

Branch Committee minutes 17th December 2015

AGM

Draft minutes of the AGM amended and agreed. Vacant posts to be circulated to members with information about [rep training on 2 February and 1 March](#)

There is also a 3 day course [Effective Negotiation and Bargaining](#) (2-3 and 23 March) in London for members of the newly created Branch Negotiating Committee.

De facto members of the Branch Negotiating Committee are Hedley Bashforth, Michael Carley, Chris Roche, Cynthia Spencer, Tim Barrett. Other members attend negotiation and consultation meetings with HR occasionally. The branch needs more recruits in this area. Agreed to circulate to members.

Report from JACNC

Catriona Scott (UCU Regional Office) accompanied Michael Carley, Chris Roche and Hedley Bashforth at a meeting with HR on 9th December to continue negotiations on the assimilation of hourly paid staff.

HR provided information showing that the number of hourly paid staff had increased, despite assurances from the Vice Chancellor that the University is seeking to reduce its use of zero hours and casual contracts.

Acting Director of HR agreed to submit proposals from UCU to Vice Chancellor for changes to employment practice for casual and hourly paid staff, as recommended by the New JNCHES (joint negotiating committee for higher education staff) Hourly Paid and Casual Staff Working Group Report ([UCUHE/262](#)) agreed nationally between employers and unions in July 2015. UCU has proposed a number of changes which, if implemented, would reduce the University's use of staff on zero hours contracts.

The following items on job security from UCU were also noted by branch committee:

- [The general secretary tells MPs that quality teaching requires decent contracts.](#)
- [Our national day of action on 19 November](#)
- [Our new magazine, Security Matters](#)
- [A report on our work throughout the year](#)
- [Our page of local success stories and case studies](#)

Gender pay

Also noted JNCHES working group report on gender pay ([UCUHE/261](#))

USS

Vice Chancellor disclosed a conflict of interest at JACNC in October, which she believes disbars her from discussing USS related matters. [UCU is seeking, to challenge the Universities Superannuation Scheme \(USS\) approach to scheme funding.](#)

Agreed to write to Director of Finance to ask her to step into the breach on this matter.

Green Paper on Higher Education

Bristol UCU have organised a panel discussion of the Green Paper on HE for 21st January. Agreed to circulate details to members when available.

Bath and Bristol branches of UCU will also submit a joint response to UCU to feed in to UCU's response to the Green Paper. The main point of this response is to clarify UCU's opposition to the further marketization and privatisation of higher education.

Health & Safety

Time to Change. Chris Roche talking to SU about ways of implementing the [University's pledge of support for MIND's Time to Change initiative](#) to end negative attitudes towards people with mental health problems.

Disability Leave

[UCU/688 Disability Leave and new updated guide for Disability History Month](#)

Branches are asked to raise awareness of disability leave and disseminate the updated guide 'enabling not disabling' during Disability History Month.

Bath UCU negotiated a disability leave policy in 2014 which is seen by others as a model of good practice.

Agreed to publicise this during Disability History Month.

Probation

Philippe Blondel has represented us at the meetings of the Bath Scheme Committee (the Bath Scheme is the probation process for new staff who teach). Philippe reports that there are proposed changes that may have implications for the time it takes assessors to complete their tasks.

James D comments:

"Workload allocation for the ASSESSORS. I currently estimate it costs me 10 hours/year. If this were to double, as the university expects, it then ceases to be noise."

Philippe will draw our attention to any changes that increase workloads for assessors or probationers.

London Metropolitan University

The university's student body has joined UCU in condemning London Met management's strategic plan which includes the closure of the world renowned Sir John Cass faculty of art, architecture and design.

The situation for staff and students at London Metropolitan University is a concern for the whole union and UCU's national executive committee (NEC) unanimously voted to mount a national campaign in defence of our members [please sign the petition to save 'the Cass'](#)

UCU challenging workplace racism, 10 February 2016

The union will be holding a day of action against workplace racism on 10 February 2016, which will coincide with the launch of a new short film and a range of new campaign materials. Let us know what your branch's plans for the day are by emailing Chris Nicholas on cnicholas@ucu.org.uk.

Next branch committee meeting

20th January 1.15 pm

