

Use strike savings for the student benefit

Submitted by Robert Liow

Conference believes:

1. The 2018 UCU strikes over the USS pension resulted in huge savings for universities due to salary deductions from staff.¹
2. Universities have not agreed to refund students, but some, like King's College London² and UCL³, have announced that they will ring-fence these savings to be used for student benefit e.g. by putting it into hardship funds.
3. Only some⁴ universities have spent part or all of this money.
4. One potential consequence of the ongoing USS dispute is that salary deductions may be returned to staff, following the demands of some UCU members.

Conference further believes:

1. The intransigence of university management is the reason for university strikes; the blame does not lie with striking academics.
2. Universities which do not spend strike savings in any way will financially benefit from strikes.
3. Strike action doubly affects students who are also academic staff as they sacrifice their studies and/or pay.
4. Universities should not be allowed to renege on commitments they have made to students in recognition of their responsibility for the strikes.
5. Universities using funds promised to students to instead pay academics who were on strike will drive a wedge between students and staff.
6. As only some universities have spent their savings, allowing universities to choose between spending strike savings to student benefit and returning them to academics who struck is unfair to students.

Conference resolves:

¹ <https://ftalphaville.ft.com/2018/02/22/2198956/the-strange-economics-of-the-university-strikes/>

² <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/newsevents/news/newsrecords/2018/02-February/Industrial-action.aspx>

³ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/news/2018/feb/industrial-action-ucl-term>

⁴ <https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/partnership-fund/>

⁵ [http://www.thenationalstudent.com/Student/2018-06-](http://www.thenationalstudent.com/Student/2018-06-23/york_and_reading_uni_are_paying_for_graduation_gown_hires_using_wages_from_the_strikes.html)

[23/york_and_reading_uni_are_paying_for_graduation_gown_hires_using_wages_from_the_strikes.html](http://www.thenationalstudent.com/Student/2018-06-23/york_and_reading_uni_are_paying_for_graduation_gown_hires_using_wages_from_the_strikes.html)

1. To mandate the VP Higher Education to call on universities to repay academics who struck from a separate, equivalent pool of money instead if there is an agreement to return salary deductions.
2. To support student unions in campaigning for universities to put current and future strike savings to student benefit.
3. To support student unions in campaigning for universities to put an equivalent amount of money to student benefit in the event that salary deductions are returned to academics who struck, and for student unions to determine the allocation of this money.