

Email to members from Jo Grady

My name is Jo Grady and I'm running to be UCU General Secretary. This election is a historic opportunity to transform UCU into a force for positive change in education, and I am the candidate to do this. You can find my election address and my manifesto at <https://grady4gs.com>. But before I discuss my platform, I want to explain why this election matters.

The General Secretary is an important figure in the union. They are the only officer who is elected by members and works for the union full-time. They shape the union's strategy by implementing policies passed by UCU Congress. But to me, the role is more than that. I don't want to be a name you only recognise from emails. You'll see from my manifesto that I want to establish regular ways to meet and listen to members.

Turnout is usually low in GS elections. We need to ensure that's not the case this time. Voting is the most important thing you can do as a UCU member in the next five years. This is a crucial moment for our union, with the sector under a lot of pressure. You have a rare opportunity to vote for someone who works in the sector, understands what that pressure is like, and is an industrial relations expert.

If elected, I will be UCU's first General Secretary with first-hand experience both of the world of trade unions and of the tertiary education sector. I am a Senior Lecturer in Employment Relations at University of Sheffield, where I teach and research pensions; employment regulation; trade union organising and industrial action; and causes of labour market inequalities. In UCU, I have served for years as a branch rep and committee member. On a national level, I have served on the USS National Dispute Committee, and was recently elected to the National Executive Committee. I have over a decade of experience of UCU, of trade unions in general, and, most importantly, of what it is like to work in teaching, research, and administration in this sector.

Since I announced my candidacy I've had messages of support from across the UCU membership. I was nominated by hundreds of ordinary members like you. As an independent candidate not supported by any faction, my expenses are funded by individual donations. In my previous two elections to national posts, I stood as the only non-aligned candidate and was elected above other candidates with widespread support.

I want to open up spaces for all members, not just activists, to participate in and shape the union – however much or how little of their time they are able to commit. I am particularly keen to find ways to increase membership and participation among FE members, low paid, migrant, BME and disabled staff, and those without secure employment. My manifesto shows how we can do this, from comprehensive reform of UCU's subscription rates, to the creation of special 'task groups' that make the most of members' expertise and experience.

I am determined to rebuild the union so that we can launch effective campaigns on the issues that shape the day-to-day experience of staff in Higher and Further Education – not just press releases, reports, and webpages. These issues include the fight against the Hostile Environment and Brexit-related immigration controls; the imposition of irresponsible metrics such as the TEF; and the lack of job security for staff in all sectors.

I'll be sending more emails during the ballot period, sharing my ideas about how to do this. If you have questions, email me at Grady4GS@gmail.com, contact me via Twitter [@DrJoGrady](https://twitter.com/DrJoGrady) or Facebook [Grady4GS](https://www.facebook.com/Grady4GS), or subscribe to my mailing list via [Grady4GS.com](https://grady4gs.com). But the most important thing you can do in this election is vote.

The ballot runs from 29 April to 23 May. You will receive your ballot papers by post and you need to return them by post: you cannot vote online. Because there are three candidates, rather than two (as in the last two GS elections), the ballot will operate on a Single Transferable Vote basis: you can indicate an order of preference, rather than picking one candidate.

A career in education is more than just a job, and education is not a commodity. Use your vote so we can become a union that shapes policy, rather than reacting to it, and fights for public education.
Vote for me.

Dr Jo Grady
Grady4GS.com

Email to members from Jo McNeill:

I'm Jo McNeill and I'm standing in this election to be General Secretary of UCU.

Post-16 education has been targeted by the employers and governments since the beginning of the era of austerity. In FE 24,000 jobs have gone and lecturers pay cut by 25%. In Adult Education one million ESOL places have been abolished. In HE we have seen our pensions under attack in both pre and post 92 institutions and pay falling year on year behind inflation. In both sectors workload is rising uncontrollably and bullying managerialism is rampant.

These changes to the sectors have also brought about a narrowing of education values. Universities and colleges increasingly have become exam factories. If we are to be successful as a trade union in reversing these attacks, then we need to build a union that can defend our members and at the same time provide an alternative vision for post-16 education, for those who work in the sectors and for those who study. In my manifesto for **FE** and **HE** I have set out a comprehensive and detailed vision of how we can do this.

I will build this union from the grassroots. I am a **long-serving activist** with experience at local, regional and national levels. I have organized and mobilized members, led local disputes and won victories. If you elect me, you elect a GS who has worked in the education system and understands the conditions members work in, the conditions reps organise in, and the different systems and structures across the union.

I want to change the culture of UCU, I want branches to know they have autonomy and I want to provide them with the skills and resources to build their membership, knowing they have the strength of the union behind them. I will immediately accept changes to the GS contract when voted through congress. These changes will give members the opportunity to recall the GS.

We can never again allow members' voices to be ignored as they were during the USS dispute. The USS strike showed how, when given a lead, our members are prepared to make sacrifices to not only defend their pensions but those of future generations. When our members take action in defence of pay, pensions and conditions, UCU needs a GS that will be with them on the picket lines and will not buckle under pressure.

