

Another education is possible

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ATL NUT UCU
UCU
LEFT

FAIR PENSIONS FOR ALL

The fight for our pensions

Why unity is the key to victory

In this issue

The Marketisation of Higher Education

(De)professionalising Further Education

Young people and the riots

UCU Elections



Professor Murdoe McMurdoson (University of Midwickdon)

I am writing to update you on some new initiatives we are taking in line with our 'Face Business' campaign.

With regards to the new Demand and Supply Seminar Model, students have enthusiastically paid the £5 weekly supplement to attend seminars scheduled either before or after the lecture. The sliding scale—which falls to 50p for those held at 9am and 7pm and any time on a Friday—has been keenly embraced by students from families on a lower income.

We feel this is a key step in widening participation and ensuring fair access for all, regardless of parental income and ability to pay. In order to ensure fairness we have complied with Equal Opportunities and are in the process of making an arrangement for loans for those unable to make cash payments with our partner, Ameribank. This will be part of an extremely appealing package of fee repayment with market based APR.

Unfortunately, another initiative has been less well embraced by teaching staff. The Marketing Team has worked hard to secure local business participation in our 'Sponsor a lecture' drive, but we have had few takers. However, we are very pleased that Dr Maingrader from the English department has pioneered this venture in her 'Social Justice and Democratic Socialism in the work of George Orwell Lecture: Brought to you by McTucky Chicken'.

The jingle in the middle of the lecture apparently went down well with students, who said that it enhanced their learning experience in their end of lecture, weekly, monthly and semester feedback forms. We hope to see this result reflected in the NSS. I will be discussing our revitalised and more exclusive approach to NSS and job tenure in my next blog post. Keep your eye out! We hope that going forward more staff will be prepared to embrace this entrepreneurial revenue raising initiative.

We are concerned by student feedback that many of the teaching staff are 'grumpy', 'looking jaded', 'glassy eyed' and in some cases 'walking around muttering to themselves'. The Senior Management Team are concerned that this is not conducive to the marketability of the university. As such, we are initiating a new mandatory course 'Service with a Smile: Moving Forward with Student Satisfaction'. Modules will include resilience workshops, the 'Just say yes! Participatory Session' and 'Making Bureaucracy Fun'. As this is compulsory for all staff, we will not be including these hours in workload models, out of fairness to all. The courses will be held each month between January and August, with the exception of Open Days. Car parking and childcare will be available at the normal rates.

The final thought of the day that I want to share with you is this: The 'Face Business' train is pulling out of the station at speed, and if you are not on that train, maybe you're on the wrong line!

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Another Education is Possible

We are facing an unprecedented assault on the public sector. Huge reductions in funding and the marketisation of education represent a threat to our jobs, working conditions and academic freedom. For future students it represents a dramatic reduction in choice and access to Further and Higher Education. This is the context in which we need to understand the challenges for the UCU.

Pensions: The Front Line

The attack on our pensions is at the cutting edge of the assault on the living standards of working people. Understanding the details of pensions can be bamboozling, but in short the imposed changes on USS members and the proposed changes in the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS) mean that we will have to work longer and pay more for reduced benefits. In the longer term the very existence of publically funded pension schemes are threatened. This leaves future generations depending on the vagaries of stock markets to provide for their old age. The big debate is how can we win this fight after the strike on the 30 November.

Neoliberalism: At Home and Abroad

The White Paper on Higher Education, 'Students at the heart of the system', was unveiled by Vince Cable and David Willetts in June 2011. These draconian proposals lay the basis for the privatisation of Higher Education. Salivating at the prospects of profits, private providers are waiting in the wings and have lobbied hard to press open the sector for competition.

The experience of these firms in America has been little less than disastrous. In the UK, these proposals, combined with some of the highest student fees in the world, will bring about the closure of courses – particularly in arts, humanities and the social sciences. The limited gains in opening up educational opportunity over the last ten years will be rolled back so that a degree becomes the preserve of the rich and privileged.

We are already faced with the pseudo-marketisation of the sector and under the guise of 'professionalism' subject to a barrage of measurement, metrics and targets. The forthcoming Research Excellence Framework has raised the threshold, and will exclude large numbers of lecturers from having their research recognised. It is weighted heavily on 'impact' in a thinly veiled attempt to make the production of knowledge serve the competitive interests of industry and harness research to government agendas.

The neoliberal onslaught on education is not confined to the UK. In this edition we report on two inspirational struggles. In Chile massive protests and occupations have been ongoing for five months involving teachers, students and lecturers. The demand is for free and equal education. In Egypt student protests over tuition fees, the cost of living and studying, freedom of speech and democracy on campus continued throughout October.

The Demonisation of Young People

Young people have been at the sharp end of the recession and government attacks. The withdrawal of the modest Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) means that many young people will be discouraged from staying on in education and unable to get the qualifications necessary to get to university. There is talk of introducing fees in Further Education, which would be a final step in pulling away the ladder of opportunity for many young working class people. The riots in the summer of 2011 demonised young people as being greedy and/or were attributed to 'gang culture'. Now that the hysteria has abated it has become clear that these young people, now facing draconian prison sentences, were underprivileged with poor education. An argument for increasing resources for FE not reducing them!

A Vision for the UCU

The UCU Left is a coalition of activists who come from a broad spectrum of political

traditions. We are members of our local committees, we are branch secretaries and officers, and some of us are members of the National Executive Committee.

In the workplace we believe in fighting for every job and against every attempt to roll back hard-fought gains in working conditions and practices. These 'bread and butter' issues are critical, but they are linked to a wider defence and vision of education. Vibrant, democratic and inclusive branches are necessary to defend our colleges and universities from the forthcoming onslaught. Elections at the top are important too. There are real choices before us. That is why UCU Left is standing candidates in the forthcoming General Secretary and NEC elections.

Our candidate for General Secretary is Mark Campbell – a lecturer at London Metropolitan University and an NEC member. Mark knows what it is to be on the front line. Our candidate for Vice President is Angie McConnell – a lecturer at Wigan and Leigh College and a tireless campaigner for equality. Voting does matter and can make a difference. Not only because we should exercise our democratic rights to vote in union elections, but also because decisions taken at national level impact on the work of our branches.

Another Education is Possible

The challenges that we face in our colleges and universities are immense. These are likely to intensify as the recovery of the global economy falters and a plunge into a second recession is highly likely.

The attacks that we face are part and parcel of a supposed solution whereby austerity has been foisted on working class people rather than those who caused the crisis in the first place. We are looking to build the strongest and most united fight to defend jobs and education. But we also believe that another education is possible – one which is free, open to all and determined by a thirst for knowledge and learning and not the dictates of the market.

