

Defend jobs and defend education

At this time of recession, political parties have admitted that education and skills are at the centre of economic recovery. Yet across the country the trends are apparent: cuts, closures and job losses.

UCU fully recognises the constraints on public spending during tough economic times but the only way to ensure education does the job MPs and the country expects, is to ensure it is fully funded. France, Germany and the US (to name only a few countries) have all invested in education through the recession – but we are seeing swingeing cuts.

In higher education, the government has been warned by the union and institutions alike that the cuts that are being handed down could bring the sector ‘to its knees’. UCU, the Russell Group of Universities and Universities UK are united in saying that the cuts we are seeing have the capacity to decimate the university system and damage it for decades to come.

Higher Education Jobs lost so far and at risk today: almost 5,500

Higher education is facing a huge funding crisis

In the last year the following cuts to HE in England have been announced:

- Efficiency savings (2009 budget) - the sector has been told to find £180 million;
- Pre-Budget Report - £600 million will be slashed from HE funding by 2013;
- Grant letter – an overall 6.6% cut in HE budget for 2010 – 2011, with a real terms cut of £88 million for teaching and research.

The fact is simple – our higher education system, which has been world leading, cannot sustain these cuts. Teaching, research and the student experience will suffer. There will be bigger class sizes, fewer university places and a staff that will buckle under the burden of more students, more marking, less face-to-face teaching time and a real lack of time or resources to conduct research. The days of staff who are on the cutting edge of their professions and passing this knowledge on to students in manageable class sizes, will be a thing of the past.

Across the world, the reaction to the recession has been to invest in education funding – France are investing 11 billion Euros, Germany 18 billion. The Obama administration is pumping cash into science, technology and energy research.

In contrast in England, for the first time in a decade, the spending per student is set to decrease.

All political parties are supporting the same agenda - the only difference being the speed with which the deficit will be paid back. Why should the public sector workers pay for the mistakes of the banks with their jobs? Oppose these cutbacks. Change the mindset of the politicians by writing to them outlining your opposition. You can contact your MP via:

www.writetothem.com

Also join a union as they lobby MPs, challenge the current political agenda and generally support working people.

Join the UCU at:

www.ucu.org.uk

Or pick up a form from the SCR