

## **University of Bath Staff and students call on VC to speak out**

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Students and staff at the University of Bath have joined forces to call on their Vice Chancellor and local MP Don Foster to speak out against growing unfairness in the university system.

Staff unions have already taken strike action four times since October in support of their claim for fair pay. The value of staff pay has been cut by 13 % in five years. University of Bath Students Union has now thrown its weight behind the strike action and staff and students are calling on the Vice Chancellor, Professor Dame Glynis Breakwell, to use her influence to help settle the national dispute. Professors, cleaners, catering staff, IT staff, technicians and administrators are all set to take further strike action this Thursday 6th February.

Students are taking action of their own this week to try to stop the privatisation of student loans, which would push up the interest that students have to pay on their loans once they start earning over £21000 a year.

“There is no reason privatised loans would keep the same terms and conditions as current loans, meaning in a worst case scenario students could be priced out of higher education by off-putting interest rates on loans,” said Student Union President Ellie Hynes. “It is creating a barrier to education for many young people who would not traditionally consider education.”

Marie Morley, President of the University of Bath University and College Union, added

“Universities are being run more and more like private businesses, with a few people at the top being paid huge salaries to squeeze more money out of customers (students) and cut the pay of all the other staff. They are stockpiling money instead of using it to maintain high quality education. Last year universities reported surpluses of over £1 billion. The University of Bath Vice Chancellor, Professor Dame Glynis Breakwell, is an influential figure - she was, until today, Chair of the Student Loan Company and is respected by the employers’ body UCEA. She could use her influence to call for fair pay for staff and stop the privatisation of student debt. We call on Professor Breakwell and local MP Don Foster to demand more public investment in higher education and to stop the drift of universities towards privatisation. The only people who will benefit from privatisation are those looking to make a quick profit.”

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