JANE HARDY

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The pensions fight: unity as the seed of victory

The German Romantic and utopian poet, Hölderlin, once wrote: 'Where danger is, grows also that which saves'. The world, in other words, never poses a problem without also seeding its solution. This may have been desperate hope overwhelming philosophical realism but it is an intriguing idea.

For staff in post-16 education, that question resonates today. In its attack on public sector pensions has the Coalition Government bitten off more than it can chew?

Resistance and No Compromise

The public sector unions are finally to mount a collective defence of pensions. The TUC is being forced to front that resistance. Desperate to discover some negotiated compromise, the TUC is relentlessly pursuing the Prime Minister, or other Government ministers, or anyone who will talk to its representatives about a compromise.

By contrast, our need as teachers and researchers and academic-related staff (members and potential members of the funds) is to win this battle; it is not to compromise. We cannot afford a compromise on this question. We need to ensure that the discussion

about what is necessary to win takes place now. We need to reflect on the escalation of action after 30th November.

Pensions and Public Education

The Government's intent is not only to drive down the cost of education but also to undermine public service and public provision, to out-source as much of public provision as possible, and/or to dispose of parts of the education sector. Cheapening the employers' pension contributions is part of that strategy.

The Government, and our employers in colleges and universities, have a strategic vision, and do not hesitate to generalise out from specific struggles to the wider picture. Unless we want to fight for heroic defeats, we must understand what is at stake strategically, and be willing to fight with an equally generalised vision.

The TPS AND USS Schemes

There is no financial requirement for these changes. The Teachers Pension Scheme and the University Superannuation Scheme are not underfunded schemes. These proposed changes are not about financial viability but only about shifting the burden of pensions from employers to employees

In the USS scheme, in

the pre-92 universities, the employers want to calculate pensions by averaging out salaries over a whole career, rather than the current final year salary scheme. Staff joining the new scheme, and retiring at the top of the lecturers' scale, could lose £100,000 compared to current arrangements.

The employers have shifted the inflation link from the Retail Price Index (RPI) to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), wiping £2bn off the pension fund. In the case of USS, they have already capped the rate that pensions increase to match inflation at 5% - given that inflation is already above 5%, this move will significantly reduce the value of pensions.

They are trying to buy off existing staff by applying the new arrangements to new entrants in the first instance. At one point during negotiations, however, the employers revealed that once the new scheme is introduced, they would like to move everyone onto the inferior pension scheme.

Unaffordable

In the TPS, the switch from RPI to CPI in April 2011 was the trigger for the decision to ballot for industrial action. The consequence of this switch is a dramatic reduction in pensions. Extrapolating and averaging from past

differences between the two indexes gives the following over the average length of retirement:

- * for an FE lecturer with a £10k pa pension, a £36,000 loss over 25 years;
- * for an HE lecturer with an £18k pa pension, £65,000 loss over 25 years.

To compound matters, the Government announced in its Comprehensive Spending Review in October last year that there would be increased employee contributions to public sector pension of 50 percent - from 6 percent to 9 percent of salaries. The effect of this would be dramatic on take-home pay as a result of increased pensions contributions:

- * a top-of-the-scale FE lecturer will pay an additional £84 per month;
- * a top-of-the-scale HE lecturer will pay an additional £104 per month.

The changes also involve an increase in the age of retirement to 68 for younger members of the schemes.

Pay, Pensions and Contracts

For the notional HE lecturer, described above, the joint effect of these proposals constitutes the actuarial equivalent of a £3,848 reduction in annual salary, i.e. a reduction of £320 per month. This is on top of

the cut in real take-home pay from the sub-inflation settlements of the last few years (itself a cut in real pay of in excess of 10 percent).

This is not only a retrospective imposition of a unilateral decision to worsen our contractual terms. It will cause real hardship to many, and will raise the spectre of foreclosure by their mortgage companies. Along with that financial stress will come the real worry that lecturer and other workers in the HE and FE sectors will not be able to send their own children to university.

Government Strategy

Is this simply about the short-term expediency of reducing the deficit?

The answer is, not at all. References to the Government deficit are a smoke screen. Raising the state pension age gradually to 70 (the unstated intention) will reduce Government spending in the long run. That is, however, not what it is most centrally about.

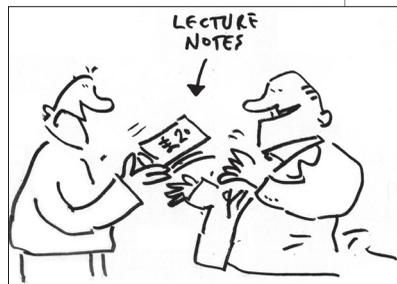
The aim is rather to break a system in which the pensions of the generation of retired people are paid for by the contributions of those currently working. The aim is to destroy a tradition of intergenerational solidarity and social responsibility.

It is to try to individualise responsibility for retirement. The aim is to drive millions out of 'defined benefit' (e.g. final salary) into 'defined contribution' schemes

where employees pay into a scheme, the banks then gamble with the funds on the stock market, and the pensioners then finally share between them whatever is left once the bankers and brokers have taken their cut for professional services.

Commercialisation and Profitability

The drive, in other words, is to 'commercialise' the provision of pensions. By this mechanism, the Government creates substantial profits for the financial sector; it undermines social



solidarity; and it reduces employers' contributions from 12-15 percent of salary to 3-6 percent.

In the terms of political economy, this would be a sharp shift of wealth and income from employees to the owners of capital.

From Resistance to Victory

In 1998, when the Spanish Government tried to cut pensions the move provoked a General Strike, and the Government backed down. When the Socialist Party Government in France attacked public sector pensions in 1995, and tried to remove trade union oversight of the schemes, it provoked a

wave of public sector strikes that paralysed the country, and led to the abandonment of the Government's 'reforms'.

When Berlusconi's Government in Italy tried to sever the link between pensions and average earnings, it was defeated by a strike wave and the biggest demonstrations for generations. In the face of this resistance, and learning the lesson of it, the German Government abandoned its plans for pension reform. The lesson was clear.

The central question, therefore, is not 'how do we get the biggest turn-out

on 30 November?' The question that must be asked, and asked now, is, 'What happens after 30 November?'

Given the Government's long-term project, it will not be deterred from its strategy by a single one-day strike. It will watch the turnout carefully, and it will attempt to judge the mood. Its hope will be that the public sector unions will see the 30th as the culmination of the struggle not its start. It will sit out the 30th, and wait to see what happens thereafter.

Escalation after 30 November

For our side, the question is equally stark. What are we prepared to do to defend out pensions? For how long would we have to strike to make the cost of lost pay outweigh the benefits of defeating the Government's proposals?

