



University and College Union Bristol Local Association

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 13th May 2015

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm.

**Arts Complex, LT1 Woodland Road,
BS8 1TB**

Main meeting runs from 1.00 pm – 2.00 pm

Minutes

- 1 Minutes of the previous AGM 14th May 2014**

The minutes were agreed.

- 2 President's Report**

National Issues:

USS Dispute

This has been of major significance to members over the last year and will continue to be prominent in the coming year. Whilst no one can say that they were happy with the outcome of the negotiations, UCU did secure some significant improvements to the initial proposals which included the raising of the “cap” on defined benefits from £40K to £55K and the increase in the accrual rate from 1/80th to 1/75th. This was achieved through the threat of a marking and assessment boycott. It was clear that members accepted the deal most reluctantly but felt that the dispute would be difficult to maintain over an extended period. There are still opportunities for improvement during the consultation period and our pensions team (primarily Steve Condliffe and Ricky Tutin with support from Jamie Melrose and myself) have been working on a branch response to USS. We very recently met with Andy Nield (Finance Director) and Guy Gregory (HR Director) to discuss our response.

Steve Condliffe steps down as Pensions Officer at this AGM and I would like to note my immense gratitude to Steve who has spent a huge amount of his own time working on behalf of the branch – thank you Steve ☐

Pay campaign

Two of the three negotiating meetings with UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association) have taken place with a third and final meeting on 12 May. 0.9% has been offered so far plus the threat of performance related incremental progression (which has been clearly rejected by our negotiators). We may know the final offer by the time of the AGM on Wednesday.

Local Issues

Reinstate Alison Hayman

Our biggest local campaign – led by Jamie Melrose - has been Reinstate Alison. Alison was sacked from her post as Lecturer in the School of Veterinary Sciences, after 14 years, for failing to secure sufficient external grant funding despite having submitted numerous grant applications and achieving one of the highest scores in her School REF assessment. Alison's petition has been signed by nearly 2000 people and the campaign has been well supported by Epigram and has been taken up nationally. Alison's case underlines growing concerns about the marketization of universities and claims that universities are increasingly being driven by profit motives. Similar case have been report at Warwick and Imperial College. Alison's case is going to an industrial tribunal and we are currently awaiting a response to this branch's letter to him asking for her reinstatement.

Ordinances Review

A major project for the joint trades unions this year was a review of our Ordinances. A triumph –following a petition of nearly 500 staff – was the change in the Fixed Term Contract (FTC) policy to remove the clause which allowed an FTC to be issued where there is only funding available for a fixed duration. This means that all new staff will be appointed on open-ended contracts unless their posts are covered by the remaining objective reasons (which are pretty restricted).

Considerable changes have also been made to the redundancy policy which means that all staff will undergo the same redundancy process and that redundancy decisions will be made at School and Divisional level rather than via redundancy committee. Whilst that seems a scary proposition I have only known of one instance where the redundancy committee has overturned an application for redundancy. An appeal process still remains in the new policy. As part of the negotiations we also managed to get the £20K cap on redundancy pay removed.

The Ordinances have been approved by Council and the University hopes to implement them in September. In advance of this the joint unions need to be consulted on the development of Managers' Guidance to support the new policies. The university will also need to undertake training and briefing sessions for manager.

HPT to Fractional Part-time Teachers

This is another major project undertaken this year. Many thanks to Chris Bertram and James Thompson who have sat on the project board with me. In summer 2014 we successfully negotiated the conversion of three long-term hourly paid Language Tutors in Modern Languages to permanent fractional contracts (though only 10 months, not year round). We anticipate that 30+ staff in Arts should be converted this summer. The staff are primarily in Modern Languages and CELFS both of whom have historically had a very high proportion of their Grade G Language Tutors contracted on an hourly paid basis. There will also be a small number of conversions in other faculties.

The policy to convert HPTs to Fractional part-time teachers went through the Joint Negotiating Committee at the end of 2014 (though and negotiations are now taking place to potentially convert many more HPTs.

Workload project

James Thompson and Stephen D'Evelyn have been our leads on this inevitably long-running project. At the moment a pilot is being planned with a small number of schools using software from Simitive (used at Exeter, UWE, Cardiff and others). Workload issues (for academic staff the competing demands of research, teaching and administration) remain high for our members.

