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**Government must support universities facing financial crisis**  
  
The i-news website [revealed today that at least three universities may be on the brink of bankruptcy](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/62696/151504/6986/1/) and a growing number of institutions are now relying on short term loans just to survive. UCU head of policy and campaigns Matt Waddup said: 'Our universities are the envy of the world and we need ministers to come out and support them, not anticipate their premature demise. Politicians need to stand up for their local universities and give ministers the clear message that allowing great institutions to go bust will be a disaster both locally and nationally. Countries like India and China are expanding their universities, not standing by and allowing them to go to the wall.'  
  
**Further education England: the fightback continues**  
  
UCU’s further education officers met this week to discuss [last week’s ballot results](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/62696/151504/6921/2/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDIgTm92ZW1iZXIgMjAxOA%3d%3d&x=03abe069) and have recommended that branches that achieved at least a 50% turnout (Bath, Bradford, Croydon, Lambeth, New College Swindon, and Petroc College) should take two days strike action on 28 and 29 November; branches that came close (35% and above) should be re-balloted from 28 November to 19 December; and branches that need to build more support for action should hold members' meetings to decide whether to re-ballot.   
  
The campaign for a better deal for FE continues. Vice-chair of the further education committee (FEC), Sean Vernell, [writes here in TES](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/62696/151504/6987/3/)on why the fight for fair pay is also a fight for the well-being of students. UCU is also asking members in English colleges to take a few minutes [to write to your MP](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/62696/151504/6809/4/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDIgTm92ZW1iZXIgMjAxOA%3d%3d&x=e4c1f0a0) asking them to support fair funding - especially after the Westminster budget produced so little.  
  
**USS pension dispute update**  
  
Earlier this week we updated members on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) dispute and the response to the first report of the joint expert panel (JEP) and [you can read about all the latest developments here.](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/62696/151504/6989/5/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDIgTm92ZW1iZXIgMjAxOA%3d%3d&x=eea3b830)  
  
[See here for the full update including:](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/62696/151504/6988/6/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDIgTm92ZW1iZXIgMjAxOA%3d%3d&x=9414d203)

* In the news
* All out for 17 November: unite against racism and fascism
* Love Our Colleges: write to your MP

Best wishes  
  
Justine Stephens  
UCU head of campaigns