At an estimated cost to us of over £3,500 for every working year, how many strike days does that represent?

Will we return to work feeling that our protest has been registered, and allow normality to reimpose itself? Or will we immediately begin to organise the escalation of strike action that will be necessary to secure victory? Will we start to raise the slogan, 'All Out and Stay Out!' in every school and college and university, and build towards a two-day public sector strike in the spring?

Education and Pensions

Most crucially, in education, will we link this struggle to the fight to defend education and to fight against student debt? Or will we present ourselves as if we are only concerned with our sectional interests as employees?

We need a united fight with the other public sector unions over pensions. As educationalists, however, we also need a united fight with our students, with the NUS, with future students, and with the community to defend access to publicly funded post-16 education.

Paradoxically, the Government has itself created the foundations for that unity in opposition to its policies. Perhaps Hölderlin was not so unreasonable in his hope.

TOM HICKEY
NEC AND

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

The Higher Education White Paper and the Great University Swindle

The Higher Education White Paper, 'Students at the heart of the system', was unveiled by Vince Cable and David Willetts in June 2011. It represents the greatest assault ever attempted on university education in England. It seeks to:

- * Shift the burden of funding for university teaching from state to students
- * Double or treble tuition fees, saddling students with a lifetime of debt
- * Shift the focus of academia from teaching and research to marketing
- * Create an artificial market based on fictional notions of "student choice"
- * Remove regulatory barriers to the entry of for-profit providers into the university system

How will higher education funding change?

- * £3 billion to be cut from the government teaching grant to universities
- * Universities to receive this money via students who will be forced to borrow it from the government
- * From autumn 2012 minimum annual tuition fees to be set at £6,000
- * Universities meeting new criteria on widening participation and "fair access" may charge up to £9,000

Doubling graduate debt



How will the loans be repaid?

- * Graduates earning more than £21,000 will pay back 9 percent of earnings above this threshold
- * Interest on loans will be charged according to income up to a maximum of inflation (RPI) plus 3 percent
- * Unpaid loans will be written off after 30 years

Total graduate debt is set to double from the current average of £25,000 to over

£50,000 under the new fee regime. Since those earning the highest salaries will be able to pay their debt off quicker, poorer graduates will end up paying back far more because they will accumulate more interest on their loans.

What specific proposals does the White Paper make to improve teaching?

- * None
- What information does the White Paper require universities to collect?
- * The proportion of time spent in different learning and teaching activities (supported by links to more detailed information at module level)
 - * A Key Information Set, detailing prior qualifications of successful applicants, composition of the student body, graduate destinations, etc

- * The teaching qualifications, fellowships and expertise of their teaching staff at all levels
- * The size of different kinds of classes (lecture, seminar etc) offered
- * Online summary reports of student surveys of lecture courses
- * How graduate contributions are being spent (in the same way that councils offer information on how council tax is being invested).

The document contains no information on how the experience of teaching itself will be improved. Instead, it emphasises information-gathering and monitoring. Far from being empowered, students are to be offered an ever more sophisticated advertisement for high quality education while the "product" itself declines.

Marketisation

How is competition between universities to be engineered?

- * "Popular" institutions and courses should expand
- * "New" providers should enter the market
- * Quotas of student places for universities to be reduced
- * 65,000 students with AAB grades or above to be removed from quotas
- * 20,000 further places to be fought over

by institutions charging £7,500 or less

- * Quotas to be reduced every year
- * Privately sponsored students to be removed from quotas
- * How will private providers get to compete with universities for students?
- * Rules on granting and renewal of degree-awarding powers to be loosened
- * University status to be granted to more institutions and private providers

Prior to the White Paper universities were allocated an annual admissions target, or quota, of government-funded places. By removing all students with A level grades of AAB or above from this quota the government is creating a market of 65,000 places to be fought over by universities which consider themselves "elite" institutions.

The competition for students and the loan market

Those that fail to recruit enough AAB+ students will need to find ways of making up for the loss of funding resulting from cuts to the government teaching budget and the reduction in the number of government-funded student places.

Some institutions are likely to cut "unsustainable" courses, others may have to drop their fees. Those that charge £7,500 or less will be able to compete in a different market, from which those charging higher fees will be excluded.

This market will consist of 20,000 places, made up of students with grades below AAB. These places will be fought over not just by universities, however, but by for-profit providers and by further education colleges. The government intends to allow private providers access to the newly inflated student loan market by dispensing with the existing regulatory framework.

By creating a market of students with AAB+ grades the government is favouring the privileged. In 2010, 29 percent of students aged 16-18 who achieved AAB or

higher in A-levels or AVCEs (Advanced vocational certificate of education) in England were from private schools. Private school pupils represent only 6 percent of all school students. A further 10 percent of those achieving AAB went to selective state schools.

Ten elite institutions already recruit around 40 percent of AAB+ students, their share is likely to increase under the new system. These universities mostly belong to the Russell group of institutions, only 20 percent of whose students received full means-tested bursaries (for students from households earning less than £25k) in 2010-11. This is half the rate for post-92 universities. At Oxbridge the figure was below 15 percent.

Meanwhile, 20,000 students without AAB+ grades are to be removed from the quota. Many of the institutions that currently cater for poorer students stand to lose out under the new regime, meaning that they will have fewer resources to provide for their education.

For-profit

How does the government intend to facilitate the entry of private companies into higher education?

- * Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to be remodelled as a “consumer champion” and lead regulator for sector “with a duty to take competition implications into account when making decisions on funding”
- * HEFCE to monitor providers, address signs of failure and agree recovery arrangements
- * “High performing” institutions to benefit from light-touch regulation
- * Number controls on admissions to be freed up
- * Quality assurance to be downgraded to risk-based regulation
- * Process and criteria for granting degree-awarding powers, university and university college title to be reviewed for new providers

The inspiration from this model comes from the US as we shall see in Ron Mendel’s article. In order to offer for-profit

providers access to the student loan market, the government will dispense with the need for providers seeking university status to prove the quality of its provision over time.

Degree-awarding powers are currently renewable every six years. Risk-based quality assurance will ensure that quality control is only likely to come into play once something goes wrong.

Management attacks

The White Paper will reinforce and intensify university management’s attacks on staff and students. According to one vice-chancellor, survival with fees below £7,500 would involve redundancies and worsening student-to-staff ratios: “The only way you can cut [fees to] that level is by dramatically reducing staffing” (Martin Hall, *Times Higher Education*, 7 July 2011).

Conditions will be made even worse by the entry into the sector of private providers with an even more bullish attitude to driving down costs. The government wants to break up the existing university system, driving some universities to the wall, making an elite few the preserve of the most privileged and allowing private providers to scavenge the sector in order to turn public money into private profit.

