

Michael Chessum #1

Education & Campaigns



If elected I'll be an independent and experienced student voice and will make the union a place that YOU control. I'll fight hard for education at UCL, and for a better world.

- **For a Free Education: It's a right, not a privilege!**
- **Defend your Education: keep courses running and libraries open! Universities didn't cause the recession, and we shouldn't pay for it.**
- **London Living Wage: UCL should be ethically, as well as academically, world-leading.**
- **More Women's, Anti-racist and LGBT campaigns!**
- **For Global Justice, Human Rights and the Environment!**

Free Education. Stop Higher Fees. I've spent a lot of my time at UCL as a Free Education campaigner. Students are already burdened with massive debts, often being forced to work part time to make ends meet. This year the government's 'review panel' is likely to recommend raising tuition fees, which would be a disaster for students and for the society we live in. I firmly believe there is only one fair funding system for education: it is a right and should be free for all. There's nothing unrealistic about Free Education when billions are spent financing ID cards and wars.

Defend your Education! UCL is not, and will not be immune from the cuts, and we need to **fight for our courses**, and for **24hr libraries during revision**. If elected, I'll be a strong student voice, and will work hard alongside local staff reps to defend teaching, research and student funding at UCL. We didn't cause the recession, and no-one should be losing a lecturer when UCL management insists on entertaining dignitaries with champagne, and splurging on prestige projects.

More Active Women's, Anti-racist and LGBT Campaigns. In Britain today, LGBT people are murdered on the streets of London and banned for life from donating blood, Muslim students are victimised in law and on campus, and the conviction rate for rape is around 6%. LGBT, BME and women's networks have an important social role, but they should also be active campaigning groups. I'll work hard alongside the networks to make that happen!

Support the London Living Wage Campaign! It is unacceptable and counter-productive that so many of the university's cleaners and catering staff are paid poverty wages, and have been victimised for joining a union. UCL should follow the example of Birkbeck, Queen Mary and SOAS and introduce the London Living Wage, a basic minimum calculated by the Mayor's office. It makes ethical and long-term financial sense.

The Environment, Human Rights and Global Justice. As a student body we have a duty to oppose injustice across the world and at home. I'll encourage campaigns that deal with attacks on domestic civil liberties, war crimes, and global poverty. Climate change remains the greatest threat to everyone, and I'll make it a big priority: UCL has a poor record on environmental efficiency, and should employ an environmental director, like many other unis.

For Democracy and Student-Led Campaigns. Relatively few UCL students know that their union does proper campaigns. Those that do often think that they're in the hands of a tiny number of bureaucratic and unaccountable officers. That has to change, and being well-branded and shiny can't substitute for a being a genuinely campaigning union.

Effective National Co-Ordination. This year I've worked a lot at organising the National Convention Against Fees and Cuts. More than ever before, students need to organise on a national level to oppose rising fees and attacks on education.

Experience. So far while at UCL I've co-ordinated the Free Education and Anti-Cuts Campaigns, worked hard in the Living Wage Campaign, sat on Union Council, been an NUS Delegate twice, directed a play, acted in three, and been active in organising the work of three campaigning societies. I feel that being Education and Campaigns Officer is a natural next step, and that I have the experience to be competent at it.