



THE MEGAPHONE

The Strathclyde UCU Newsletter

Issue 9 February 2023 (again)



A rat race is for rats. We're not rats. We're human beings. Reject the insidious pressures in society that would blunt your critical faculties to all that is happening around you, that would caution silence in the face of injustice lest you jeopardise your chances of promotion and self-advancement.

(Jimmy Reid, 1972)

Welcome to Issue 9 of The Megaphone

In this brief but perfectly formed edition of The Megaphone we have an update on our picketing plans and strike activity for this week; a week that might lead to good news. You will no doubt be aware of the news that came out from UCU HQ last week, with talks scheduled to take place today and tomorrow between UCEA and UCU, facilitated by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service ([ACAS](#)) This progress has been generated by the action you have been taking and the pressure exerted on the employers' organisations. However we cannot assume that the outcome

from these talks will be satisfactory; we must push UCEA harder in order to win this dispute. For more information about ACAS see [this thread](#).

Strike days

A working group is continuing to pull together a range of activities and strategies for the remaining days of strike action. If you have suggestions or want to deliver a teach out, organise something or share an idea please get in touch. Our assembly meeting last week resulted in some great ideas which we are pursuing, one of which was to increase and expand the musical aspect of our pickets. Please do bring along your tuba, violin, recorder, flute or cello. Even better; bring a pot and wooden spoon, a vuvuzela or a cow bell.

Our plan over the next few days is as follows:

Tuesday 14th February: Join us from **8.30am** where you can collect leaflets, sign in and marvel at the luxury and grandeur of the UCU office. From there you will be directed towards the pickets which will be in various strategic positions. We know the schools are off in some places, so at **9.30am** we will have children's entertainment, face painting and balloon artists outside the TIC building. Bring your children, someone else's children (ask permission first) or your granny. This carnival of merriment and militancy will go on for a few hours before picketers are encouraged to join the daily assembly within the Mandela room in the student union. Free tea and coffee will be provided by Common Ground and within Joanne Goodbite. At **2pm** we will have creative arts and sign making within the Mandela room. Throughout the day you are encouraged to write a love poem for the university, some special people within the university or the union itself. Bonus points for those who hand craft their own cards.

Wednesday 15th February: A key demand of this dispute is an end to precarious contract and exploitation of workers, particularly PGRs and GTAs. We will make this very clear today, with pickets forming from **9am**. Later that day at the daily assembly we will focus on issues relating to PGR/GTAs and discuss how we can collectively end the scourge of precarity which deprives workers of security, stability and self esteem.

Thursday 16th February: Pickets will be active from **9am** onwards; check in at the office to find out where to go. A group will be heading to Glasgow City Chambers around **9.45am** to join the Joint Trade Union Lobby, calling on the council to defend vital local services. After our daily assembly we will be watching a movie together, either Molly Malones or Nae Pasaran dependant on which of them is in stock at Blockbuster. Popcorn will be available in the union but shenanigans when the lights are down is not permitted.

On all strike days there will be a post-picket strikers' assembly within the Mandela Room of the Student Union. This will be a space to come together, enjoy the free tea and coffee from Common Ground and Joanne Goodbite, warm up and to share ideas as to how we can make Strathclyde a better place to work.

******Details of our strike plans for the following week will be shared with you soon******

Reballot

Due to Tory-imposed anti-union legislation our mandate that allows us to take industrial action will expire over the coming months. We are therefore about to enter another phase of 'Get The Vote Out'. This will entail you getting pestered to remind you to vote until you have confirmed that you have indeed returned the envelope containing your ballot (the Tories have outlawed electronic balloting, despite running their own leadership election(s) that way...).

To avoid being pestered you should 1) return your ballot immediately and then 2) tell the person nagging you to vote that you have voted. That will take you off the 'people to pester' list, at which point you can go on with your day

happy in the knowledge that you have done your bit. Feel free to pester your pals thereafter. In the meantime please ensure that your mailing address held on the UCU database is the correct one. We recommend having the ballot sent to your home address.

NEC elections

Elections to the National Executive Committee are underway. These are vital positions, bearing responsibility for deciding on industrial action and strategy. Please do take the time to vote and ensure that the NEC reflects your views.

Get involved! We aren't a cult. Promise.

Many of Strathclyde UCU's reps, committee members and activists have become involved because of periods of industrial action in the past, and we hope that this dispute too will produce a new generation of active UCU members.

YOU are the branch, and the more you can do to help, the easier it will be for all of us. As well as the current dispute, we need volunteers to support individual members with casework, to negotiate with the university, to sit on promotions appeals panels, to campaign, to analyse policy, and much else. Come along to one of our meetings, [get in touch](#) with the committee, talk to your colleagues and ask them to [join us](#).

If everyone does a little, none of us needs to do a lot...

Speak to a committee member if you would like to get more involved, or feel free to email ucu@strath.ac.uk.

