

University of Bath UCU Branch Committee

Notes of meeting 20th January 2016

1 Notes of last meeting

Director of Finance has now responded to branch request for a meeting about USS. She suggests waiting for the outcome of the UCU and UUK dialogue on the valuation methodology before deciding whether a local meeting is worthwhile.

2 Apologies and vacant committee positions

Apologies received from James Davenport, Cynthia Spencer, Harry Pitts

The following members have agreed to take up positions on the branch committee:

Elke Pawlowski (Teaching Fellow rep)

Anna Baildon (Academic-Related and Professional Services Rep)

David Skidmore (Disabled members rep)

The following positions remain unfilled:

Women/non-binary members rep

BME members rep

LBTBQ members rep

Lecturer/Readers rep

Professors rep

3 Pay

UCU will submit a joint pay claim with other HE unions in first week of February and will run a campaign among members, including a ballot for industrial action, to support the claim. Tim Barrett and Michael Carley to attend national pay briefing in Birmingham on 17th February. Chris Roche reserve rep.

See national briefing [UCUHE/263](#) for more details

Living Wage update

Michael Carley reported on correspondence he has had about reasons given by the University for not becoming a Living Wage employer. There has been some inconsistency in the reasons given by the University, which Michael is investigating.

4 **Motion of support for NCAFC Women and Non-Binary Conference** (attached) agreed.

5 **Motion on student maintenance grants** (attached) agreed and to be forwarded to members and to next branch meeting for discussion.

6 **Hourly paid workers**

Elke Pawlowski reported that TF members in the Academic Skills Centre who have both fractional and hourly paid contracts were hearing that their hourly paid work is to be consolidated into their fractional contracts. This is an outcome of the negotiations between UCU and University about the assimilation of part time staff, though we have not been informed how many staff are affected.

No date yet set for next meeting with HR to continue negotiations on assimilation of PT staff.

A change in the law on zero hours contracts came into force this month. See https://ucu.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/28

Annual meeting for staff on casual contracts, 11 March

The union is holding its annual meeting for staff on casual contracts on 11 March and each branch can send two delegates. If you are interested in getting involved in UCU's campaign for secure employment in education and would like to attend [please see details and how to register here.](#) Or contact Hedley Bashforth for further information.

7 Health & Safety: all 3 campus TUs are challenging the University's failure to include TU reps on its newly formed Mental Health Strategy Working Group. Students have been invited to participate. If the University continues to exclude us we will formally request that a sub-committee of University H & S Committee be created to consider the University's mental health strategy. This is not our preferred option, but we are left with no alternative.

8 Reps needed for:

- TU Consultation meeting with HR 04/02/16 1030: Tim Barrett
- Meeting with HR on Dignity and Respect Policy 28/01/16 1530: either Michal Carley/Tim Barrett/Hedley Bashforth
- Meeting with HR on Facilities agreement (no date yet)
- [Disability: Campus Access Audit coming up later this year.](#)

David Skidmore offer to brief members on this at next branch meeting.

- 9 TU Bill: [8-14 FEBRUARY: ♥ unions and drop the TU Bill week of action](#)

Agreed to hold branch meeting on 9th February to launch pay campaign and to link up with national activities on that day

- 10 Recruitment week 22-26 February

Kim Luetchford sorting some dates for Dave O'Toole to run a recruitment stall in Claverton Rooms during that week.

- 11 London Metropolitan University UCU are balloting members this week over threatened redundancies and the closure of the Aldgate Campus. Please show your solidarity and [take a photo of yourself and branch colleagues with this poster](#) and send it to uculondonmet@mail.com

- 12 **Big win for trade unionists in Bath**

Please see below a post from Bath Trades Union Council about an excellent result for recycling workers and Unite members at Kier Ltd. Worth sharing with members to remind us what industrial action can achieve.

“!!!!VICTORY FOR THE RECYCLING WORKERS!!!!

Recycling workers, outsourced to Kier Ltd by Bath & NE Somerset Council, have been getting paid less than a Living Wage and £2/hour less than other workers doing a similar job a few miles away. Instead of passively moaning about their conditions, almost all of them joined [Unite the union](#), balloted to strike and have been taking industrial action since the beginning of the year. They've been working to rule, refusing overtime and have taken several days of all out strike action. Members of [Bath Trades Union Council](#) went down to the picket line in Keynsham last week and it was militant and solid.