Defending our universities

The White Paper has already brought together a remarkable variety of voices prepared to defend our universities, from the Campaign for the Public University’s co-ordination of the Alternative White Paper in defence of public higher education to the Oxford academics who initiated a motion of No Confidence in Willetts, later taken up by UCU and now signed by around 20,000 people.

UCU has a major role to play in this situation. Its organising capacities can help create a broad and powerful national campaign against the White Paper when it goes before parliament in 2012. The government’s political objectives for the university sector, as we have seen, represent a general assault on the quality of our

education which will make life worse for students and for staff and rob society of a precious resource.

This assault has already begun in the form of an industrial offensive by university managers, as they implement the cost cutting measures which this White Paper explicitly urges them to adopt, driving down pensions and pay and making staff redundant.

These are the specific means by which the future of higher education is being put at risk. UCU must find a way to mount significant, sustained resistance to this generalised onslaught on our universities, uniting staff with students and the wider community. If resolute industrial action in defence of our universities is not organised in the face of these threats, many will ask what is the purpose of trade unions?

This assault on higher education can be defeated. It will require careful and detailed argument and the development of a national campaign of action. This is likely to require the systematic, campus-by-campus organisation of mass defiance, led by UCU and the NUS, uniting staff and students alike in teach-ins, occupations, demonstrations, strike action and, if necessary, an indefinite shutdown of the entire university system.

JIM WOLFREYS

KINGS COLLEGE LONDON

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For-profit universities in the United States – Coming to a town near you

The Coalition government has issued a Higher Education White Paper that will allow for the entry of private for-profit providers of higher education in England.¹ David Willets, the University and Science Minister, has met with representatives from BPP, Pearson's, Warburg Pincus and other private firms to signal his intention to open the public university system to competition. Since the government has been inspired by the growth of for-profit universities in the United States, it would be instructive to assess what the American experience tells us about the risks and hazards associated with for-profit higher education.

For-profit universities aim to maximise income. The for-profits can be owned by an individual, a corporation or be run as a public limited company with stockholders. (Kinser, 2009:4) Since 1998 the for-profit HE sector in the US has grown from about 600,000 to approximately 1.8 mil-



lion students. The fourteen public limited companies, among the largest for-profit providers, claim 1.4 million students. (U.S. Senate: 2) Encouraged by the repeal of the restriction that universities could offer no more than 50 percent of their curriculum on line, the better resourced for-profits have expanded exponentially, gobbling up their smaller counterparts.

Public subsidies for for-profit universities

Underpinning the growth of the for-profits is public financial support to students. Pell grants and federal loans issued to students constitute a growing percentage of the for-profits' income. For example, the five largest for-profits derive 77 percent of

their income from grants and loans. In addition, for-profits claim a disproportionate share of the increased expenditures on grants and loans, rising from 13 percent in 1999 to 25 percent in 2009. (U.S. Senate:3)

The importance of these public subsidies cannot be underestimated as the share of Pell grants and federal loans going to for-profits rose to almost \$25 billion in 2008-9, double the share they had ten years earlier. Although for-profits enrol about 10 percent of higher education students they receive 23 percent of the federal grant and loan funds. (U.S. Senate: 3)

'Recruit at any cost'

Not surprisingly since tuition fees constitute a higher proportion of their income, for-profits have the incentive to enrol as many students as possible. This has led to a 'recruit at any cost' approach whereby aggressive marketing practices are deployed. Outreach includes television and billboard advertisements, telephone solicitation and web marketing. One study commissioned by the United States Senate showed that eight publicly traded HE providers devoted over 30 percent of their costs to marketing and recruitment and only 50 percent to education. (U.S. Senate: 5) In the process student recruiters were compensated with bonuses if they exceeded their recruitment targets, leading to many instances where students have been recruited who did not have the appropriate educational requirements to pursue a HE degree.

For-profits fail to deliver

No assessment of the for-profit universities would be complete without addressing their own self-serving claims. Advocates and providers alike assert that for-profits offer efficiently delivered course, enhance the student experience, foster employability and in general provide 'value for money'.

On all counts these claims cannot be substantiated. Tuition fees at for-profits exceed those at public universities (double

that of four year universities and six times that of two year community colleges), although they only about spend half of their income directly on educational services. (Kinser, 2009:13) A United States Senate Committee found that student retention and progression was highly problematic, as over 540,000 students out of 590,000 in one sample failed to complete their year of study. Although the data for graduate employment is not entirely reliable, there is considerable evidence to suggest that graduates are landing positions which they had not trained for. If poor retention rates and suspect rates of graduate employment are not enough, mounting levels of student debt add salt to the wounds. Approximately 21 percent of for-profits' students who actually graduated defaulted on their federal loans, which under the law will not be simply be written off. (U.S: 8) Instead students face financial penalties and mounting interest payments which hound them for the rest of their lives.

Dodgy business practices

The track record of for-profits has attracted additional attention from the US government in recent years. Some of the companies who have been trying to get a foothold in England have been found guilty of business malpractice. Kaplan Higher Education was charged with defrauding the government of millions of dollars and unethical student admission procedures. Career Education Corporation faced allegations of fraudulent recruitment practices – admitting students who did not fulfil the sufficient enrolment criteria and encouraging staff to sign up relatives who never attended. (University and College Union: 4-5; Marcus, 2011) Apollo, the parent company of Phoenix University's ventures and the recent buyer of BPP Professional Education (already granted degree awarding powers in England), stands accused of enrolling unqualified students and massaging students' grades to keep them on their books. Not

Continued on page 10 »

Tipping the balance away from state-educated students

The White Paper is a blueprint for a transfer of resources from poor and middle class, state-educated students to a minority of privately educated students.

The White Paper is formally meritocratic, funnelling resources to high-achieving students on the basis of A-Level achievement. But A-Level achievement is highly dependent on wealth.

Privately educated students do much better in A-Levels. In 2011 20.9 percent of Comprehensive, 13.3 percent of Secondary Modern and 39.8 percent of Grammar school A-Level exam entries were marked at A or A*, while over half of private school entries received an A or A*. Whereas Grammar school admission is selective, partially explaining their success, private school admission is not. And in reality the class-divide is wider, since privately educated students are more likely than Comprehensive students to even be entered for A-Levels.

A-levels are a class-biased predictor of ability. It could be that after doing better in A-Levels privately educated students go on and do better at University. This is, however, not so. The Sutton Trust recently found that, 'a comprehensive student with grades BBB is likely to perform as well at university as an independent or grammar school student with grades ABB or AAB' (2010: 28). Similarly in 2003 HEFCE found that state school students with grades ABB performed as well as private school students with grades AAA. Thus A-Levels exaggerate privately educated students' abilities, while underestimating those of state-educated students'. Any funding based on A-Levels will do likewise.

The three new 'markets' that the White Paper establishes, represent different models of state support, or lack thereof, tailored at class-differentiated student bodies and providing varying levels of student choice or constraint.

- 1. Potentially unlimited places at their chosen University for students gaining AAB or better at A-Level (at present 65,000 students).** Privileged privately educated students, who already account for 30 percent of AAB students, will monopolise places provided by this market, with access to a full range of degree programs, from Art History through Sociology, Medicine, Mathematics and Biological Sciences.
- 2. 20,000 places on any course at any institution, including private institutions, charging under £7,500.** Disadvantaged students, seeking to avoid excessive indebtedness will be clustered in underfunded teaching-only institutions. As gradually more stock-market listed companies compete in this market (to gain access to the state funded student loans on offer) these students, many with little knowledge of HE, will find themselves faced by aggressive salespeople pushing potentially unsuitable programmes of study.
- 3. Unlimited places for any student receiving private sponsorship.** With business sponsorship emerging as an alternative route into higher education, some students, missing out on AAB+, will choose to make a deal with the devil: gaining access to a 'good' education, in return for pursuing a 'business-friendly' programme of study.

RACHEL COHEN
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

« Continued from page 9

surprisingly, then, that in 2008 the graduation rate at Phoenix University was only 9 percent (Marcus, 2009)

The neo-liberal world of for-profits

Although eleven of the fifty US states have been conducting investigations into the business practices of for-profits, the private institutions operate in an unregulated market. Teaming up with sympathetic Republican Congressmen, the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU) successfully pressured the federal government to dilute the requirement that for-profit universities demonstrate students had secured 'gainful employment' after graduating (Marcus, 2011). In essence, despite the use of public money in the form of grants and loans to finance student enrolment, the performance of for-profit universities is not subject to close government scrutiny. Consequently, the quality of education is compromised and the student experience suffers. As Apollo, Kaplan and other US-based for-profit enterprises eye the English higher education market, let students, lecturers and the general public be aware of the dangers they pose to our university system.

RON MENDEL
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

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¹Higher Education in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are subject to regulations legislated by regional assemblies which in many cases differ from those in effect and about to come on stream in England. However, given budgetary squeezes being experienced throughout the UK, the changes being proposed for HE in England might be adopted elsewhere.

Pulling Away the Ladder

The great black American poet Langston Hughes in a poem written in the 1930s understood only too well what happens when expectations aren't met:

What happens to a dream deferred?

**Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?**

**Or fester like a sore —
And then run?**

**Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over —
like a syrupy sweet?**

**Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.**

Or does it explode?

I think the riots of August 2011 have, once again, answered that question.

“It took a riot...” this was the heading to a briefing paper that Michael Heseltine wrote for the Tory cabinet in the aftermath of the 1981 riots. Once again we are in the same situation as that of over 30 years ago. But

perhaps with greater intensity and significance.

I wrote a pamphlet in the summer of 2009 as an attempt to challenge the pervading orthodoxies about young people. I did so because I was sick and tired of the continual tabloid attacks on young people as “feral” and “criminal”. I also believed that young people would be at the forefront of shaping their own and therefore the rest of society's destiny.

10 November demonstration

Since then the young working class have taken to the streets in their tens of thousands. First we saw 50,000 students and lecturers demonstrate on 10 November 2010, over the raising of tuition fees and the scrapping of EMA, which turned into a mass revolt of the young in defence of their futures. Bar a mild reform of EMA this movement failed to stop these attacks. However, what it revealed was that the young were not apathetic or apolitical and that they were not going to sit back and allow the Tory led government to push them deeper into poverty.

When any new generation fights back for the first time, they do not do so in the old familiar ways of past generations. They bring with them new and fresh ways. It is also the case that the way that they express their rage and to whom they direct it might not follow the



Picture: Simon Basketeer

usual ordered way that traditional trade union struggle often does.

The August riots

The rioting that took place over four days in August 2011, sparked by the murder by police of Mark Duggan in Tottenham, the fourth to be killed by the police since March, was a reflection of the same sense of anger and frustration. It shone a very powerful light on the chasm between the young working class and those who run our society. The scale of the revolt shook the establishment from top to bottom.

Of course the politicians and media made much of the fact that it was their own communities that the young trashed. But make no mistake the causes of these riots share the same sub soil that gave birth to the half million strong trade union demonstration on the 26 March 2011.

The government response was predictable-more repression. The government have seized on the riots as an opportunity to introduce even more draconian police powers and divisions to push through their austerity programme. They arrested over 300 students following the fees and EMA protests and over 5,000 following the riots. The students arrested were young and working class, and disproportionately black. This brutal attempt to crush the revolt through mass arrest, imprisonment and fear will only serve to deepen the hatred and resentment of those in authority by large swathes of working class youth.

The government and the right wing media have also launched an ideological offensive, raising all the old clichés about the “criminal classes”, “parental discipline”, “greed” and “lack of “values” (and often as not the lack of “British” values). Michael Gove, education minister, asked the question,

“Why has a culture of greed and instant gratification, rootless hedonism and amoral violence taken hold in parts of society?”

The breath taking hypocrisy and stupidity of such a question beggars belief. Young people are shaped, as we all are, by the world in which we live; greedy bankers who wreck economies and then get wealthier, politicians on the take who don't get arrested, police officers who beat and murder, but rarely, if ever, get brought to justice.

We live in a society where we are told that being rich and famous is the path to happiness and fulfilment. The survival of the fittest, get rich quick, dog eat dog morals that are drummed into our young, day in day out, are the ones that we are supposed to live by.

They see the wealthy flaunt their riches ensuring their own children are secure and happy, whilst knowing that they will never have this for themselves or their

families, no matter how long they work or how hard they study. Are the politicians and those who write about the young and their behaviour so out of touch with working class life that they really don't understand what created such a reaction to another killing of a black man on our streets?

For some I'm sure the riots did come as a shock, like a thunderbolt through the clear blue sky. They are out of touch. However, I find it hard to believe that many of those that run society were that surprised. Even their own publications warned about the dangers of mass unemployment. “Young, jobless and looking for trouble” was the heading of an article in the Economist written on 3 February 2011. It went on to say,

“We are rightly fixated on the politics of what is going on in Egypt at the moment. But it is worth sparing a thought for the economics, too. If Russians in 1917 wanted ‘bread, peace and land...young Egyptians want jobs. ...Egypt’s youth unemployment rate is currently about 25 percent. That is clearly a depressing number, but even more depressing is that it is not out of line with rates across the region and beyond. Lebanon’s youth-unemployment rate is 21 percent, Tunisia’s is 30 percent, Britain is 20 percent and Spain 40 percent... Policymakers would be well advised to think about how we’re going to promote job intensive growth...”

