

DAY 14 – TAKING STOCK

THE FINAL DAY – FOR NOW

Today is the final day of this first phase of strike action. That makes it a good time to take stock of what we have achieved.

Striking staff at the OU have stood alongside the staff of more than 60 other institutions. Across the 4 nations, thousands of HE staff took part in this dispute. At many institutions, students supported the staff by occupying buildings, joining staff on the picket lines and participating in teach-outs. In the 'Alternative University of the Air' the OU had our own unique virtual teach-out, and we'll keep using that resource in future.

PICKETING FOR PENSIONS

We have had picket lines in six OU locations: Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Manchester, Nottingham and Walton Hall. Those on strike have been joined by staff from other unions, community groups and local politicians. We've held two Pension Parades with support from UNISON.

OU strikers around the country have also joined picket lines, rallies and demonstrations with other universities.

GROWING IN STRENGTH

Thousands of new members have joined UCU during this dispute. At the OU the number of applications increased four-fold in the first 3 weeks of the strike.

On the OU picket lines we have been buoyed up by the overwhelming support of colleagues who also recognise the importance of the struggle to retain a decent pension.

In addition, those of us who have braved the biting cold, torrential rain and early starts to picket have forged bonds across faculties and job categories. Professors have stood alongside ALs, managers and advisers.

REJECTING THE DEAL

The proposed 'solution' developed within the ACAS talks was negotiated within a very constrained time frame. It suffered from the haste with which it was put together and underlying structural problems, such as dependence on a discredited valuation approach. However, the overwhelming decision of branches to reject the deal shows the strength of the union membership. Your OU representatives wanted the strike to end but not at the price of a terrible deal.

WHAT NEXT?

UCU are planning more strikes to coincide with the examination period in most universities. Obviously we hope a deal can be struck before this happens so that the dispute can end without further disruption to students. However, if it goes ahead, the OU branch of UCU will be discussing with national officers how local action can be most effective in the context of our particular circumstances. It's crucial that the sacrifice made by UCU members to date is not wasted and that we arrive at an outcome that preserves a decent and fair pension scheme.

WHAT YOU CAN YOU DO

- Sign the petition to parliament asking the government to act as guarantor to the USS pension scheme
<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/214210>
- Write to your local MP using the template letter found at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/USS-emailyourMP>
- Watch for pension rallies and meetings over the next few weeks
- Join us for the next round of strike action (and don't forget to take Action Short of a Strike in the meantime)
- Follow UCU advice in responding to the USS scheme consultation.

Open University Branch of UCU

Email: ucu@open.ac.uk and Twitter: @oubucu

Facebook: www.facebook.com/oubucu

JOIN UCU: www.ucu.org.uk/join or 0333 207 0719

Branch website: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk>



PENSION

THE FORCE AWAKENS

WARS

UNION

STRIKES BACK

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