Well, the Tory Council responded by trying to recruit scab labour from the local community, and were aided, quite disgracefully, by the BBC, who uncritically used their local news programmes to recruit workers to break the strike. It looked like this was going to go on for a while, and Bath Trades Union Council started putting together plans to collect for their strike fund...

But, faced with the threat of rolling strike action for months to come, a united work force and support from other trade unionists, Kier have backed down! Yesterday, the recycling workers in Unite were given a new pay offer of 9% backdated to July, another 6% this July and another 3% in July 2017. An 18% pay rise over three years, front loaded. Everyone will now be paid above a Living Wage.

This is an inspirational win by a determined and brilliantly organised group of workers, and a timely reminder that militant collective action is the best way to

defend and improve your wage and working conditions. If you're not happy with what you're getting for your work, stop grumbling about it, join a trade union, recruit your colleagues and start doing something to change the situation. Let us know if you'd like advice on where to start.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/bathtradeunions/photos/a.1536353550024267.1073741828.1511397469186542/1540420479617574/?type=3&theater>

13 **Academic freedom: UCU writes to Turkish government**

UCU has [written to the Turkish government](#) about threats to academic freedom and the safety and well-being of students in the Kurdish region. For more on the Academics for Peace initiative, [see here](#).

14 **TEF/Green Paper on HE**

Michael Carley reported that a number of members have used information circulated by the branch to post a response to the Green Paper.

University of Bristol have invited our members to the following meeting:

From REF to TEF: On the Government's Plans for Higher Education, Thursday, 21st January 2016, 17:00-18:30, Old Council Chamber, Wills Memorial Building

Bristol UCU invites you to *From REF to TEF: On the Government's Plans for Higher Education*, a panel discussion and Q&A on the future of Higher Education in the wake of the government's recent proposals.

For tickets, please go to: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/from-ref-to-tef-on-the-governments-plans-for-higher-education-tickets-20015943225>

From REF to TEF provides a space to debate this direction of travel. What exactly do the Green Paper and coming White Paper mean for the notion of a University? What is to be done in the face of Jo Johnson's 'reform' agenda?

Panellists include

- Sorana Vieru (NUS Vice President, Higher Education)
- Harriet Bradley (UWE and UCU NEC and HEC)
- Jessica Patterson, (PGR Rep, NCAFC)
- Tom Hickey (University of Brighton)

Events and notifications

Convention for Higher Education which brings together activists in the UCU with campaigning groups, including the Council for the Defence of British Universities and the Campaign for the Public University to discuss and challenge the Government's green paper, 'Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice' which outlines the blueprint for the wholesale privatisation of Higher Education in England.

The convention will be held on Saturday 27th February at Christopher Ingold Chemistry Building, University College London (UCL), Click on:

<https://heconvention2.wordpress.com/paper-and-convention/>

And click on The Second Convention Tab

UCU continuing professional development (CPD) courses – places available

A few places remain on the following UCU CPD courses, which are free to all members. Please circulate details and encourage members to attend. We'll be adding new course dates in the coming days, so do keep an eye on the [CPD website](#).

[Classroom Management](#) – Plymouth, 20 January

[Classroom Management](#) – Bristol, 21 January

[Speaking Up: Voice Care for Educators](#) – Bristol, 4 February

UCU reps courses this winter

The following courses for UCU reps are now open for booking:

[Rep 1: UCU reps induction](#) – Exeter, 2-4 February (3 day course)

[Rep 1: UCU reps induction](#) – Liverpool, 10-12 February (3 day course)

[Effective negotiating and bargaining skills](#) – London, 2-3 and 23 March (3 day course)

[Health and Safety 2: Organising and bargaining for health and safety](#) – Birmingham, 2-4 March (3 day course)

[Rep 2: Representing UCU members](#) – Oxford, 7-9 March (3 day course)

News for academic related and professional staff

[The winter issue of '...and related'](#), the academic related professional staff (ARPS) newsletter is out now.

LGBT+ intersectionality: practice and research conference, 20 May

The Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality has issued [a call for contributions to their conference](#) which takes place on Friday 20 May at the University of Manchester. For further information contact Seth Atkin on satkin@ucu.org.uk.