90 million unemployed young people

The International Labour Organisation estimates that 90 million 15-24 year olds are unemployed. This is the highest figure since records began.

It is clear that there were plenty of warnings but the government refused to do anything about them. Their fake concern and crocodile tears for our communities in the aftermath of the riots was just a smokescreen to allow them to continue to drive through their austerity policies.

It is also clear that capitalism cannot deliver a better life for the young. Their dreams and aspirations will not and cannot be met. All it can do is attempt to lower expectations by calling on the young to be “realistic”, accept dead end jobs on poverty pay. Forget about going to university. At best some will be able to get on courses that teach “skills” for non-existent jobs.

Governments' attempts to vilify and demonise the young working class reflect their fear of them. They are right to be fearful. It is their energy, dynamism and sense of injustice that will be able to unleash the forces that can bring about a new society that does not waste the creative capacity of the young.

SEAN VERNELL

NEC AND CITY AND ISLINGTON COLLEGE

AUTHOR OF DON'T GET YOUNG IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM -
CAPITALISM AND THE DEMONISING OF THE YOUNG WORKING CLASS

The Institute for Learning and the (De)professionalism of FE Lecturers

The idea of professionalism in the FE and Adult Education sector has had a hard time of it lately. The ongoing self destruction of the Institute for Learning (IfL) following years of enforced and bureaucratically-imposed 'professionalism' has done significant damage to the notion of professionalism within the sector, and there is a danger of practitioners getting switched off it altogether.

The IfL is the 'professional body' for Further Education and Adult Education; teachers and lecturers in FE are obliged by law to become members of the body. Following the imposition of a fee to become a member, FE members of UCU voted overwhelmingly to boycott the organisation. This action has initiated a review of the IfL and professionalism within the sector.

Professionalism is, however, an important part of the work we do as a trade union. It's a unifying banner under which a number of seemingly different areas of our work can be brought together to express a singular vision for the way in which FE and Adult Education practitioners will be treated. It is the way in which we consider our educational practice and the way that this interfaces with the wider world.

The imposition of paying to join the IfL was a catalyst for widespread anger towards the IfL and this acted as a focal point for many of the things which are problematic about the way the sector works. This anger, along with decisive collective action through the boycott gives us an opportunity to push for a better professionalism.

Targets

Successive governments have put forward a vision of FE and Adult Education, a vision of metrics, statistics, data collection, target setting and key performance indicators, all regulated by league tables, conferred status and pre-ordained generic competencies. This vision of professionalism is an intrinsic part of the neo-liberalisation of education; it is part of an imposed pseudo-marketisation of the sector.

Teachers and lecturers have become judged on the data they produce. Statistics and data analysis have become the most important aspect of their work and as the achievement of the targets becomes all important, their focus becomes more and more distant from the actual activity (education) that the numbers are supposed to represent. The nature of the quasi-market system which has been created in FE thus becomes apparent, and our 'professional' identity – as target setters and achievers – becomes the singular view of us in the eyes of the government and our employers.

In the context of all of this data entry and target setting, IfL has hewn a path which places the FE and Adult

Education professional in a position which skirts the edges of the data and metrics based model handed down by the government. The IfL's model of 'reflective practice' is slightly separated from the government's statistics-based model. It doesn't look to replace it, rather it adds on the notion of sharing development with other practitioners, as well as considering the effect of development on your education practice, combining the bureaucracy of data collection with superfluous form filling.

Clearly reflection on teaching and the sharing of good practice is something which can be beneficial, and have a positive impact on students. However, the prescribed 'IfL way' of doing it diverts attention from this being a positive and collective process, owned by the practitioners at a local level. Instead it ends up as an abstract, distant process with predetermined headings under which everything must sit.

The inherent passivity of the IfL's vision is not a platform for change and this is why we need a more forceful, unified and ultimately active vision of professionalism for our sector, we need a vision of professionalism which genuinely represents the aspirations we have for the work we do, and more importantly the students we teach.

Further and Adult Education is not, and should not be seen as merely a place to acquire 'skills'. It's not something that students undertake solely as the first step onto a conveyor belt into a job (that is if they can get into work at all). Education is more than this, Further and Adult Education is more than this, and our professionalism should be more than this. Our sector and our professionalism need to be transformative.

We are not here to indoctrinate the next generation of workforce drones, we as teachers should be contributing to social change and be preparing our students to contribute to change in society.

In order to shape the forthcoming review of the IfL and the nature of FE professionalism, we need to push for:

- * The return of trust to the sector—part of professionalism is being treated as though we are professionals, not blindly pushed to meet targets which simply don't relate to the educational context of our students.
- * A guarantee of genuinely developmental CPD—something directed by the teacher and not 'sheep dip' staff training imposed by the employer which does not benefit students.
- * Genuine democratic control of all of our representative bodies, as part of a democratisation of the sector as a whole, for the benefit of students.

DOUG ROUXEL

NEC AND SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE

Why Equality is a Trade Union issue

Speaking before this year's annual TUC meeting, and in reply to a question about whether trade unionism provides definitive answers to a deepening financial crisis Brendan Barber said "Trade unions have a sword of justice effect, not just in workplaces but in the economy as a whole. They are a force for greater equality. We can start tilting the balance back towards a fairer society. Trade unionism is a crucial answer to part of that question."

And he is right; the trade union movement is a force for greater equality and to start tilting the balance. He was talking about unions being a force to improve wages, safety and training but let's consider Equality with a capital E and in the singular. The common usage of 'equalities' is dubious and should be questioned. Even the Government has an 'Equalities' office, showing their lack of understanding of the issue. There is only one Equality - anything else is inequality. There cannot be different levels of Equality, we are either treated equally, or we are not. There is no middle path.

I have heard the question asked "Why should trade unionists be interested in Equality? Surely we should be campaigning on behalf of all our members, not just a few?" The answer lies in the very roots of trade unionism. We believe that, if we work together, members' working lives can be defended and improved. For some members the quality of their working lives is diminished because they belong to a group having what the Equality Act calls a 'protected characteristic'.

The Equality Act which came into force in October 2010 gives some protection. The 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religions and belief, sex, sexual orientation. UCU has representative bodies covering Women, LGBT, Disabled and Black and Minority Ethnic members – we may in the future need to revisit these categories to consider whether they are appropriate.

