

Support the university strike action

Whilst not every member of staff is perfect, we are extremely lucky to attend a university of a high calibre like York. Both the strike and the manner in which it has been handled it encourage us to support the academic body. Even if you don't, you can't possibly object to the extra day off

By [Ellie Rice](#), Comment Editor (2013/14)
Tuesday 29 October 2013

Strike action is due to hit the University on Thursday, with all forms of contact time cancelled as University and College Union members (UCU) make their feelings heard about pay rise problems. The problem has arisen over a fall of 13 per cent in real terms of staff salaries over four years, and the refusal of the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) to provide the 1 per cent pay rise requested.

This situation is exceptionally unfair for those who need the raise, last year this university alone made in profits into the millions and has recently been entangled in a tax haven scandal, yet they don't seem to be supporting those who are arguably their most valued members of staff. Negotiations have been underway for many months now, and as a last resort the strike has been confirmed. We, the student body, should support the walk outs, especially as departments have made a conscious effort to keep their students well informed and entertained on Thursday.

It is important to value our tutors, readers, lecturers, professors and all the other varieties of academic staff. They are a key component of the universities and they alone provide the actual purpose of why we are all in York. If academics are put off entering this profession, then British universities could lose out on talent, and suffer a fall in reputation which in turn will impact our student numbers.

Whilst the History department's suggestion that we lead our own seminars is somewhat optimistic, I for one do not object to a few extra hours to catch up on reading and get ready for my looming presentations, essays and dissertation. The information given out by the department has also been discreet. At no point has a lecturer, tutor or other member of staff tried to push their professional complaints onto students. By keeping their problems to themselves, a thoroughly professional air has been maintained which encourages me to support their actions- it is not a strike for the sake of it or to create an aggressive air. It is merely a demonstration of their dissatisfaction.

The strike is not only supported by academic staff. Unite, which represents 20,000 workers, saw 64 per cent support the strike, with 54 per cent of Unison members also giving it their backing. They too will walk out on Thursday.

With such a large number of people from a variety of perspectives supporting the action, you would expect those who are opposing UCU to relent. But the UCEA are standing firm. They believe that the general state of the economy and falling number of undergraduate students prevent them from raising salaries. Rather confusingly, both these factors haven't stopped them awarding senior staff "substantial pay rises" according to Joanna de Groot, President of the University Of York Branch Of UCU.

It boils down to priorities, and I believe the academic staff should be appeased. They work hard both in

their teaching and researching and deserve to see this reflected in their pay, just as any private sector worker would expect. Whilst not every member of staff is perfect, we are extremely lucky to attend a university of a high calibre like York. Both the strike and the manner in which it has been handled encourages us to support the academic body. Even if you don't, you can't possibly object to the extra day off.



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