Mediasite – recording of lectures

The recording of lectures is expected to come on stream from the coming academic session thus it is important that we get the policy right from the outset. Ed Thomas and Jamie Melrose are working with the project group and our regional office to negotiate changes to the current policy based on feedback from members.

Restructurings

We have seen restructurings this past year in many Divisions. I have been the UCU lead for these negotiations along with colleagues from the other campus unions. These include:

- Library
- Careers
- Student Recruitment, Access & Admissions
- Academic Registry

In all of these there have been a small number of redundancies most of whom have been

members who have been supported by UCU caseworkers. In many of the restructurings there have been downgrading of roles which is a worrying on-going trend.

To come

- Faculties of Health Sciences and Biomedical Sciences
- Sports, Exercise and Health
- Marketing and Communications

Our Executive, Faculty reps, Departmental reps and Caseworkers

I'm very pleased to report that following the AGM on Wednesday that our Executive will be fully populated including two co-opted members – thank you Exec members old and new! We have new reps joining for health and safety, research, teaching and equality. I hope this means we can set up working groups to start looking at issues such as work place stress, promotion and progression. So much of our work in recent years has been reacting to events leaving little time to consider branch strategy and development – it will be great to think that we may be more forward thinking.

Fai Tila, our recruitment and rep coordinator, has managed to secure many new departmental reps and caseworkers (several of whom have now received casework training and are supporting members). Building up our volunteer caseworker team is vitally important as we are still getting around two to three new cases per week and each restructuring can create big spikes in case workload. We lost two experienced

long-term caseworkers last year – James Annett and Celia Hollingworth – both of whom have given huge amounts of time and expertise in supporting members through difficult times – so I am pleased that we are now bringing on a new cohort of caseworkers. For members in difficulty their caseworker may be their life-line and are hugely appreciated by the members and by the branch officers - it is a vital role to play. We are running another casework session in June so do please get in touch if you'd like to be involved.

There are a whole raft of Faculty and Divisional joint trade union meetings which take place termly in addition to the formal joint negotiating committee and joint union meetings. It's at these meetings that the main information flow happens between management and unions and I'm grateful to all the Faculty and Divisional reps who volunteer to attend these meetings.

Branch Communications

Jamie has been leading on moving Bristol UCU into the 21st Century. He has created Facebook, Twitter and blog accounts for us and is working on moving our web pages to a new CMS. Jamie has also tried to make us conform to a single *Newsflash* email per week summarising local and key national activities – we don't always comply though!

The Future

We have a majority Conservative government, we have a New Vice-Chancellor. We know we have financial pressures coming with reductions in teaching and research incomes alongside increases in pension and NI costs. Our employers want to link our increments to performance (satisfactory performance is no longer good enough). There's bound to be more pressure on academic staff to bring in more funding, to teach smarter and the reviews will continue within the divisions.

Building the branch - It is important that the union remains strong locally and it's important that new, young staff understand the value of joining a trade union and we need to develop policies which new members will support. UCU Congress will be voting on a new subscription rate of £1.00 per month for staff earning under £5K – we need to recruit the PGRs who will become our early career researchers and the future of the union.

National Report and Discussion on Congress Motions

The motion to reinstate Alison Hayman is foremost in our priorities as it originates from the campaign we have been waging and the motion was written by Jamie Melrose, our Vice-President. Other notable motions include a motion for UCU publically to oppose the immigration bill, to lobby UUK, to oppose the imposition of monitoring on members, to monitor equality impacts and campaign with the NUS and other bodies. Also of note was a motion to obtain guidance for branches on exposing VC and senior pay and perks and encouraged the development of local campaigns. UCU sent a FoI to all HEIs and UCU guidance to branches will be issued before Congress 2015.

Here are 8-9 motions that the Bristol UCU Congress delegation would appreciate a steer on. We can also have a discussion regarding the position of our delegation regarding policy in general.

These are not necessary the top 10 'controversial' motions, more a list of 10 motions that are representative of similar motions (i.e. motions on affiliation, UCU reorganisation and UCU policy on the ground) and of UCU discussion nationally.

Motions are available on the UCU website.

1) ED4: The Learner/Student Voice – South East Regional Committee/Open University (p. 7).

