UCU Left is supporting the following candidates in the NEC elections 25 January - 1 March 2024

General Secretary
Saira Weiner

Vice President
Peter Evans

Trustee
Mike Barton

UK-elected FE
Naina Kent
Dharminder Singh Chauhan
Saleem Rashid

UK-elected HE
Peta Bulmer
Saira Weiner
Alan Barker
Donna Brown

North East FE
Elaine White

North East HE
Matt Perry
Josh Moos

London and East FE
Richard McEwan
Regine Pilling

London and East HE
Sean Wallis
Roddy Slorach
Dr Richard Wild
Christina Paine

Wales HE
Philip Allsopp

Women
Regine Pilling
Safia Flissi
Julie Hearn
Lesley Kane
Saira Weiner

Testimonials for Saira Weiner

My vote for General Secretary will go to Saira Weiner. Saira is not only a fierce defender of a true member-lead union, but also a leader able to achieve synthesis, successfully manage challenging circumstances, balance different views and work effectively with lay reps and staff, as she has demonstrated as the Chair of ROCC, Chair/Vice Chair of North West Region and previously Chair of the Women's Standing Committee.

With extensive branch leadership experience, Saira knows first hand the challenges activists and members face. Working at a post-92 institution, she has experienced the results of the marketisation of education and barriers they create for academic and academic related post-16 education staff. She has been working closely with members across the HE, FE, ACE and Prison education, both through regional work as well as through NEC, to support strategies and tactics which will allow for pay and conditions to improve. Saira will conduct her role with fairness and inclusivity, and will be committed to accountability, democracy and militancy.

It is an honour to call Saira a friend, and to be able to vote for her in these elections.

Do use your vote, do support UCU Left candidates!

Dr Maria Chondrogianni
UCU Vice-President (University of Westminster, HE)

I support Saira Weiner for UCU General Secretary as she is someone who stands up for what she believes in and wants to improve education for all.

In FE, we need a GS who will think about a strategy that can win for all of our members rather than an atomised campaign with branches left fighting to improve conditions by themselves. This approach sows the idea that it's not possible to fight back nationally – it is, and Saira is clear that the national union can provide support and confidence for all members.

Carly Grundle
UCU Branch Treasurer, Westminster Kingsway College (FE)

I'm backing Saira Weiner for UCU GS. We need a GS who understands that the scale of the crisis facing HE means that unless our union mounts a strong united fight, we will not only continuously suffer pay erosion, but we'll see the fracturing of national bargaining and the destruction of our terms and conditions.

We need a GS who respects the decisions of the unions democratic bodies and implements them swiftly and fully, rather than imposing her own ideas instead. We need a GS who understands that a strong ballot result is just the first step and that winning a dispute requires empowering members to take the level of industrial action necessary to shift intransigent management.

Saira Weiner will do this. She believes that a union is its members and that a GS must be answerable to them

Mark Abel
UCU Branch Chair, University of Brighton

For more information about the UCU Left platform and candidates visit **uculeft.org**

VOTE UCU LEFT ★ For a campaigning, member-led union

Election runs from 25 January - 1 March

UCU ELECTIONS: TIME TO TRANSFORM UCU

Our candidate for General Secretary: **Saira Weiner**

Our candidate for Vice President: **Peter Evans**

Post-16 education is in crisis. Successive Conservative governments have slashed funding and ramped up a process of marketisation and privatisation across the sectors. That's why UCU members have been at the forefront of resistance and on the picket lines across Higher and Further Education.

Even with a likely Labour victory at the next general election, we believe that Keir Starmer's Labour Party won't reverse this trend and rebuild education without massive pressure.

This means we urgently need to develop a political and industrial strategy that can defend post-16 education and make real gains for all our members.

As an education union, we must deal with industrial matters but also we are the champions of education. We must deal with the wider political issues that face our members, students and wider society.

We have just seen tens of thousands of HE members go through a bruising dispute for the 'Four Fights' (pay, workload, equalities and casualisation) including extensive strike action and a Marking & Assessment Boycott.

But despite the bravery and commitment of our members in the face of intransigent employers and punitive pay deductions, the stop start strategy and outright opposition to democratically made decisions by our present General Secretary meant we failed to breakthrough.

The fantastic victory achieved on USS pensions was achieved off the back of extensive strike action, in the face of the GS's argument that it wasn't the right time to fight.

In FE despite historic votes for action the chance to build a serious fight over both pay and national bargaining was squandered yet again by the GS's supporters who remain convinced that national action is impossible and at best local deals can be achieved.

We've seen a wave of redundancies in the wake of the HE dispute. At Brighton University, UCU members engaged in the longest ever strike in UK HE history (129 days) in defence of jobs. This was a dispute of national significance but the branch received inadequate support from the national union machinery. This can't continue - UCU must implement a serious national strategy to win UK-wide disputes and must support every branch.

But at present UCU's national initiatives lack a clear strategy or clear leadership. This is why we believe it is important to stand candidates who offer a real alternative, not just more of the same.

UCU Left supporters are standing in the National Executive (NEC), Vice President - FE (VP) and GS elections to ensure there is a root and branch change to how UCU operates. Our candidates are dedicated members with proven track records in their branches. Many have played a leading role in building national resistance and have led local disputes in defence of jobs and conditions.

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VOTE UCU LEFT ★ For a campaigning, member-led union

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We need a union where rank and file members have a voice and lead their own disputes through democratically elected strike committees, Branch Delegate Meetings (BDM's) and the decisions of Congress.

