

POLICY PROPOSAL

TITLE: SU SUPPORT FOR STAFF

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REASON FOR CHANGE

Considering that...

1. In the period 27 Nov 2017 to 19 Jan 2018, the University and College Union (UCU) balloted on industrial action in Spring, in response to damaging proposals from employers to the USS pension scheme. ¹
2. Nationally, 88% of UCU members who voted backed strike action and 93% backed action short of a strike. The turnout was over 58%.²
3. The USS proposals will end guaranteed pension benefits, making final pensions depend on investment performance rather than workers' contributions. They risk the futures of academic staff, effectively destroying the pensions scheme.
4. The USS pension scheme's own analysis shows that the employers could muster the funds to avoid this and keep guarantees on pension payouts.
5. UCU have consistently supported student campaigns and actions.³
6. NUS Conference has previously voted that our default position as students should be to back industrial action by education workers, because we understand that working conditions and teaching quality are so closely tied, and because we understand that the alliance of solidarity between students and education workers is vital to our own campaigns.
7. NUS have resolved to support the industrial action.

PROPOSAL

1. For the SU to automatically call a referendum on supporting industrial action by campus Trade Unions.
2. Following a vote to support strike action from referendum The SU Bath will:
 - a. encourage the University to oppose the changes to USS, by making a statement/encouraging the university to make a statement against it.
 - b. encourage students to show solidarity by not attending lectures and seminars, or using services still in operation, on the strike day(s) where possible.
 - c. encourage students to join staff picket lines.
 - d. engage in an educational campaign for our students explaining why the strike is happening and why we should all show solidarity.

RATIONALE

1. Student-worker solidarity should be central to everything we do.
2. Although industrial action is likely to affect students in the short-term, fighting for pensions means fighting for the long-term health of a profession of which students are primary beneficiaries.
3. Threats to staff working conditions are part of a wider picture of cuts to education funding and marketisation.
4. The attacks on different pension schemes are used to play staff against one another – one scheme is undermined, then members of another are told that they must accept attacks on their own scheme on the grounds that it is unfairly better than the first.
5. These attacks will be most damaging to workers at the beginning of their careers, including our members such as PhD students looking to begin research careers, which could have a devastating impact in years to come. Furthermore, we all have a long- term interest in halting and reversing the erosion of pensions across the labour market.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Students missing lectures
2. Possibility for those writing dissertations/final year projects not having supervisors during strike action
3. Depending on negotiation conditions, missed teaching may not be caught up, as this would be free labour and completely against the principle of strike action