Dilution

However, in many ways the Equality Act represents a dilution and diminution of protection. The requirement to have Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) has been removed, there will be no requirement for public bodies to set out the steps they will take to achieve their equality objectives, and they will only have to publish 'one or more' equality objectives (which, in practice means they will probably only publish one). This is why UCU activists need to weave Equality issues into local and national negotiating strategies. In the current climate of savage cuts and redundancies, it is our most

vulnerable members that will be disproportionately affected. Women particularly have been shown to be far more at risk in redundancy situations, partly because they are more likely to be in part-time or fractional posts. The government's austerity measures are a clear attack on all public service workers, but are a particular attack on women and members in minority groups.

Age discrimination is also appearing. Our members in the 50+ bracket are being pressured and bullied into taking retirement so that they can be replaced by younger, cheaper workers.

Branch negotiators should insist on EIAs being done. Public bodies have a general duty to promote equality and we can argue forcefully that an EIA shows compliance with that general duty.

Equality Officers

There is often an argument that Equality should be mainstreamed, should be at the heart of all we do as trade unionists, which has an attractive ring to it. But without separate representation and separate democratic structures the voices and views of our members suffering oppression in the workplace can be overlooked and not taken seriously.

That is why every Branch and Local Association needs an active Equality Officer to take up cases, work with members to improve awareness of Equality issues and to put help put pressure on employers to recognise their legal and moral obligations on Equality issues.

That is why every Region should also have an Equality Officer and should be encouraging and supporting Equality networks to enable members to get together to share experiences and support each other and to share good practice. That is why at national level we have an Equality Committee to progress the work of the union and generate policy. There are four Equality Standing Committees and four annual conferences for Women, BME, LGBT and Disabled members where issues that need to be addressed by the union at national level can be raised.

UCU and its predecessor unions NATFHE and AUT have a long and proud record in the area of Equality. This has not come easily; we have had to fight for representation throughout our history both within and outside the union structures and this fight is not yet over. We are, as Brendan Barber said, trying to tilt the balance towards a fairer society. This could take some time.

ANGIE MCCONNELL

NEC AND WIGAN & LEIGH COLLEGE

Angie McConnell is standing for UCU Vice President in the forthcoming election

The 'Chilean Winter'

In Chile today a mass movement continues. The protests of the 'Chilean winter' are demanding free and equal education.

For the last five months, there has been a wave of protests and occupations against one of the most unequal and underfunded education systems in the world, a system one professor has dubbed 'education apartheid'.

Pinochet's legacy

While across the world austerity measures are being introduced with new attacks on public education, in Chile they have suffered from a neo-liberal privatised education system since Pinochet first allowed the market into the education system.

Although more than twenty years have passed since the end of the dictatorship, today only 45 percent of high school students study in public schools, and ordinary Chileans pay some of the highest university fees in the world to study at underfunded and often privatised universities.

Kissathon

In response we have seen a wave of exciting and radical tactics launched by the student movement, with half a million out on the streets in defence of education (with a population of less than 17 million). This included a mass 'kissathon' organised to show how passionate students are about education, a dramatic

faked suicide organised by school students showing the death of education, and more recently the storming of the Chilean Senate by hundreds of students.

Most schools and universities have been shut throughout this time with a solid student strike refusing to back down to government repression and intimidation.

This mobilisation has been extremely successful in pulling in wide layers of Chilean society in defence of education, with an increase in teacher's low wages a key demand for the students.

General strike

At the end of August a two-day general strike was called by the CUT (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Chile - The Workers' United Centre of Chile - a union federation). 600,000 workers walked out on strike to join the student protest in defence of education. Similarly the miners' union has developed strong links with the students' union.

The power of this movement has created an extremely weak government, President Pinera has only roughly 24 percent support from the population, while successive polls have shown 72-82 percent in support of student demands. From discussions with activists in Chile, it is clear that the movement is not going away.

Only yesterday the faculty of medicine at the University of Chile was occupied by the students, who continue to challenge the

very nature of the education system in Chile.

The impact of this movement is being felt across the world, with tens of thousands recently protesting in Bogota and other Colombian cities against reforms to higher education, clearly inspired by events in Chile.

Such an exciting mass movement uniting workers and students, and employing new and creative tactics should be publicised and discussed in Britain today, as they provide a magnificent inspiration for those of us fighting against education cuts and privatisation.

SHIRIN HIRSCH
POSTGRADUATE STUDENT,
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Protests and Strikes in Egyptian universities

The new academic year began with protests and strikes across most Egyptian universities.

Staff and students have been involved in fierce battles to force the resignation of senior management and university presidents appointed by the Mubarak regime.

Nine university presidents resigned under the pressure of combined student and staff protests, with the heads of Ain Shams, Alexandria, Assiyut and Sohag Universities quitting in the space of a single week.

The presidents of eight other universities (Mansoura, Beni Sweif, Zagazig, Damanhour, Suez Canal,

Menoufiya and Kafr Al-Sheikh) retired during the same period. Elections held in mid-October brought some former Mubarak appointees back into office, prompting protests from some academics.

The Arab Spring

Students, lecturers and other university staff have played an important role in the revolution so far. Student protests over issues such as tuition fees, the cost of living and studying, and freedom of speech and democracy on campus continued throughout October.

Other groups of university workers also took action, such as temporary admin workers at Mansoura University who organised a hundreds-strong sit-in to demand permanent contracts at the beginning of October.

Protest wave grows

Meanwhile the wave of protests continued to spread from the well-known public universities, such as Cairo and Alexandria with long traditions of student and staff activism, to other parts of the university system, including the minor provincial universities, private fee-paying universities (which are often run in partnership with foreign universities), and even the ancient Islamic university Al-Azhar.

For more reports on the workers' movement in Egypt and to get involved in solidarity actions go to: www.menasolidaritynetwork.com

ANNE ALEXANDER
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The importance of the General Secretary election

Many UCU members are up to their necks coping with demanding workloads. Many union activists are trying to stay afloat, managing the day job and union work.

The hard-pressed local union officer, juggling the day job, casework, local negotiations and disputes, may wonder whether it matters who becomes their new General Secretary, Vice-President or NEC representatives. How does all this relate to immediate issues of job security, threats to pensions, rising workloads, static pay levels and falling living standards? Does it matter who members vote for in national elections? Will voting make any difference?

Yes it does matter and voting can make a difference. Not only because we should exercise our democratic rights to vote in union elections. Decisions taken at national level impact on the work of our branches. There are real choices before us. That is why UCU Left is standing candidates in the forthcoming General Secretary and NEC elections.

Our candidates

Our candidate for General Secretary is Mark Campbell - a lecturer at London Metropolitan University and NEC member. Mark knows what it is to be on the front line. He has been involved in campaigns and industrial action at London Met to defend jobs and conditions of service. Mark is a principled and dedicated trade unionist who is committed to defending education both for the students and the workers.