We have been through a transformative experience over the last year - we need to transform UCU.

Saira says

I'm a member of a post 92 University and standing for General Secretary. The victory over USS Pensions shows that a serious industrial strategy can win for all sectors, including post 92 Universities, FE, Prisons and Adult Education. Our members have repeatedly called for UK wide action to defend and extend our terms & conditions, and to fight for the future of education. We need to be bold. We need to transform UCU so that grassroots member's control our union and disputes - our democracy must be strengthened. I will ensure this happens.

Peter says

I'm currently the NEC rep for LGBT+ members (FE) and Chair of the LGBT+ national standing committee. I'm a lecturer in Business at West London College where I am UCU Vice Chair. I'm in the Labour Party, and an activist within the Labour left. If elected I plan to bring UCU back to local membership with rank-and-file organising, building elected strike committees and implementing Congress decisions. We need more democracy in order to face the challenges we face.

For more information about the UCU Left platform and candidates visit **uculeft.org**

Vote #1 Saira Weiner for UCU General Secretary

Election runs from 25 January - 1 March

I am an experienced activist at branch, regional and national levels. UCU needs to be transformed by democracy and solidarity in action, so I will focus on delivering:

Democracy for a real member led union

We urgently need a democratic transformation in UCU, where members taking collective action are in control of their disputes. To ensure this, strike committees should be used to ensure members' views are heard, and actions are coordinated. Union democracy requires well-organised branches meeting regularly, debating questions and motions before voting on them. Collective debates are essential because we need collective solutions. Moreover, when decisions are made through our democratic structures, it is the role of union officials to carry them out.

A strategy to build solidarity

Our union's strength hinges on our ability to defend members. Therefore, we need a strategy based on militancy to build membership solidarity and action. While negotiations play a vital role, we must be prepared to take action when necessary. We won't win unless we fight, and we need to mobilise members fully with the backing of the whole union to win.

In HE, post-92s are under attack due to hikes in TPS employer contributions. We need to restart our national dispute and put pressure on the government to Pay Up For Post-92. In FE unmanageable workloads and the lack of national binding bargaining is breaking the sector and leaving branches to fight alone – we need a national strategy to win back national collective bargaining. In ACE we need a serious campaign that reverses the government's funding cuts and ensures a national lifelong learning strategy. And in Prisons we must ensure Health & Safety is taken seriously and ensure smaller class sizes. Across all our sectors we need to fight against casualisation that erodes members' conditions.

Liberation for all

I will campaign to ensure every member is able to play their part and flourish in our union and in our workplaces.

We face an incredibly right wing government that systematically scapegoats vulnerable groups for their own failures. Their racist policies towards migrants and refugees have targeted our students and staff. I will defend the rights of our colleagues and their family members to stay in the UK by opposing racist immigration controls and demanding practical financial support for visa fees.

We are witnessing a horrendous war in Palestine. Our members are facing harassment for speaking out against the atrocities – we have to stand up for free speech and oppose any witch hunting of our staff and students. We must stand firm against all forms of racism, including antisemitism, and show support and solidarity with the most downtrodden in society - racism within the wider working class is a recipe for ruin.

UCU must continue its work to oppose homophobia and transphobia. We must protect the concepts of freedom of speech from those who seek to distort it.

Our workforce is structurally segregated – women; members racialised as black and our disabled members are concentrated in precarious roles or in positions with little opportunity for advancement. We need to turbo charge the Gender, Race and Disability Pay Gaps 'Four Fights' campaign and we need an anti-casualisation campaign in FE and ACE that campaigns to 'level up' and liberate everyone treated as second-class citizens in our institutions.

Climate injustice and inaction threatens our lives, livelihoods and our working conditions. In UCU we joined the student climate strikes, XR protests and campaigns against new oil and gas. We need more of this and should support and build a climate movement that mobilises the huge demonstrations we need alongside the direct action to prevent new carbon intensive projects.

Solidarity as a central tenet of our union

No one changes the world by themselves, but when tens of thousands of us join together we can begin to make a difference. As UCU members, we show solidarity with students and other workers – we are not just fighting for ourselves but the future of education and research.

We gain confidence from each other. FE members were inspired by HE members, and lifted by the teachers' strikes. I will encourage a culture of solidarity throughout our union. When members face redundancies in one department or college, we need to rally around to ensure they win.

I will fight back against the anti-strike laws that are under the guise of so-called "Minimum Service Levels". We should back our members if they break these unjust laws. As GS I will work with other unions to campaign against these attacks on trade union rights and to deliver hard-hitting coordinated strikes to push back the Government's offensive.

Getting results for our members

We are an incredibly strong group of workers, and we need to inject some confidence into our union organising.

Our love of education and determination to help individuals, keeps our students in our courses. We need to channel the same passion in our industrial and equalities strategies to ensure we gain results.

We need to strengthen branches, officers, committees and reps, and develop regions to help coordinate between them, share ideas and take initiatives.

We need the National Executive of our union to play its part in acting as a tribune of branches, holding the General Secretary to account and ensuring policy is enacted.

If elected, I commit to take home the average UCU members wage - not the £110k+ that is offered.

UCU LEFT calls on members to vote for candidates who are committed to building the fights against the attacks faced in FE, HE, ACE and Prisons. UCU Left candidates stand for strengthening democracy in our union, and for using the power of trade unions to fight for a more equal, sustainable and peaceful world. Please encourage your colleagues to use their vote. Democracy depends on participation and low votes give comfort to the employers.

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