalities in the workplace, fighting for rights at an industrial tribunal/picket line, organising locally on key issues or engaging with the day-to-day negotiations that determine pay, pensions or workplace conditions.

Our union needs an NEC and



national negotiators who have a serious commitment to members' rights, and aren't just trying to fit in with the easy solutions or what's temporarily politically expedient.

I aspire to be trustworthy, open, knowledgeable, and member-focussed. As a former financial regulator, and having worked in financial services, I bring skills and insights that will be valuable for deliberations of the NEC.

If re-elected to NEC, I will continue to work with members to press for employers to advance improvements to workload, pay, casualisation, equalities, working conditions and pensions.

The way that many of our institutions are run, is actively harmful to education. I want us have a genuine say in the governance of our institutions.

We need to be proactive in directing how our institutional decisions are made, not just react defensively to whichever hare-brained or corrupt plan management comes up with next.

I want to see reduced bureaucracy, greater transparency and genuine accountability both within our institutions and in our union. I will continue to put in the work it takes to make these a reality.

With our zeal, our collective intelligence and experience, and the right values, we can reclaim our workplaces. We can make them institutions whose worth is judged not by rigged rankings, league tables or financial returns to the few, but by our contributions to education and how this in turn shapes our community.

For more information about the UCU Left platform & candidates [click here](#).