

David Swanson

Actively organising to improve HE for all

Election runs
from 26
January-
1 March

*UCU NEC elections:
Vote David Swanson for
North West HE*

Service

- 1996-2009 Branch committee member, City College Manchester NATFHE/UCU
- 2004-2009 Branch Secretary, CCM NATFHE/UCU
- 2008-10 UCU NEC (UK Elected FE)
- 2010-22 Branch Exec, University of Manchester UCU
- 2015-19 Membership and Organising Officer, UoM UCU
- 2019-22 President, UoM UCU

History

I worked for many years in Further Education, eventually becoming Branch Secretary of one of the biggest FE branches in the country. We were successful in winning permanent contracts for all hourly-paid staff, and in stopping the imposition of new contracts. A merger brought an anti-union Principal and a redundancy was invented to quickly get rid of me. We fought my victimisation hard, but unsuccessfully as the city power structures backed our management. I eventually won a tribunal, took refuge in Higher Education to do a PhD, immediately joining the Branch Exec at UoM, and am now a Senior Lecturer in Education, teaching PGCE Mathematics. My time in



FE, as well as my wider personal history, means access to education for the working class and all those marginalised and excluded is particularly important to me.

Approach

Since joining the Branch Exec at UoM, and then as membership and organising officer, I have worked hard to shift the branch from a more top-down, service model to our current active organising approach. The 2018 USS strike gave that a big push and, in my time as President we now organise with an emphasis on building departmental structures and cross-university networks such as GTA/FTC/Equalities.

The successes of this approach have included:

- Winning minimum hours contracts, paid training and sick pay for GTAs;
- Winning access to promotion for language tutors, and regrading all

- language tutors up a grade;
- Branch officers and active networks now being built for all equality strands;
- 60% increase in UCU facility time;
- Getting over 50% in last ballot in each faculty and among PS staff;
- Doubling the size of our exec to 38, with all taking active roles and responsibility.

Priorities and beliefs

- Ending the scourge of casualisation;
- Putting equalities at the heart of everything we do;
- Re-enforcing the bottom-up democratic decision making structures of our union

I am a member of UCU Left. I have always actively encouraged those with all perspectives to feel a part of, and feel ownership of, the branch, with decisions taken by consensus where they can. I am also a socialist. In practice for me that primarily means 1) trying to maximise the numbers engaged in decision making and action. I would rather lose an argument in a meeting of 200 than win one in a meeting of 20; 2) always trying to convince people that it's worth trying to change things (because it is).

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