GCR motion to support UCU strikes HT2020

The St Antony’s GCR notes:

1. The policy of Oxford SU is to support the industrial action of the University and College Union (UCU).
2. UCU has in the past actively campaigned for issues affecting students, such as opposing rising tuition fees.
3. It is possible that UCU members will be taking strike action this spring over falling pay, the gender and ethnic pay gap, precarious employment practices, and unsafe workloads. Since 2009, pay in higher education has been effectively cut by nearly 20% in real terms, while staff are being asked to work longer hours. University employers consistently fail to address these issues.
4. Strike action is also being taken over changes to the USS pension scheme, as employers are ignoring pension experts and want employees to pay more based on a flawed way of assessing the scheme. [1] Striking is always a last resort decision and not taken lightly. Going on strike means the employees suffer financial losses because of pay deductions. Many postgraduate students, including members of St Antony’s GCR, who are employed by the university will be hardest hit by the loss of earnings during the strike.
5. Joining UCU is free to postgraduate students. [2]

The St Antony’s GCR believes:

1. Solidarity with workers during an industrial dispute is an important principle.
2. Students benefit from university staff having secure pay, manageable workloads, and safe working conditions.
3. Winning this industrial dispute is crucial to the future of students and workers uniting to defend our higher education.
4. We should make sure that the most precariously employed, who will be financially worst hit by strike action, are adequately supported.

The St Antony’s GCR resolves:

1. To adopt a position in support of the UCU strikes for the remainder of the academic year 2019-2020, by encouraging students to not cross picket lines on strike days and to attend rallies organised by the UCU.
2. [Depending on GCR finances] To donate £100 to the Oxford UCU branch’s hardship fund, which will go towards limiting the impact of losing pay for workers hardest hit, including graduate students at our university. [OR:] Encourage GCR members to donate to the UCU strike fund.

**Strike fund details:
Account name: UCU Fighting Fund**

**Sort code: 60-83-01**

**Account no: 20179432**

**Reference: 'Fighting Fund Voluntary Levy'**

Proposed by: Emma Rimpiläinen

Seconded by: Shruti Iyer

References

[1] For more information, see: <https://novaramedia.com/2019/11/24/why-are-university-staff-going-on-strike-heres-what-you-need-to-know/>

[2] See: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/postgrads>