

University of Bath UCU

Notes of branch meeting 5 October 2016 1.15 pm 1E2.4

36 members in attendance, 24 apologies

1 Minutes of branch meeting 27 July 2016 (pages 6-8)

Agreed as a correct record of the meeting

Matters arising from the minutes

EU Referendum

Some discussion of the University's ambivalent response to the new political climate post referendum. Many non-UK members have expressed concern about future status and security. Some universities have agreed to pay the £65 cost of a [Permanent Residence Card](#) for their non-UK staff, but Bath has not yet done this. Agreed to take this item to the JACNC meeting with the VC on October 26th.

UCU nationally has made representations and General Secretary Sally Hunt has written to all members, including an [online tool for members to contact and lobby MPs](#)

Foreign Languages Centre

Outcome of dispute over compulsory redundancies in Foreign Languages Centre (see page 5). Meeting regretted the refusal of the University to delay the implementation of the cuts to FLC programmes, but welcomed the improved voluntary redundancy terms secured through negotiation. 7 members of staff accepted these terms. The branch remains committed to a policy of no compulsory redundancies, but agreed to seek the revision of the University's redundancy avoidance strategy to incorporate these improved terms (a 50% enhancement of any entitlement to statutory redundancy pay) in any future cases where redundancies are threatened. The meeting also noted with concern the exclusion of staff on zero hours contracts who were dismissed with no redundancy pay at all and agreed to seek their inclusion in a revised redundancy avoidance strategy.

2 New members of branch committee

Megan Robb (SPS) LGBTQ rep

Palash Kamruzzaman / Alex Masardo (both PoLIS) International members reps

3 National negotiations on pay, casualization and gender pay gap

Meeting received an update on national negotiations (see pages 5-6). The employers have imposed an improved offer of 1.1%, which has been accepted by UNISON and Unite. UNISON members did vote to reject the deal but this was overturned by their national body.

UCU HE Committee will meet on 14th October to determine the course of the dispute, following consultation with branches from across the UK. Agreed to call a further meeting for Bath members following this to hear and discuss the outcomes.

Members are reminded that action in support of our claim includes a call to resign positions as external examiner. Many institutions are seeking new external examiners at this point in the year, and we call on members not to take these posts on for as long as the dispute is in progress.

4 Joint UCU/NUS national demonstration United For Education 19 November

Lucy Woodcock (Bath SU President) was invited to address the meeting about the [joint national demonstration \(UCU/NUS\)](#) in defence of free access to quality FE and HE and against cuts and privatisation. The event will take place in London on Saturday 19 November.

Agreed to sponsor coach transport to this event, and to work with Bath SU to promote it to students and staff at the University.



5 Casualisation

UCU and Bath SU have also agreed the following letter to the Vice Chancellor, and it is endorsed by Unison and Unite.

We call on the University of Bath to make clear its commitment to providing high quality education for students by taking decisive action to improve job security for academic staff.

We believe that the working conditions of staff are the learning conditions for students and we think that it is unacceptable for universities who market themselves to students on their reputation for high quality provision to employ large numbers of their staff on contracts that prevent them doing their jobs as effectively as possible.

Casual and insecure contracts disrupt educational relationships, stifle the development of teaching staff and often put them under unbearable pressure to cut corners by employing them on poor hourly rates that fail to cover the work they really do. Yet in spite of this across the sector, almost half of all academics are employed on insecure or temporary contracts.

We call on the University to:

- 1. demonstrate its commitment to transparency by publishing data showing the proportions of undergraduate classes that are being taught by staff on insecure contracts and*
- 2. show its commitment to real change by conducting a joint review of all non-permanent academic and related contracts with UCU, with the express aim of increasing job security, continuity of employment and opportunities for career progression.*

See page 6 for further information.

In view of the lack of progress on this issue, the meeting agreed to register a 'failure to agree' notice with the University, which will trigger a formal dispute process.

**STAFF WORKING CONDITIONS ARE
STUDENT LEARNING CONDITIONS**

6 Report from JUCNC meeting with HR (22 September)

No matters to report

7 Reports from branch officers

Nour Alhusein's offer to take on the role of TU rep on the University Equality and Diversity Network was welcomed. Thanks Nour.

Noted that Tim Barrett has been elected chair of UCU Academic-Related Staff Committee (national) and the meeting congratulated Tim on this.

8 Threat to 395 jobs at London Met University and fears of privatisation

Meeting had a report from Chris Roche who has been joined the London Met UCU picket last week. Agreed to send a donation of £395 to the London Met strike fund and to invite Mark Campbell (sacked London Met UCU branch secretary) to attend a meeting of Bath UCU in the near future.

Also agreed to write to UCU HE Committee expressing our support for London Met UCU call to 'greylist' the University in protest at its threats to jobs, its threats to impose new and excessive workloads and its victimisation of union reps who have challenged these moves.

London Met has one of the best records in the country for widening participation, yet is under threat of privatisation and serious cuts to provision.

9 Agreed to affiliate the branch to War on Want (£25 fee)

<http://waronwant.org/what-we-do>

10 Training for members and other UCU events (see pages 6-7)

Please contact branch secretary Hedley Bashforth if you are interested in any of these. Any member attending is entitled to time off work to undertake this training.

11 Any other business

Next branch committee meeting Thursday 20th October 1.15 pm

Branch Annual General Meeting Wednesday 14th December 1,15 pm

SW Regional Committee meeting Saturday 15th October 11-2, Bristol University UCU office, Woodland Rd., Bristol

Outcome of FLC dispute

University managers have implemented cuts to the Foreign Languages Centre proposed during the summer. The Centre has lost three (possibly four) languages, seven staff on fractional posts and a further ten staff on zero hours contracts. UCU called for a one year freeze on the proposals to allow wider consultation with staff, students and the local community, but this call was rejected despite a 2600 name petition to the University's governing body, Council.

