

**5**  
UNIONS  
**1**  
DEMAND

**Defend**

**Higher**

**Education**

### **The crisis in education:**

The five trade unions that represent higher education staff have joined forces because we believe that there is a crisis in higher education. Since March this year, we have seen a wave of job cuts sweep through our sector, affecting staff at every level. We believe that these cuts will have a devastating effect on the provision and quality of higher education.

At a time when the government is proclaiming the importance of education, we believe that an ill-thought out, short-term strategy of slash and burn to cut costs is nothing less than a betrayal of current and future generations in communities that are already being hit hard by the recession.

### **What the employers are saying:**

In March this year, UCEA, the national body that negotiates for university employers, told the unions that 99 universities, two thirds of the sector, were considering job cuts. Since then, they have stood back and watched as one university after another has slashed jobs.

At the same time they told us that they would only offer a 0.3% pay increase for our staff this year, representing just 2p an hour more for the lowest paid

workers in our sector. They subsequently increased the offer to 0.4% but told us that if they offered any more, universities would look to cut more jobs and privatise services. They are telling us to keep our heads down, keep quiet and tighten our belts, whilst the average salary for the head of a university is £193,000.

### **What we want:**

Our aims are modest. We want fair treatment for staff and a fair pay offer. That's why the unions, together, have submitted a claim for a national agreement to protect jobs. We want a nationally agreed procedure which will commit universities to work with us everywhere to attempt to avoid redundancies, to provide training and to maximize opportunities for redeployment.

Our agreement would also build in greater security for the most vulnerable staff, those on casualised contracts and commit universities not to privatise services. We want a pay offer that is fair and that will not undermine the progress made in recent years or penalise the lowest paid staff in our sector.

### **Support the campaign to defend higher education:**

These are reasonable goals. We believe that a partnership between unions and employers to reach a national agreement on job security is necessary if we are to defend higher education in the interests of our economy and our communities.

That's why our unions pledge to campaign together on defending education, reflecting the belief that our sector plays a critical role in mitigating the effects of the economic recession; creating the conditions for future prosperity and providing all in our communities with access to the opportunity to learn.

### **What you can do to support the campaign:**

- Sign the joint unions' national petition:  
[www.defendhighereducation.org.uk](http://www.defendhighereducation.org.uk).
- Branches in all unions across the country are being asked to call joint meetings. Show your support by attending these meetings.
- Join your union:

