

Joint Statement by AUT and NATFHE on the Rights of Graduate Teachers in the United States to Trade Union Recognition

11 April 2005

On 13 July 2004 the US National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) withdrew the protections of US labour law for graduate teachers seeking to form a union. This overruled a unanimous decision made by the NLRB over four years previously.

The judgment was clearly partisan. The decision was made after a split vote. There are five members on the NLRB, the three members of Bush's party voted as a bloc.

The AUT and NATFHE are saddened by the US administration's decision to abandon the internationally recognized human right to be represented by a Trade Union and believe it will prove counter-productive. Experience in the UK shows that trade union representation leads to higher standards for both the staff delivering the service and those receiving it.

Academic trade unions see it as their role to protect the cherished values of intellectual freedom and to uphold the highest educational standards. These values lie at the heart of educational excellence and a thriving university sector, and we are disappointed and disturbed to see the Bush administration encroaching upon them.

We commend our colleagues in GESO and GSEU, the graduate teachers' unions at Yale and Columbia universities, who are on strike in their continued effort to seek union recognition. We applaud their action and offer them every support in their continued campaign.

Sally Hunt,
Association of University Teachers General Secretary

Paul Mackney,
National Association of Teachers of Further and Higher Education General Secretary