**Motion to Back UCU Industrial Action in Pensions Dispute**

**RHUL Students’ Union notes:**

* 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.
  2. Nationally, 88% of UCU members who voted backed strike action and 93% backed action short of a strike. The turnout was over 58%.
  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. A typical lecturer will lose £10,000 a year in retirement should the attacks take effect.
  6. UCU have consistently supported student campaigns and actions.
  7. 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.
  8. NUS have resolved to support the industrial action.
  9. Striking is not an action that comes easily to staff. Losing 14 days of pay in addition to the education that students will miss out on, is not something that is taken lightly. Only when all other options have been exhausted must staff exercise their right to strike so as to protect their working rights and the quality of education.

**RHUL Students’ Union believes:**

* 1. Teaching staff are an essential part of education
  2. The preservation of quality in higher education is something that is maintained by the efforts of both staff, the students, and the solidarity between them. Protecting the working rights of staff is integral to these efforts.
  3. 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.
  4. Threats to staff working conditions are part of a wider picture of cuts to education funding and marketization, and to allow them to continue unchallenged would see the decrease in the quality of education.
  5. 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.
  6. 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.

**RHUL Students’ Union resolves:**

* 1. To give full and public support to UCU on any industrial action that follows the ballot result.
  2. To lobby the University to oppose the changes to USS.
  3. To encourage students to show solidarity by not attending lectures and seminars, or using services still in operation, on the strike day(s).
  4. To direct student frustration regarding the necessity for strike action toward employers and management that have caused it, rather than the victims of the new pension scheme.
  5. To encourage students to join staff picket lines.
  6. To engage in an educational campaign for our students explaining why the strike is happening and why we should all show solidarity. Staff working conditions are our learning conditions.

Proposer: Courtney Fisher

Seconder: Abby King