Our candidate for Vice President is Angie McConnell. Angie is a lecturer at Wigan and Leigh College. She has served on the NATFHE and UCU NECs.

In 2012 the VP is to be elected from the FE sector, but this is an election in which all members are entitled to vote, since the person elected will be President of the whole union. Angie is an experienced trade unionist who will uphold and defend the UCU constitution and members' democratic rights.

Uniting the struggles can win

Working people are under attack on almost every front: job cuts, pay freezes, plans to slash pensions, rising prices, increasing workloads and cuts to state benefits. We need to understand these attacks are all part and parcel of the economic crisis and the austerity programme of the government. The anti-union laws mean that we sometimes have to ballot separately on disputes around pensions, pay, jobs and other matters.

Unfortunately some in the union use this fact to argue that members can only fight one battle at a time. This is useless when the government is attacking us on so many fronts. Thus we have a hierarchy of disputes, which can give the impression that all the union cares about is pensions.

This is hopeless for recruiting and mobilising younger and newer staff, such as lecturers and researchers on temporary contracts, hourly-paid, part-time and graduate teaching assistants. They struggle for the basic right to have a job, so that they can then have a pension. We need to respond in a holistic and integrated way to the offensive from the government and the employers, not be divided and picked off in one battle after another.

The fight of our lives

In order to win the fight of our lives, we need to put up the fight of our lives. This means we need more than one-day strikes. They are a good beginning, but we need to plan for longer term action. UCU needs to argue in the wider labour movement for serious industrial action by the mass of trade unions. We also need to unite with students, service users, anti-cuts groups and others who wish to challenge the privatisation and marketisation of education and the destruction of public services.

Building a fighting union

UCU Left exists to build UCU as a fighting, democratic union in which the mass of members are involved in defending

their jobs, pensions, pay and working conditions. This is what we need to do to win. We cannot have a model of a union in which members are passive consumers who receive support from officials or local reps when they have a casework problem and have no other involvement in their union. We need all members active in defending local and national agreements.

We need more reps in the workplace. We need a union perspective and practice in which the members are the union. The present General Secretary offered us the opposite at Congress 2011, emphasising more casework and services for members, rather than a union based on the activism of the membership.

Union democracy

UCU Left believes UCU should take decisions on the basis of full debate and votes at branch meetings, regional committees and Sector Conferences and Congress. The NEC should carry out the decisions of Congress and Sector Conferences, not use consultation exercises to undermine them.

The problem with email consultation exercises is that they individualise the membership and produce 'findings' which can be interpreted selectively. There is nothing wrong with membership consultation exercises to build action. There is a real problem with them when they are used to produce 'evidence' that the members are not prepared to act.

It matters who gets elected

UCU members need a leadership committed to fighting the Government's austerity programme and to upholding the democratic procedures of the union. With the right leadership we can fight back effectively. With the wrong leadership we will have one (or both) hands tied behind us. Vote for the UCU Left candidates. Build UCU as a union which can fight back and win.

LIZ LAWRENCE

NEC AND SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

The fight of our lives

All in our union will agree. We are facing an unprecedented battle facing a Government determined to impose the will of the market on everything, and to abolish what remains of the welfare state, publicly funded education, and the National Health Service.

Its justification is the reduction of the deficit, but that is no more than an excuse. The question is what must we in education do to defend our universities and colleges, and our role as scholars and teachers and related staff, and what kind of UCU do we need to organise that defence?

My Record

I'm a rank and file UCU activist and Chair of the UCU Coordinating Committee at London Metropolitan University where I have worked as a Senior Lecturer in Computing for the last 10 years. I'm UCU London Region Rep on the South East and Eastern Regional TUC and Vice-Chair of its Public Services Committee.

I'm a member of the UCU's National Executive Committee (NEC), and have served on the Recruitment, Organisation, and Campaigns Committee (ROCC) for the last four years, and have represented UCU at the TUC Congress for the past three years. I have been in the forefront of the fight to defend jobs and courses at London Met and have played a prominent role on the NEC in defence of pensions, pay and members' conditions.

If elected as General Secretary, I pledge to only draw the equivalent salary to my current lecturer's salary plus any increases we win for our members, the rest to be donated to the union's strike fund.

What I stand for

I stand for a UCU that is led by its members rather than its national officials through the democratic structures of its branches, regional committees, Congress, conferences, and the elected lay officers of the National Executive.

I am committed to the view, based on recent successful examples of collective fightback like the Save Esol campaign, or the ballot to reject the unacceptable deal over the Institute for Learning (IfL) in FE, that if we are to prevail we must stand united with our students, with other trade unionists, and with those in our communities who are fighting the cuts.

UCU members in both FE and HE have shown over and over again, in ballot after ballot, that we are prepared to stand up and fight back when our conditions and our service are attacked.



- * I stand for a union that is committed to getting the best conditions for members, not just as a self-interested end in itself, but as a central part of defending public universities and colleges.
- * I stand for a union that will find a way for members to use the union's power to defend their academic independence from the strictures of the REF, from the 'pedababble' of academic audits, and from impossible workloads and conflicting demands.
- * I stand for a union that values all its members and will campaign hard for its most precarious - hourly paid lecturers, Graduate Teaching Assistants, and junior researchers - all currently on a variety of exploitative casual contracts.
- * I stand for a trade unionism that is willing to mobilise in opposition to Government education policy, and to defend our students when they make their sacrifices for future generations. That is a unionism that will act on its belief that a cohesive society requires social solidarity, including that inter-generational solidarity that is represented by the provision of education as a public good, and pensions as a social rather than an individual responsibility.

A Member-led Union

I'm committed to a democratic, member-led union that will campaign and organise collectively to defend both the principles of wide access to, and a democratic ethos in, education.

Mine is a vision of a leadership for the UCU that is committed to collective campaigning rather than one seeking to develop an individual servicing model that is over-reliant on casework. Mine is a vision that seeks to play to the organising strengths of the union rather than to focus on appeals for sympathy, or to rely on the supposed magnanimity of our employers or Government.

To read a full version and for more specific details, read Mark's blog at <http://markcampbell4gs.wordpress.com>



Picture: Guy Smallman

Join UCU Left

UCU Left is a national organisation of University and College Union activists. It is committed to ensuring that:

- the UCU has a democratic structure through which members can determine policy
- elected officers and professional officials can be held accountable.

UCU Left seeks to:

- defend educational equality
- oppose the consequences of neo-liberal marketisation
- oppose all forms of racism, sexism, oppression and imperialism.

Join UCU Left today

To join fill in the form below and send it to 90 Mornington Road, London E11 3DX

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Join online at www.uculeft.org