UCU secured an improved offer from the University for the seven staff on fractional contracts, together with a promise to review the University's redundancy avoidance strategy. This offer was made after branch members voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action if there were any compulsory redundancies. There were no compulsory redundancies.

On the plus side the UCU branch managed to win an improved offer (redundancy payments enhanced by 50% for people accepting voluntary redundancy) for those staff on fractional contracts (including non members) who were facing dismissal. The downside is that the enhancement was only 50% and that some people lost their jobs. The other serious problem is that the ten staff on zero hours contracts who lost their jobs were offered NOTHING.

This small gain shows that UCU members have more bargaining power than we might think. Faced with the threat of local action against cuts and job losses, there was some movement from University managers.

[For a full review of the dispute and the issues raised see report from UCU Branch Secretary.](#)

Update on national negotiations

Employers have written to the HE unions with a revised offer.

The offer includes plans to tackle the gender pay gap and to deal with the problem of casual contracts and job insecurity for staff - key elements of the union's pay claim. However, it does not make an improvement on the 1.1% pay offer made by UCEA in April, which was just a 0.1% increase on the original 1% offer made in March.

The union said that UCEA's stated aim to "keep channels open for dialogue... to seek a settlement with all the trade unions on their 2016-17 claim" looked strange next to its move of urging universities to impose the 1.1% pay increase before the dispute had been resolved.

Details of [the offer can be found here](#) and [the union's response here](#)

Following a briefing with branch reps (including reps from Bath) on 27th September UCU's HE Committee will consider proposals for further strike action in November and an assessment boycott from January. More information on this at the meeting.

Branch reps also attended a briefing on the gender pay gap on October 3rd.

Bath comes in at 17/87 universities for holding down women's pay – see Table 6 of https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7959/Holding-down-womens-pay-updated-Apr-16/pdf/ucu_IWDpayreport_rev_apr16_.pdf

Casualisation

The branch made a formal request on March 2nd to enter into negotiations in respect of the use of hourly paid and casual contracts. The request identified four points on which UCU is seeking to make a collective agreement with the University:

Assimilation of hourly-paid Teaching Fellows to established fractional posts at the point at which they meet the threshold of the existing agreement of 2009, and mechanisms for calculating the fraction/pathway to which they will be assimilated. This assimilation process to be carried out twice a year, as agreed in our more recent meetings, and to build in a review mechanism whereby fractional salaried Teaching Fellows who have been undertaking additional hourly-paid work for two years have their fractional contract increased accordingly;

As discussed in recent meetings, the extension of the above agreement on assimilation to all hourly-paid staff in UCU's bargaining unit;

Minimum guaranteed hours contracts for part-time hourly paid teaching staff where their hours fall below the 0.2 threshold;

The ending of the use of atypical worker zero hours contracts for teaching-related, research and academic-related staff where regular patterns of work have been established, to be replaced by contracts with employee status with appropriate pay, terms and conditions

There have been no meetings on this since 28th April and no progress has been made.

UCU and the SU have agreed to make joint representations to the Vice Chancellor about the use of non-permanent contracts.

Precarious Work and Quality: Guidance for branches

UCU has also produced new guidance for branches on action to stop the use of casual contracts

http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/pdf/UCUBANAB4.pdf?utm_source=lyr-branchroundup&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=New+branch+action+note:+precarious+work+and+quality&utm_term=

Training for members and branch reps

Our branch has grown in numbers and we always need more trained reps, caseworkers and people able to attend national events on our behalf. You do not have to devote huge amounts of time for this and in most cases you are entitled to attend. If you want to know more about any of the events below or want to express an interest please contact branch secretary.

Health and Safety 1: Induction

Date – 12th to 14th December 2016

Venue – UCU head office, London

Time – 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with refreshments from 9:15a.m.

The branch needs more trained health and safety reps. This course is aimed at all new and existing health and safety reps who have received no training. You are entitled to attend. Contact Secretary for details.

Union Learning Reps (ULRs) Union learning representatives (ULRs) are branch based representatives and are similar to health and safety representatives; but while health and safety representatives focus on health and safety issues, learning reps focus on members' personal and professional learning interests. They offer assistance and expertise on including training and development in local collective bargaining agreements and can offer members individual advice and guidance on development issues. ULRs have been instrumental in championing the importance of training and development. ULRs work very hard to boost the image and strengthen the organisation of their union within the workplace. They can help widen union membership across the board and in underrepresented groups. If union members want to become ULRs, they should first discuss it with their local UCU branch, or their full-time officer. Then contact the UCU training team at training@ucu.org.uk

Branch representatives (negotiating on behalf of and advising members)

22nd, 23rd and 24th November 2016, Exeter or,

22nd, 23rd and 24th March, Exeter Regional Office.

This course is for all new and existing UCU reps and officers regardless of role

Representing individual members - an introduction to casework 7th December 2016 – Bristol <http://www.ucu.org.uk/bristolcasework>

Certificate in employment law – online, 30 September – 9 December

UCU Annual Equality Groups Conference

The annual equality groups conference takes place in Birmingham on 1-3 December. If you want to attend this event on behalf of the branch please read this circular, which includes details on how to nominate to the black, disabled, LGBT and women's members' committees, how to send motions to each of these, registration information and a conference schedule.

[HTML](#), [RTF](#)

Please contact branch secretary if you want to attend this event.