



**BUILDING A UNION
FOR THE MEMBERS**

J Grady

Four Prime Ministers, a global pandemic and the most concerted attack on workers since the Miners' strike. This has been the backdrop to my first term as your general secretary.

Despite this, we have:

- Won two UK-wide higher education ballots.
- Delivered the biggest pensions win in UK trade union history in USS.
- Pushed back against the government more than any union during Covid.
- Won dozens of ballots and settlements in further education.
- Doubled our membership in prison education.
- Stabilised overall membership as it's fallen across the movement.
- Significantly raised UCU's profile.
- Set a climate and equality agenda to be proud of.

A FIGHTING UNION

In 2018, many in our union feared balloting nationally, so we were poorly placed to resist employers' brutal and coordinated attacks.

Our move to national ballots in higher education has seen us win two UK-wide votes.

In prison education, we've built density which saw us doubling in membership and winning a pandemic health and safety ballot.

In further education, my cast-iron commitment to taking the sector as seriously as HE has seen us committing more resources than ever to the coordinated pay ballot, with wins at a record number of colleges.

We have won more ballots in the last four years than any union in the UK.

COVID

We won campaigns and ballots that forced employers to keep teaching online and were the only union in summer 2020 calling on the government not to allow students back to campus in September. We kept our own records of Covid outbreaks and argued swift action could avoid a second wave. We pushed the TUC to ensure that Long Covid is recognised as an industrial illness.

Our union kept people alive.

PENSIONS AND PAY

We can't claim we won everything you deserve, nor should we shy away from recognising the biggest victory for workers in recent years: the USS pension win. Your determined action has returned millions of pounds to USS members, and countless pay wins to further and prison education members.



EQUALITIES

We have become the most unequivocal and vocal advocate for trans and non-binary rights in the trade union movement. When I took office in 2019, our union lacked definitive leadership on this key issue. Now it is beyond doubt. I am so proud of this.

In the face of opposition, I established a sexual violence task group. It led to a ground-breaking report, beginning the process of overhauling our own rules and the support we give members, and we'll soon have a dedicated sexual harassment caseworker. I've seen first-hand how sexual harassment can ruin careers and lives. As GS I've experienced how pervasive sexism and misogyny is. Gender bias remains damaging in all workplaces, especially when it intersects with race, disability, sexuality, and employment insecurity. Similarly, there is huge under-representation of Black staff in senior positions in education, alongside marginalisation of Black voices. I want to see us run more campaigns fighting for marginalised groups, and hardwire an intersectional analysis into all we do.



I know the current equalities landscape in the UK can seem bleak. But our union is making a difference. Our campaigns against all forms of racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, and discrimination are vitally important.

WHAT NEXT IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

We need a campaign to protect higher education, with members at the heart of it.

Fair pay, ending casualisation, reasonable workloads, and eradicating inequalities will be part of the campaign, but we must ensure our post-92s (particularly TPS) are protected. This government's assault on the arts and humanities must be met with the full force of the union. We won't tolerate job cuts because of their chronic underfunding and academic vandalism.

More broadly, we cannot keep pressing the repeat button and hoping for a different outcome. In our recent survey, members told us clearly that we need a different strategy. I agree. I outline what we must do in a detailed and strategic document on www.grady4gs.com.

WHAT NEXT IN FURTHER EDUCATION?

The rebuilding of FE must be consolidated and advanced. Our members in FE achieve miracles every day, often with people written off by the rest of society. We need to rebuild national bargaining in FE, reduce workloads, and plug the funding gap that continues to disadvantage members compared to their school and sixth form teaching colleagues. We have closed the pay gap in Wales; it can be done in England and Northern Ireland too. We cannot leave our adult and community educators behind, either. The value they bring to communities is beyond measure; they must get our recognition and support.

WHAT NEXT IN PRISON EDUCATION?

We have massively increased our membership in prison education. We have won ballots, improved health and safety, and got members the pay rises they deserve. This is just the start. Next year will see the launch of campaigns aimed at the Ministry of Justice, ensuring that they address privatisation, pay, racism, and health and safety.

A STRATEGIC UCU

We need to widen participation and cultivate a sense of ownership among people who would have previously found the union's internal culture to be off-putting, or even brutal.

We must break out of the cycle in higher education which, for too many members, feels like a repetitive and fruitless treadmill of balloting and action. This doesn't mean rolling over. Elsewhere in the union we have implemented strategic long-term plans that have built capacity and led to wins. We weaken our capacity for struggle if we fail to learn from the past, or recognise the real toll the past few years have taken on our members and reps.

Internal squabbles and political factionalising only produces ever-diminishing dividends, and the rhetoric of militancy alone will not address the deep-seated issues we face. Members are calling for a fresh strategy – that's what I want too, and what I will deliver. There is a disconnect between what members say they want, and what our decision-making structures produce. Once elected, I will deliver the concrete proposals and strategies that you have endorsed by voting for me.

UCU will listen.

BUILDING UCU

I firmly believe in building UCU from the ground up. We need wider networks of solidarity. We need workplace density that intimidates every employer and an industrial strength that can grind universities and colleges to a halt.

Achieving this will take work. I will direct resources into the recruitment of new members and representatives. I will also ensure branches have the training and resources they need, like campaigning for fair facilities time.

A MEMBER'S UNION

Under my leadership our union has changed.

- People doubted we could win a national ballot in higher education.
- Few believed we could win the USS pensions dispute.
- We didn't treat our further education members as equals.
- We didn't give our prison education members enough support.
- We weren't key players in the wider trade union movement.
- We didn't have a strong media profile.

We've changed this. We can change so much more.

Please vote to re-elect me, to elect David Hunter as Vice-President and the platform of candidates that are running with me. I cannot deliver change on my own.

My manifesto, a series of strategy documents for HE, FE and prison ed, and a list of platform candidates can be viewed at www.grady4gs.com.

You have given so much to get us this far. Four years ago, you elected one of your own to change our union. Re-elect me now, and together we'll finish the job.

VOTE JO GRADY

