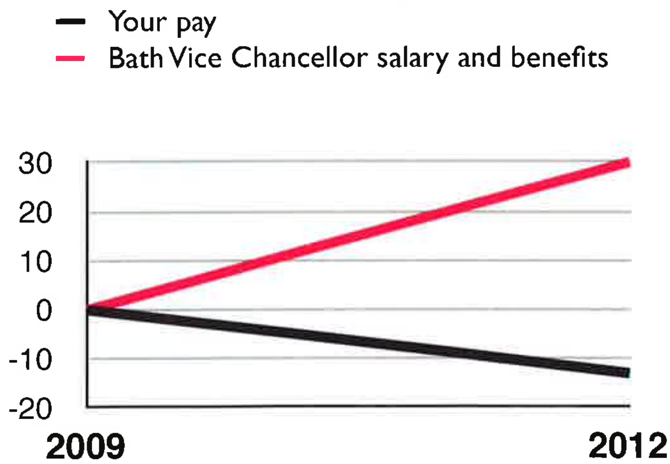
Unions unite to fight low pay

There have been two different stories on pay in the last four years. While the number of high earners has gone up and their pay has shot through the roof, everyone else has seen the value of their pay cut. This is as true in universities as it is in other jobs. The value of our pay has been cut by 13% while Vice Chancellors and other senior managers have had big pay rises. The pay gap at Bath has become so wide that even the University Chancellor made a thinly veiled criticism of his VC in March this year.

For the last two years we have called on the University Remuneration Committee - the small and unrepresentative group that fixes the pay of the VC and some of the other high earners at the University - to show restraint. They have ignored us. We are writing to them again before their meeting on June 27th (see inside).

% change in pay after inflation



Nationally, employers want to cut our pay again this year. They have offered a 1% increase. With inflation running at almost 3% this is another real terms cut. These are the same employers that have been stealthily building up financial surpluses in the last four years. Earlier this year HEFCE announced that 'the majority of the key financial indicators are the best on record, with the sector reporting strong surpluses, large cash balances and healthy reserve levels.' Why won't the employers pay everybody what they pay themselves ? Why are they happier putting more and more of us on fixed term and casual contracts or pushing more work on to people with more 'secure' jobs ? If you want to do something about this come to the joint union meeting on 27th June.

Joint union meeting
Thursday 27th June 1.15 WH1.LT

UCU University and College Union

UNISON

Unite the UNION

Letter to Chair of University of Bath Remuneration Committee

Dear Mr Troughton

20th June 2013

We wrote to you and other members of the University Remuneration Committee in June 2011 and June 2012. We wrote to express our concern about the decisions of the Remuneration Committee to award pay rises well above those negotiated for other employees of the university. In the last four years the value of our pay has declined by 13%, and our pensions contributions have also increased. Yet in 2011 and 2012 the Remuneration Committee has awarded real pay increases to the Vice Chancellor and other high earners at the university. In the last two years alone the Remuneration Committee has awarded an aggregate increase in salary and benefits of 28% to the Vice Chancellor. The gap between the pay of most university staff and the university's high earners has increased significantly.

In his farewell lecture in March this year the University Chancellor Lord Tugendhat was very clear about the implications of the growing gap between the pay of an organisation's leaders and the pay of everyone else. Speaking about those who run big, complex and successful organisations of all kinds he suggested that

"When their pay and pay increases so far outrun those of the people who work for them and the population at large, they lose moral authority, their words will be discounted."

We agree with Lord Tugendhat. We hope therefore that at its meeting on June 27th the University Remuneration Committee will take a different view to the one it has taken in the last two years.

As you know, UCU, UNISON and Unite represent the interests of university staff in national pay negotiations. The claim we have submitted on behalf of our members includes

- a pay offer that matches inflation and starts to address the four year erosion in our pay. This is modest and affordable: HEFCE reported in March that surpluses in UK universities were stronger than projected last year
- a national agreement on guidance to universities over workloads and working hours - to begin to rein in the long-hours culture in HE
- nationally agreed measures to avoid compulsory redundancy and all hourly paid staff to be put on the national pay spine and contracts that are fair for all our staff
- national measures to address the gender pay gap - active intervention by employers is the only way to close the gap

- an agreement on disability leave.

