

MYTHBUSTERS!

DURHAM UCU

“MANAGEMENT TRY THEIR BEST, BUT THERE’S NO MONEY!”

Management want you to think we’re struggling so much their cuts are inevitable, but they’ve repeatedly refused to share financial data to back this up. Data that **is** available shows a university still making money, just slower than management predicted.

Management spent £108 million on Waterside, 211% of what it cost to build. Some departments are still making six-figure salary hires. They cut £15 million from staffing **before** starting to cut £10 million in estates. Does this sound like doing their best in tough circumstances?

Management have choices. We don’t have to accept their choices.

“INDUSTRIAL ACTION DOESN’T WORK!”

It absolutely does! Because of industrial action 2018-2024, USS members still have defined benefits pensions, and reversed cuts worth thousands to their retirement incomes.

At DU, industrial action in 2020, 2022, and 2023 won a £1000 payment, better job security and pay for casualised staff, career development fellowships, top-of-grade pay progression, more payment towards visa costs, higher academic starting salaries, and living wage accreditation.

Other branches have recently defeated cuts by industrial action. Our employer begged us to avoid significant action, and we moved them significantly away from compulsory redundancies.

“THEY RULED OUT REDUNDANCIES! THE FIGHT IS OVER!”

Management very deliberately refused to rule out compulsory redundancies, even after hitting their first savings target and pursuing no redundancies this year. They’ve left open the possibility of redundancies for their second target. They’ve repeatedly chosen to keep staff in fear of compulsory redundancy rather than reassuring them their jobs are safe.

Moreover, the effects of the £15 million staff cuts (through voluntary severance, cancelling vacancies, and not renewing contracts) are beginning to be felt. Already-stretched workloads are getting worse. Teams are being ‘re-aligned.’ The fight continues to protect staff being made to work harder and longer to make up for management’s ill-thought-out cuts.

“VS WAS A VERY GENEROUS OFFER!”

We know some staff were very happy to take the VS deal offered. We congratulate them and wish them the best. But we also know staff who only applied for VS because they were scared they’d be made redundant anyway, or because of toxic working environments, or because they saw through management’s assurances that losing hundreds of colleagues wouldn’t affect workload.

For those staff, VS wasn’t a generous offer, just the best among bad options. They were given a raw deal by management, who chose to sell VS through fear. They chose to offer no meaningful plans to avoid 10-15% PS staff cuts throwing teams into chaos. They’ve failed to tackle workplace toxicity. When hundreds of your crew want to jump ship, it’s because that ship is sinking.