This motion calls for 'the learner voice/student voice campaign' to be prioritised while noting the misuse of anonymous student feedback. It calls on UCU to work with NUS 'to agree a policy concerning appropriate use of the student voice'

2) SFC4: UCU and BDS Campaign (p. 15).

This motion reaffirms UCU's pro-Boycott, Divestment and International Sanctions policy, see policy passed at Congress 2009 and 2010. It asks UCU to email individually contacting members to remind them of the policy on boycotting Israel academic institutions.

3) SCFC13 Model Local Rules, NEC, (p. 18).

This approves proposed model local rules. The aspect that has caused most discussion in Executive is meeting quorum:

At all general meetings, including extraordinary general and emergency meetings, of the Branch/LA a quorum will be one twentieth of the membership or 30 members, whichever is least. In any case, the quorum must be greater than the total size of the committee.

Currently, Bristol quorum is 25 members. In branch feedback to national, we've expressed our concern with a 'high' quorum.

4) SFC16 Election of General Secretary, South East Regional Committee (p. 19).

The motion proposes to set up a working group to bring forward proposals to reduce the term of office of the General Secretary.

5) SFC18: Review of Special Congress and Sector Conferences, UWE (p. 19) & HE38: Use of online ballots, University of Bath (p. 51).

The UWE motion notes 'problems arising from persistent calls for special or sector congresses....long unexpected journeys...costing £20,000 or more'

The motion calls for 'a review of procedures for calling special sector conferences....the use of facilitating IT'

On the other hand, the Bath motion 'directs HEC (Higher Education Committee) to refer all future decisions to commission consultative ballots to an HESC'

6) ROC11: Lack of grass roots communication in UCU, Preston College (p.31).

This motion calls for 'the re-introduction of a regular UCU journal/magazine or newspaper at the earliest possible opportunity'

7) HE8: Failure of Trustees to Act Prudently, Lancaster University (p. 37).

The motion calls on UCU to mount 'a legal challenge must be made to stop the proposed April 2016 changes' as 'the trustees failed in their legal duty to act in the best interests of scheme beneficiaries'

8) HE11: Election of USS negotiators, University of Liverpool (p. 38).

This motion calls on UCU to elect its USS negotiators at an annual Higher Sector Conference starting with 2015. Currently the negotiators are elected by the National Executive Committee.

Treasurer's Report - 2013/2014 Accounts

Total income for the year was £83,180.79. The surplus for the year was £7,305.24. A sum of £32,624.44 has been brought forward from past years.

Election of Officers and Local Association Committee members for 2015-2016

Officers Elected for 2015-2016

President:	Tracey Hooper
Vice President:	Jamie Melrose
Secretary:	Stephen D'Evelyn
Treasurer:	Colin Lazarus

Other members of the Executive Committee:

2015-2018

Emma Anderson	School of Social and Community Medicine
Steve Fitzjohn	Physiology and Pharmacology
Stuart Prior	Archaeology and Anthropology
Fai Tila	Chemistry

2014-2017

Maria Fannin	Geographical Sciences
Blair Matthews	Centre for English and Foundation Studies
Ed Thomas	Geographical Sciences
Ricky Tutin	Accounting and Finance

2013-2016

Chris Bertram	Philosophy
Keith Hallam	Interface Analysis Centre
Mark Harvey	Academic Registry
James Thompson	Historical Studies

Co-opted members

Stephen Condliffe IT Services
Scott Greenwell Interface Analysis Centre

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic-Related (Prof Services)	Mark Harvey
Anti Casualisation	Jamie Melrose
Biological and Genetic Modification Safety Council	Keith Brown
Computer Staff	VACANCY
Equality Rep (Gender)	Emma Anderson
Environmental	VACANCY
Fixed-Term Staff	VACANCY
Health & Safety	Stuart Prior
Joint Chair JCNC	Tracey Hooper
Membership/Subscriptions	Laura Forman, Branch Administrator
Pensions Officer	Ricky Tutin
Postgraduate	VACANCY
Recruitment	Fai Tila
Regional	VACANCY
Research Staff	Scott Greenwell
Teaching Staff	Steve Fitzjohn
South West TUC	Keith Hallam

Any other business

There was no other business to report.