

Organising to win on equality, pay and pensions

- Lecturer in Governance, Financial Regulation and Risk, University of Reading (2008 – present)
- Branch President, Reading UCU
- Former chair of negotiators – USS pensions
- Former member of UCU NEC and chair of Legal Panel
- Previous employment as a financial regulator and banker

As a disabled, Black, first-generation immigrant, formerly casualised, woman, I bring lived experience of the inter-sectional challenges our members face. As an experienced branch officer with significant national experience, I have opposed sham 'redundancies' and rampant casualisation (and the discrimination against women therein); challenged poor governance; defended academic freedom; and negotiated workplace policies.

I understand the cumulative, detrimental effects of pay and pensions gaps. Research from the TUC in 2025 shows that on average retired women have £7,600 a year less than men. I am proud to have chaired UCU's USS negotiating team when we secured the momentous unwinding of employers' circa 40% cuts to pensions (and ensured members received restitution).

But it is not enough for UCU to preside over a managed decline. We must actively seek improvements on pay, pensions and equalities. Such wins ensure that all members are fairly paid, have secure work and safe conditions, and have dignity and security in work and retirement.

Vote Dr Deepa Govindarajan Driver for NEC member Women (HE)



Lecturer, Henley Business School, University of Reading

These wins don't materialise from thin air. Having learned a lot from the excellent work of the anti-casualisation committee, for example, I know that UCU's equalities standing committees play a key role in our grassroots organising.

If elected to NEC, you can be sure that I

- will vote for the timely deployment of union resources to defend members;
- will uphold democratic decisions;
- am able to stand firm when things get rocky;
- support vibrant, pluralistic debate;

Election runs from 30 January -2 March

- care deeply about fairness and social justice;
- oppose war, conflict and weapons-spending in our international positions;
- will defend the right to a safe and inclusive workplace for members and for UCU staff

Outside UCU, I am vice-chair of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers and have served as legal observer on landmark cases relating to national security, Palestine solidarity, freedom of information, academic freedom/ employment law and justice for survivors of torture. As Board vice-chair of the for Brussels-based NGO Finance Watch, and as a former financial regulator, I am accustomed to scrutinising finances. I hope to use my skills and lived experience to serve members.

Post-16 education can foster critical thinking, disseminate knowledge, liberate and inspire. As labour organisers, together we can build a progressive, just and humane society with public education at its core. Please vote for Sean Wallis as Vice President (HE), Regine Pilling as Vice President (FE), me and other UCU Left candidates for a credible, democratic and principled UCU.



For more information about the UCU Left platform and candidates

<https://uculeft.org/nec-elections-2026/>