

Resolutions from NEC

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Support Union Action and Strikes

NEC believes

1. Our education system is marketising at an alarming rate. Our institutions' staff are facing greater barriers and greater exploitative policies and management.¹
2. Staff trade unions such as UCU have balloted their members for additional strike action for 2019, the ballot closes on the 22nd February. UCU members at 16 English colleges are being called to take strike action for two days starting on Tuesday 29 January.
3. University and college staff are facing removal of their rights, casualised contracts, and continued pay cuts and wage regression, with ever decreasing job and financial security.

NEC further believes

1. There is an increasing atmosphere of hostility towards staff members, with expanding "draconian and discriminatory" staff monitoring policies.
2. The rise in casual and zero-hour contracts and expansion in outsourcing, staff are facing multi-directional attacks to their rights.
3. Strikes and the withholding of labour are actions that are fundamental in achieving change and progress within institutions.

NEC resolves

1. To create toolkits/workshops to mobilise students and provide other material support to staff and trade unions, and to support students activists who show solidarity with striking workers of all kind in the Institution should a HE strike occur.
2. To work collaboratively with grass roots campaign groups in achieving fairer and better working environment in our institutions.
3. To publicly and openly show solidarity and support to any staff action or strikes.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2018/may/18/academia-exploitation-university-mental-health-professors-plagiarism>

Solidarity and Support for Prifysgol Bangor Staff and Students

NEC believes

1. Prifysgol Bangor is currently facing continued cuts, having already had approximately 120 jobs cut in 17/18², with a further £5 million in intended cuts by the end of this academic year³.
2. That despite this apparent financial crisis, in recent years the university has spent over £139 million on its estate (large building projects such as the Menai Science Park and St. Mary's site) and had a net surplus of £17 million.⁴
3. The Vice-Chancellor had a £750,000 "grace and favour" house refurbishment, and stepped down in December 2018, after "ageist, sexist and racist" communications came to light.⁵
4. Proposed cuts unfairly impact students and staff, with the proposed axing of the entire Chemistry school, which provides the only chemistry degree available through the medium of Welsh.

NEC further believes

1. An independent accountant's report, commissioned by trade unions, found that spending had been diverted from staff costs to finance building projects.⁶
2. Total costs spent on academic departments has fallen by nearly 7% over 7 years, with merges and closures to schools and colleges, directly impacting academic staff and students.
3. Bangor senior management cite student recruitment and rising pension provisions as key reasons for the cuts, however Prifysgol Bangor currently pays £10 million a year to service debt accrued from its building projects and estate expansion.
4. Students shouldn't bear the burden of poor senior management choices, particularly when already paying extortionate tuition and living costs.

NEC resolves

1. To support Bangor's staff, students, and associated trade unions as they campaign against cuts, including supporting any strike actions.
2. To support and show solidarity to the Bangor Needs Chemistry Campaign.
3. To campaign on the abolition of "grace and favour" perks and obscenely high salaries for Universities' senior management.
4. To condemn the marketisation of our education, and campaign for students and staff to be the focus of institutions over estate expansions.
5. To condemn the scapegoating of staff costs and staff pensions as the reason for cuts, and to support calls for better transparency.

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-40185543>

³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-45985499>

⁴ <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education/university-paid-huge-sums-new-15688798>

⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46639721>

⁶ <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education/university-paid-huge-sums-new-15688798>

Rule out No Deal

NUS Believes

1. The current impasse in parliament over Theresa May's Brexit deal has made the prospect of leaving the European Union with no deal more likely.
2. The stance of many of those involved in the official leave campaign is to advocate for a no deal Brexit as a "clean break" from the EU.

NUS Further Believes

1. A no deal Brexit would be disastrous for students in Universities and Colleges across the UK
2. Students in Northern Ireland would be particularly affected as a no deal Brexit would immediately bring the EU's single market in direct conflict with the Good Friday Agreement, risking a hard border
3. It is still unclear what the status for British students in Europe would be in the event of a no-deal Brexit as they would lose their legal status immediately and would be up for individual EU countries to decide how they are treated
4. Universities, Colleges and students would be directly affected by the potential food shortages, medicine shortages and other unforeseen consequences of leaving with no deal which the government are currently woefully underprepared for

NUS Resolves

1. To demand that the government and parliament rule out a no-deal Brexit
2. To re-affirm our commitment to support a People's Vote on the final Brexit deal in line with policy passed at National Conference last year