

Title of Motion: **UCU Solidarity: Pension Changes Affect Us Just As Much**

Proposer: **John Wootton**

Secunder(s): **Christopher Murphy**

Is this a Standing Policy or Permanent Policy?: **Standing**

Facts & Opinions:

- The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension is, potentially, about to undergo major reforms to address a predicted scheme deficit in the coming decades from a recent valuation. The proposal is to move away from a defined benefits system (where currently an individual's pension would be half of their career average salary earnings a year) to a system where an individual will receive a percentage of whatever is left in the pot.
- Universities UK (UUK) has said this is necessary as the alternative is to increase employer contributions (which it deems to be unsustainable and an improper use of student tuition fees).
- The Universities and College Union (UCU) argues against this saying the valuation is incorrect (being hugely pessimistic) and that this is an attack on one of the few important benefits its members receive. They also argue that it will make academia less appealing as a career.
- Statements from UUK and UCU have been attached to this motion, as well as a news article looking at the details of the changes.
- We believe that the changes being proposed to these pensions will disproportionately affect postgraduates the most, especially PGR students, who aspire to enter academia. Particularly because none of them will have yet made any contributions.
- We believe that it is within our remit to protect the interests of students who wish to enter into academia as a profession and that these changes jeopardise that.
- We believe that it is important to make academia as appealing as possible so as to retain high quality researchers in the field.
- We believe that we want to be taught and supervised by the best researchers in the country and these changes could jeopardise this.
- We believe that the use of our fees to fund increased employer contributions (if this is necessary) is something we would support if it means the retention and employment of high quality researchers and teachers.

Actions:

- That the KPA formally and publicly support the UCU strike action.
- That the KPA encourage PhD students that teach to join the strike action.
- That the KPA remind PhD students who teach that they can have free membership of UCU and to encourage them to join.
- That the KPA ensures all students receive adequate information as why this strike is taking place.
- That the KPA represent postgraduates concerns (both in terms of the effects of these pension changes and the loss of teaching these strikes will entail) to the University.