Voices and Visibility: a wallchart for LGBT history month and a wallchart workshop, 25 February

A new wallchart for lesbian gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) history month is now available [and you can download it here](#).

UCU pensions news – issue 3 out now!

With news of changes to the state pension, UCU's campaign to challenge the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) valuation, ethical investment and Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) additional voluntary contributions (AVCs), [issue 3 of UCU pensions news is out now.](#)

UCU Health and Safety News – issue 86 out now!

The latest edition of UCU Health and Safety News includes updates on what to do when your office is too cold, advice on working in remote locations, news of the Westminster government's review of public-sector sickness absence and fire precautions. [Read about all this and more here.](#)

UCU/695 Calling notice for Annual Adult Education Meeting – Saturday 27 February 2016

This circular contains information about the annual adult and community education (ACE) national meeting to be held on 27 February. It includes general information about the conference, details of how to register, and a form for the submission of motions.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu695.html

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu695.rtf

UCU/694 Holocaust Memorial Day 2016: Don't Stand By

Branches are encouraged to continue to campaign about the dangers of anti-Semitism to coincide with Holocaust Memorial Day 2016, with information on planning an activity/event provided in the circular.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu694.html

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu694.rtf

UCU/693 Calling notice for Annual Meeting for Academic-Related Staff, Wednesday 2 March 2016

This circular contains information about the conference including details on how to register and a form for submission of motions and nominations.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu693.html

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu693.rtf

UCU/692 Calling notice for Annual Meeting of Staff on Casual Contracts Friday 11 March 2016

This circular contains information about the Annual Meeting of Staff on Casual Contracts to be held on 11 March. It includes general information about the conference, details of how to register, and a form for the submission of motions and nominations.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu692.html

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu692.rtf

UCU/691 Prison Education Annual Meeting – 26 February 2016

This circular contains information about the Prison Education Annual Meeting to be held on 26 February. It includes details of how to register and a form for the

submission of motions.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu691.html

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu691.rtf

UCU/683 Topics for fringe meetings at Congress 2016

Branches are invited to submit suggestions for possible fringe meetings at UCU's congress meeting in 2016. Suggestions should be submitted, preferably by email to Sue Bajwa (sbajwa@ucu.org.uk) with the information described in the circular, not later than 22 January.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu683.html

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu683.rtf

UCU/682 UCU Distinguished service awards 2016

Nominations for distinguished service awards are called for by 18 January. They will then be passed to regional committees, who will be asked to select one nomination per region.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu682.html

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu682.rtf

UCUHE/260 Challenging the USS approach to scheme funding

UCU continues to challenge the USS approach to scheme funding. Branches are reminded to consider the attached briefing, raise the issue at branch general meetings and feed back accordingly.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/pdf/UCUHE260.pdf

Support for NCAFC Women and Non-Binary Conference

Proposed: Christopher Roche (Vice President)

Seconded: Kim Luetchford (Recruitment Officer)

University of Bath UCU Local Association Committee:

Notes:

- 1) The National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts (NCAFC) is hosting a Women and Non-Binary Conference at Warwick University on January 30-31st
- 2) The conference will focus and include sessions on a number of topics central to the activities of the local and national UCU, including “fighting casualization, outsourcing and low wages”, “fighting the Green Paper”, “How the Further Education Cuts affect women and migrants”, and “Free Education is a Feminist Demand”.
- 3) The government’s reforms of Higher Education are particularly harmful for women and non-binary students and workers. For example:
 - reforms outlined in the Higher Education Green Paper propose the introduction of a ‘Teaching Excellence Framework’, within which “excellence” will be measured substantially through a consumerist student satisfaction survey. There is strong evidence that BAME and female teaching staff are systematically disadvantaged by student assessment of teaching. There is also known to be a higher rate of harassment of teaching staff with protected characteristics, which would also be reflected in TEF scores.
 - Subject to performance in the TEF, tuition fees rise in line with inflation from 2017, and will open the door to further increases; due to the gender pay gap, any increase in tuition fees disproportionately affects women
 - The Teaching Excellence Framework’s focus on graduate earnings and employment statistics is likely to result in the mass closure of arts and humanities courses; the majority of students enrolled on these courses are women
 - The proposed changes to the loan repayment threshold will also disproportionately affect women, disabled and BME students
 - The scrapping of maintenance grants will hit access to education for mature and non-traditional students hardest, the majority of whom are women
 - The government has proposed to cut £1.6 billion from the Further Education budget, putting 4 in 10 colleges in danger of closing; women far outnumber men enrolled on access to Higher Education courses
 - Women workers in education are significantly more likely to be affected by casualisation, outsourcing and low wages
- 4) The support received from student activists in Bath Students Against Fees and Cuts in trade union led campaigns, including industrial action.