We reproduce the full claim here because we are concerned that members of University Council were not informed of the full details of our claim last year, and will want to know the details of the current claim.

The University of Bath is a member of UCEA, which negotiates for the employers on pay and conditions. UCEA have made an offer of a 1% pay increase for all staff and further negotiations on some of the other parts of the claim. While we welcome the prospect of further negotiations on the gender pay gap, workloads and the terms and conditions of hourly paid and casual staff, and we also welcome progress on a local policy for disability leave, we have rejected the 1% pay offer and are now consulting our members on what action they are prepared to take in support of the pay claim.

The decline in the value of our members' pay is an increasing source of grievance. Responses to the recent staff survey have not yet been published, but we would be very surprised if this does not register as one of the most important concerns of people working at the University.

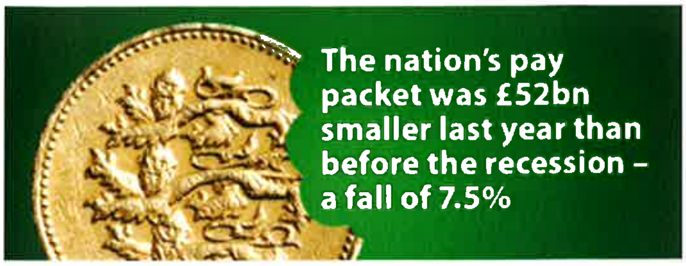
We urge you to take these matters into consideration at the meeting of the Remuneration Committee on June 27th. Specifically we call on the Remuneration Committee to suspend any decision on the pay of the Vice Chancellor and others whose pay it decides, until the outcome of national negotiations for the sector are concluded. If the Remuneration Committee were to agree that the salary increases of the Vice Chancellor and others should be no more than the increases settled through national negotiations for the rest of us, there is no doubt that this would be seen as a practical way of responding to the Chancellor's concerns. We further call on the Remuneration Committee to recommend to Council that it should make representations to UCEA that they make a pay offer that recognises and repairs the damage done to higher education by the 13% decline in the value of our pay since 2009

yours sincerely

Marie Morley, University of Bath UCU

Paul Brooks, University of Bath UNISON

Chris Coy, University of Bath Unite



BRITAIN NEEDS A PAY RISE £

The TUC's campaign to increase Britain's pay packet, and see it shared more fairly.

We're facing the tightest living standards squeeze for nearly a century

Far too many people earn too little to get by. Wages are stagnant, and the real value of UK pay packets has fallen by 7% since the 2008 crash. Across the public sector and in much of the private sector pay is frozen or rising far more slowly than inflation. Average earnings today are no higher than they were in 2000 and it is set to take until 2017 for pay to return to its pre-crash level.
This is a problem that many people faced even before the recession. After accounting for inflation, the wages of ordinary full-time workers barely grew between 2003 and 2008 and were negative for the lowest earners, despite relatively healthy economic growth. It was only the very richest - the top 5% - who experienced faster wage growth.

In fact, the wages pie has been gradually shrinking since the 1970s

For the last thirty years the British economy has seen a steady shift in the way national income has been distributed, away from wages and towards profits.
The poorest half of the population have borne the brunt of Britain's shrinking wage pie, and now receive just 12p of every pound of UK GDP - a 25% fall since the late 1970s.

But the super rich continue to see their incomes soar

Boardroom pay has continued to rise above inflation whilst the downward pressure on wages for lower and middle earners continues.
Since the 1980s some top bosses have seen pay rises as high as 4000%. The average chief executive now earns 145 times more than the average wage.

Falling wages and growing inequality hits businesses as well as households

When wages fail to rise, it's not just household budgets that are squeezed - businesses also feel the pain of reduced spending. Since 2008 Britain's stagnating pay packets have cost the economy over £50 billion.
Depressed wages equal depressed consumer demand, which leads to less investment and productivity falls - a spiral of economic decline. Lower wages also mean reduced tax receipts, leaving less revenue for vital services.

Join your union now !

If you are not yet a member of a trade union and want to find out more about the collective and individual benefits that a union can provide contact

ucu-sec@bath.ac.uk