

MOTION to Support the upcoming UCU strike action

PROPOSER

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WHAT WILL WE DO?

1. The Union to give their full and public support for the upcoming UCU strikes.
2. The Union to inform students of why the UCU members are on strike, what their demands are, what the effects of the strikes are and why it is important for students to support the UCU.
3. Student officers to attend and support the picket lines/strike actions.
4. The Union to assist in providing facilities and resources for strikers and supporters.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND TO THIS?

1. The University and Colleges Union (UCU), which represents over 130,000 academics, lecturers, and university staff, have voted in favour of strike action. This is over the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pensions and pays, staff workload, casualization, and equality issues. This is a UK-wide strike, meaning the decision was made across UCU's full membership, rather than just one singular branch.
2. Exclusive research undertaken by the National Union of Students in their monthly student opinion tracker survey has revealed overwhelming levels of support for University and College Union strike action. 73% of students support the strikes. The National Union of Students have asked members for "an outpouring of love and solidarity" in support of the UCU action: see UCU Strikes resources @ NUS.
3. A recently published report documented a widespread workload and mental health crisis in universities. Nearly a third of staff say they feel emotionally drained from work pressure.
4. Wages of university staff has fallen 20% in real terms since 2009. People who started work 13 years ago are now earning less than they did when they first started.

Notes 1: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/11811/UUK-must-withdraw-pension-cuts-if-they-want-to-avoid-strikes-says-UCU>

Notes 1.1: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/>

Notes 2. <https://www.nus.org.uk/articles/student-views-on-ucu-strikes-revealed-by-nus>

Notes 2.2: <https://www.nus.org.uk/campaigns/new-vision-for-education/ucustrikes2021>

Notes 3: <https://www.derrydaily.net/2021/11/11/harkin-strike-demands-by-university-staff-deserve-solidarity/>

Notes 4: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/11830/University-staff-pay-cut-by-20-new-figures-show>

WHAT BELIEFS THESE ACTIONS?

1. This strike isn't just about pension cuts but fairer pay, calling for an end to injustice, gender, race, and disability pay injustice. We believe it would be wrong for the union to not support the Industrial action as the union has a good record of standing up and caring for similar issues related to any injustice.
2. Strikes CAN have a negative short-term impact on students and their education. HOWEVER, if we do not support the strike the uni can use this to pressure the UCU to end the strike and accept the new negative term. The Unis will then continue their snowball of cuts to pensions, pay and jobs. This will in return have a long-term negative impact on students as a whole as an already underpaid overworked staff will be required to do even more at less. Ultimately lowering the quality of education.
3. Cancellation of classes will be entirely down to the belligerence and arrogance of university bosses and their disregard for workers and students. University bosses have the power to prevent this strike, by agreeing to negotiate a fair outcome.
4. Losing this deal could lead to a cycle of the university pushing for worse conditions and lower pay. If the pensions are cut and the pay/conditions stay how they are, staff may be less motivated, thus the students will not get as good a quality of education. This can have the effect of putting a strain on the mental health services of the university and causing the mental health of the students to decline.

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