

# Countdown to marking boycott

2014							APRIL						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5							
6	7	8	9	10	11	12							
13	14	15	16	17	18	19							
20	21	22	23	24	25	26							
27	28	29	30										

Since October UCU members have supported three full days of strike action and three more two hour strikes. The one day strikes were also supported by UNISON and Unite members, and since January we have had the support of Bath University Students Union. In February 50 of the University's professors called on the Vice Chancellor to use her voice to call on the employers to settle the pay dispute now.

Employers have agreed to talk again on 26th March. Why won't Bath's Vice Chancellor come out and say that it's time for an end to big pay rises for the high earners and big pay cuts for the rest of us ? Why does the Vice Chancellor want to talk about everything except pay ? Why won't Bath's Vice Chancellor make a clear, unambiguous call for a national pay deal that will lift the threat of a marking boycott set to begin in just over a month's time ? Our action has already pushed employers into paying the Living Wage to some staff (see inside). This is not enough. If there is no acceptable offer by April 28<sup>th</sup> we will move to a marking boycott.



*In March we asked our members what they wanted the Vice Chancellor to talk about in her latest Let's Talk session: 206 of the 215 who replied said they wanted her to talk about pay – the VC's and ours.*

# Time for transparency on remuneration

The retirement of Peter Troughton as Chair of University Council and its controversial Remuneration Committee is an opportunity for the university to address complaints that the decisions about VC pay should be more transparent. The University Remuneration Committee is made up of:

P Troughton (Deputy Chairman of Rothschild Asset Management, m-d WH Smith)

P Wyman (partner in PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP)

T Sheppard (Thrings commercial property firm)

M Hawkesworth (investment partner and director Lazard, Baring Private Equity Partners and latterly Nova Capital).



UCU has called for elected staff representation on the committee, and this year Bath UCU is asking UCU National Congress to “demand through the national bargaining machinery that institutions publish exact details of the Key Performance Indicators used by such committees when measuring performance. Further, this information should explicitly explain the link between performance and reward in a way that is understandable to staff, students and the UK tax-payer”.

It is also a chance for Bath to respond to the letter to HEFCE from Vince Cable and David Willetts last month, in which they announced even more cuts to HE funding. The Government ministers said

*“We are very concerned about the substantial upward drift of salaries of some top management. We want to see leaders in the sector exercise much greater restraint”*

Willetts and Cable went on to explain that the reason for their concern is that the big pay rises handed out to high earners by remuneration committees is hindering their efforts “to hold down increases in pay generally”. After 5 years of pay cuts and a 13% drop in the value of our pay, UCU members might well support the call for much greater restraint at the top, but will be continuing to campaign for an increase that restores greater fairness to pay in HE.

**Our increase 1%, VCs increase 8%.**  
**The money is *there*... where is our share?**

## A Living Wage ? Students not satisfied

There is no doubt that Vice Chancellors have been embarrassed by the attention given to their own extraordinary pay increases. As the pay of everybody else working in HE has slumped and the gap between top and bottom incomes has grown, it has become more difficult to defend pay rises of up to 25% a year, especially when more and more people find themselves unable to manage on what they earn from working in higher education.

According to Bath HR there are about 250 staff earning less than the Living Wage (currently £7.65 an hour outside London). UNISON represents these staff, and UCU and Unite have supported Unison's campaign to establish the Living Wage at the university. UNISON were being told until very recently that *"the University has very few problems recruiting and retaining excellent staff at its current pay rates and we believe this is because of the fair pay and excellent benefits package offered, when compared with other local employers. On this basis we do not intend to open negotiations on the implementation of the Living Wage."*

Less than a month later this all changed. To hide their embarrassment VCs have been engaged in a race to see who can introduce the Living Wage first. For some, it is also competition to see who can introduce the Living Wage at the lowest cost. The obvious and easy way to introduce the Living Wage is to stop using points on the pay scale that fall below £7.65 an hour, and to do that for everybody. Some universities have done that, but not Bath.

Here in Bath the university will carry on using the pay spine points that fall below the Living Wage, but will pay the 250 people on those points a 'supplement'. The supplement is not consolidated into basic pay and can be taken away. Some have described this as a 'tip'. Also, the Living Wage will be paid to the 250 or so on permanent and fixed term contracts, but NOT to the 1000+ mainly students on casual and zero hours contracts. Students are not very satisfied about that.

Bath students are organising their own Living Wage campaign. On behalf of the campaign, student Katy Brown says: *"With university fees at a record high, many students feel the need to take up casual work. The university should lead the way in paying its casual staff the wages they deserve."*

So is the University of Bath a Living Wage employer ? Not on this evidence. UCU and Unite support UNISON's determination to get more money to the low paid, and we have jointly accepted this pay supplement, but have secured an agreement that the way Bath has gone about dealing with low pay is still under review.

# Why casual staff should join UCU and support the action on pay

UCU has included a demand to tackle casualisation in every annual claim for many years – this year's claim included a call for the assimilation of all hourly paid staff to the national spine and the conversion to fractional contracts for hourly paid lecturers to harmonised terms and conditions that recognise the hours required to perform the job and do not make use of zero hours contracts. The claim also calls for nationally agreed measures to avoid compulsory redundancy.

However, the national employers body, UCEA, has refused, over a number of years, to discuss these issues that we know are of huge importance to all our members, not least those suffering on casualised contracts.

A win on pay will show the employers that we are serious about our claim and will strengthen our call for all aspects of future claims to be given the respect that they deserve.

When the marking boycott begins on April 28th, employers may try to use casual staff to cover the work that permanent staff are refusing to do. This will not improve the pay and conditions of casual staff. It is in the interests of casual staff to support the campaign for fair pay, and the first step is to join UCU.

<https://join.ucu.org.uk>

## **The Osborne Ultimatum: DEBT or IGNORANCE**

**Short-term economics and long term losses:  
Student loan sales and HE economics**

**Mon 24 March, 6-8pm**

Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases

Upper Borough Walls, Bath, BA1 1RL – **FREE ADMISSION**