

Ballot papers for UCU NEC elections out on 7 February...

VOTE UCU LEFT: FOR A FIGHTING, DEMOCRATIC UNION

Time to turn the tide

Higher education continues to be a battleground. The very principles of education are being progressively undermined by the mantra of the market.

The constant drive to turn our institutions into the R&D wing of industry or 'competencies' factories, under-funding in the sector, the drive to push down unit costs and drive up our productivity, all increase the pressures we are under.

Workloads are at record levels and sickness rates, stress levels and staff turnover are sky high. UCU's recent survey showed bullying and harassment to be currently members' number one concern.

Marketization of Higher Education increasingly threatens academic freedom. If academics cannot speak out, how can we expect to defend whistle blowers like Karen Reissmann of UNISON who spoke out against the privatisation of the NHS?

How do we start to turn things round in HE? How do we build a campaigning, democratic union which can challenge what is happening and organise effectively to protect our members and defend education?

Pay

Inflation, now over 4%, is set to rise this year amid dire predictions of recession. Our members will increasingly feel the squeeze.

We are told that inflation is our fault and there is no money for better funding of education and services yet New Labour can still find £50 billion to underwrite Northern Rock and more billions to pour into the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

UCU Left supporters will be fighting to ensure that the third year of our pay deal delivers the goods in May and September. In the event of any shortfall we will insist that our leadership organises effective action in opposition.

Gordon Brown's government wants to impose yet more restrictions on public sector workers' pay (a continuing pay freeze, three-year deals, even restrictions on strike action for some sections like prison officers) so we must be prepared to fight hard on pay from the 2009 round

and look for united action with other public sector workers.

National bargaining

At the Special HE Sector Conference last Autumn UCU Left supporters successfully argued that in order to undercut sectionalism and promote unity on the trade union side we need an effective national bargaining agreement that prioritises single table bargaining and resists any restrictions on our right as trade unionists to take industrial action at times of our choosing.

These are positions which we will continue to argue for if our employers threaten to walk away from national bargaining. We will argue the same position inside UCU against any who may counterpose local bargaining on an elitist basis.

ESOL – a successful campaign!

UCU Left supporters on the NEC have consistently argued that to fight successfully on a range of issues we need broad, political and very active campaigns which can mobilise and inspire people.

The Defend ESOL campaign, initiated by UCU, secured £15 million extra funding last Autumn in London to protect some courses, and now has secured a major national re-think on

funding, announced quietly over the Xmas break, which could lead to the restoration of many courses.

This U-turn was won by high profile exposure of the hypocrisy of New Labour's policies and by building a lively campaign including a national demonstration of lecturers, students, community groups and agencies. It is a model of how the union should fight over other issues.

Privatisation and bullying

This Spring there will be a national cross-sectoral UCU conference on building resistance to privatisation, and another one on how we can take on the bullying culture that is rife in our universities, both initiated through Congress motions brought by UCU Left supporters.

Much of what UCU is currently doing to develop such campaigns would not be happening if members had not voted for our candidates in last year's NEC elections. Locally, important and mostly successful struggles at Dundee and London Met this year were led by UCU Left supporters. We need similar action against attacks at institutions like Keele and Bournemouth, and against ELQ funding cuts.

We need to build on these initiatives so that we can create a vibrant, campaigning, effective, democratic union for members to be proud of and we ask you to support our candidates again this year.

UK-Elected HE list

(we suggest you list your preferences in this order)

Angela Shann, Jeff Fowler, Christine Vie, Mark Campbell, Carlo Morelli

Region – North East

Liz Lawrence, Jeff Fowler

Women members in HE

Amanda Sackur

Disabled members rep

Paul Brown

North East HE

All these candidates are supported by UCU Left. Read their manifestos at

WWW.UCULEFT.ORG

STV VOTING SYSTEM

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; and
- Give your highest preferences in the UK-Elected list to UCU Left candidate(s) **from your Region.**