We have seen successes. In the Open University 4000 casualised workers have been made permanent. In FE the rolling campaign of nationally coordinated strikes over pay and conditions is providing a model on how the union can achieve success for UCU members like at CCCG who won a 5% pay rise, moved 50 casualised staff onto permanent contracts.

Workloads are beyond unreasonable and our members are suffering. There is a mental health crisis in our sector. As well as supporting members, we must fight against the root causes: the over-zealous managerialism, the harmful metrics, the unachievable targets.

I will put equality at the core of UCU. UCU is well placed to tackle equality work in our tradition of self-organised spaces and structures, including annual member conferences and standing committees for black members, women members, disabled members and LGBT+ members. I believe that the self-organisation and democratic nature of our equality work is vital and would seek to support and extend these principles.

As a union we must mobilise to defend those threatened directly by Brexit as well as all migrant workers targeted by the hostile environment. The union needs a robust and uncompromising voice

for free movement speaking out consistently to defend staff and students.

As General Secretary, I will fight against the hostile environment and challenge the harassment and persecution of our members and students, including threats to residency, fragility of working conditions, and also the racist targeting of all considered 'other' within our institutions. I support our union's opposition to Prevent and will work with elected representatives to review how we strengthen resistance to this policy. No education worker or student should be racially profiled under the guise of management of extremism.

UCU faces many challenges in terms of educational and employment issues. I believe that our union can be a central part of transforming post-16 education. Through effective campaigning, and an inspiring vision of what post-16 education could be, UCU can make this vision a reality.

That's why I'm standing for the position of GS to make this change happen.

Vote Jo McNeill #1

Email to members from Matt Waddup:

Access to FE evening classes transformed my life and opened the door to university. I would never have made it without the staff who supported me in both sectors.

I believe I have the commitment, skills and experience required to be an effective general secretary and win a better deal for the profession that changed my life and the lives of millions like me.

An important job

Over the next few days you will get an envelope which contains your ballot paper for the election. Whoever wins will be responsible for running UCU:

- making sure members have the support they need;
- acting as our public face to employers, politicians and media;
- overseeing negotiations with 400+ employers;
- managing more than 200 staff ; and
- ensuring £25m of members' money is spent responsibly each year

The choice

I have nearly thirty years trade union experience at a senior level, first in the rail union RMT and now UCU. I have worked at the highest level through good and bad times – dealing with financial difficulties, organising major disputes and advocating for our members with ministers and employers. When Sally Hunt sadly became unwell, she asked me to take on her key bargaining and campaigning duties.

By contrast, the other candidates lack any experience of running a national organisation of the scale and complexity of UCU.

My record

My record shows that I get things done. I have:

- **supported** branches to deliver record membership – up 14,000 in the last eighteen months
- **planned** and organised hundreds of successful campaigns, including the USS industrial action;
- **delivered** national campaigns like 'Love our colleges' and 'FE Transforms' which showcase the work of FE and adult education staff;
- **acted** as secretary to the crucial USS Joint Expert Panel ('JEP')
- **implemented** the 'Future of the profession' strategy which made UCU membership free to working postgraduates and FE staff not on a teacher's grade;
- **developed** UCU policy to challenge TEF, REF, reform student admissions and managerialism; and
- **grown** UCU's political influence substantially – latest example being my appointment to Labour's Lifelong Learning Commission

An effective campaigner with support across the union

I am an independent candidate, nominated to stand this time by members who supported both candidates (Sally Hunt and Jo McNeill) in the last election for general secretary. They support my aim of bringing UCU together to win a better deal for members. My best reference comes from the credibility of my supporters, but you may also know that I was personally attacked by The Daily Mail and The Times for my role in planning and organising the USS dispute. These anti-union papers attacked me because I am an effective campaigner who gets things done.

My priorities

In FE and HE, marketisation and managerialism have created a crisis for which staff and students are paying. The intensification of competition; savage cuts to FE; imposition of one metric driven initiative after another; and the breakdown in democratic governance have had disastrous consequences.

Staff pay has been held down, workload intensified, casualisation has become endemic and performance management the norm. The risks posed by the government's disastrous handling of Brexit intensify the insecurity many now feel.

The exploitative employment model in HE and FE legitimises work overload, pay inequality and casualisation. If we really want to challenge this, we need to take a much more strategic approach. Simply pressing the repeat button on previous claims without thinking through what we need to do to win will not work. The best way to make employers take national negotiations more seriously is to strengthen our branches so they can bargain effectively.

The USS dispute shows what can be done. Our industrial action swept away proposals to decimate members' pensions. We have had good results from taking a more strategic approach in FE too. If we want USS style results, we need USS style planning and organisation. This means:

- **consulting** with members,
- **planning** our campaign properly;
- **communicating** clearly;
- **investing** in our branches and staff
- **prioritising** action where it will be most effective;
- **striking** hard when we need to

My record shows that I can deliver on this strategy.

I have the commitment, skills and experience needed to unite and lead our union.

Please vote Matt Waddup 1.

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