Believes:

- 1) That education is a social good, which should be paid for by society, by means of taxing the rich and big business
- 2) That women and non-binary people and the issues that affect them are central to the fight for free, liberated, democratic education
- 3) That the drive towards a marketised and consumerised model of education is fuelling attacks on our members' pay, workloads, working conditions and job security, and our women members will bear the brunt of this
- 4) That education and our members are best defended through unity of workers and students
- 5) The NCAFC Women and Non-Binary Conference will be an important opportunity for students and education workers to discuss, analyse and formulate why fees, cuts and marketisation entrench existing inequalities and are necessarily gendered, and plan the fightback
- 6) The conference will perform the important task of linking liberation campaigns on campus with wider struggles relevant to our members

Resolves:

- 1) To make a donation of £75 to Bath Students Against Fees and Cuts, so that they can help cover transport costs to enable students from Bath to attend the conference
- 2) To promote the conference in the next electronic message to members.

#GrantsNotDebt: Reinstate Student Grants

Proposed: Christopher Roche (Vice President)

Seconded: Kim Luetchford (Recruitment Officer)

University of Bath UCU Local Association Committee:

Notes:

- 1) Following on from the 2015 budget announcement, on Thursday 14th January a legislation committee of 18 MPs agreed to cut maintenance grants given to the poorest students in England.
- 2) Currently over 500,000 students receive targeted support based on their household income to help with the cost of living while at university, creating a total expenditure of £1.5 billion per year.
- 3) When tuition fees were raised in 2010 it was with the caveat that maintenance grants would be kept in place to ensure students from lower income backgrounds were not deterred from attending university by incurring high levels of debt.
- 4) Students in need of this financial support, if forced to take out the amount as a loan rather than a grant, will leave with around £53,000 of personal debt. This will either deter these students from attending or will create higher costs for the government as currently around 50% of all student debt is written off.

- 5) University of Bath's Vice Chancellor, Glynis Breakwell, publicly lobbied MPs to increase tuition fees in 2010, partly justifying this position on the basis of "improved support for poorer students."

Believes:

- 1) That this decision was made in an undemocratic, underhanded way with no debate or wider vote on an issue that was not explicitly stated in the Conservative Party manifesto in the lead up to the 2015 General Election.
- 2) The measure was introduced without any consultation with students, the HE sector, or the general public. An Equality Impact Assessment run by the government on the proposal revealed students from poorer backgrounds, and in particular BME students, mature students, women, disabled students, and Muslim students would be particularly at risk from the introduction of this.
- 3) This cut follows a stream of others to further education colleges and adult skills, and other 'reforms', that disproportionately negatively impact institutions providing education to people from lower income backgrounds.
- 4) That it was obvious in 2010 that a future Conservative government would make attempts to withdraw the so called "improved support for poorer students", comprised principally of an increase to maintenance grants from £2,906 to £3,250 for students from households earning under £25,000 per year.
- 5) That the position taken by University of Bath Vice Chancellor, Glynis Breakwell, was at best poorly considered, and at worse a regrettable prioritization of self-interest and short term benefit over the wellbeing of students and higher education.

Resolves:

- 1) To condemn the removal of maintenance grants for the poorest students and the increase in and inequality of debt that this will produce.
- 2) To encourage all branch members to follow national responses and continue to lobby MPs to reinstate study grants for all students.
- 3) To invite members who sit on statutory University bodies (Council, Court, Senate, Academic Assembly) to raise the issue in those forums and to ask whether, now that the "improved support for poorer students" have been withdrawn, the Vice Chancellor has made efforts to oppose the removal of maintenance grants, and what actions she will now take to lobby for their reinstatement.