

University of Bath UCU Annual General Meeting

8th December 2014 3.15pm 8W2.30

Agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Minutes of AGM 9th December 2013 (attached)
- 3 Reports and discussion

Secretary (attached)
Treasurer (to follow)
Membership Secretary (attached)
Any other reports
- 4 Appointment of independent examiner of accounts
- 5 Local subscription rates. .

Earnings	Current monthly sub	New monthly sub
£60k+	£1.20	
£40k+	90p	
£20k+	60p	
£10-£20k	30p	
£>10k	10p	

Branch committee recommends no increase for 2015

- 6 Election of officers for 2014 (current officers shown)

Nominations will be taken at the meeting

President (Marie Morley)
Vice-president (Michael Carley)
Treasurer (Tim Barrett)
Secretary (Hedley Bashforth)
Membership Secretary (Katy Jordan)
Equality officer (Mark Baldwin)
Health and Safety rep (Michael Carley)
Casework coordinator (Cynthia Spencer)

Learning representative (Theo Papadopoulos)
Environmental representative (Hartmut Logemann)
Pensions rep (James Davenport)

Anti-casualisation representative

Campaigns and recruitment rep (Chris Roche)

Student Liaison officer/rep (Kevin Sanders)

Disability rep

Departmental contacts

7 Any other business

8 Refreshments in Wessex House restaurant From 4 pm

University of Bath UCU

Annual General Meeting minutes

9th December 2013

29 members present, apologies from 12 members.

Marie Morley in the Chair

9 Welcome

10 Minutes of AGM 10th December 2012 agreed as a correct record.

11 Reports (Membership Sec, Treasurer, President) (all attached)

Reports received with thanks from the meeting.

12 Branch priorities 2014 (see attached paper)

Adopted after some discussion among members.

13 Agreed to new local subscription rates with effect from September 2014.

Earnings	Current monthly sub	New monthly sub
£60k+	30p	£1.20
£40k+	30p	90p
£20k+	30p	60p
£10-£20k	25p	30p
£>10k	5p	10p

14 Agreed the following motion

This branch supports the creation of a strike fund to support members who face hardship as a result of supporting strike action.

Details to be concluded by Branch Committee and reported to next branch meeting.

15 Election of officers for 2014

Agreed to a proposal from branch committee to create four new positions, all with membership of Branch Committee

Anti-casualisation representative

Recruitment officer/rep

Campaigns officer/rep

Student Liaison officer/rep

The following members were elected for 2014

President	Marie Morley
Vice-president	Michael Carley
Treasurer	Tim Barrett
Secretary	Hedley Bashforth
Membership Secretary	Katy Jordan
Equality officer	Mark Baldwin
Health and Safety convenor	Michael Carley
Casework coordinator	VACANT
Anti-casualisation rep	Kate Seaman
Recruitment officer/rep	Keir Mobbs
Campaigns officer/rep	VACANT
Student Liaison officer/rep	VACANT
Learning representative	Theo Papadopoulos
Environmental representative	Hartmut Logemann
Pensions rep	James Davenport
Departmental contacts	TO BE ADVISED

7 Any other business

None

University of Bath UCU

Secretary's report to Annual General Meeting 8th December 2014

Incorporating comments from pensions rep and casework co-ordinator.

All the events of the past year have been put into a very different perspective by the news that our Branch President Marie Morley died on 24th November. The tributes paid to Marie in the last two weeks, by members and non-members of UCU, bear witness to the enormous contribution Marie made to the life of the University and to the work of the trade unions. In particular, Marie built strong links with the other campus unions, which served us so well during the pay dispute; she raised the profile of academic related staff, who normally play second fiddle to academic staff in UCU; and, in the words of one of our members, 'she got the branch off its knees'. She combined political skills with a warm and compassionate handling of the personal troubles experienced by some of our members. Others will be able to put into words more appropriate than mine the feelings of loss we all share. She was the life and soul of our union and we will miss her as a friend and an inspiration.

If Marie could read this, she would, of course, tell us gently to get on with it. In the last 12 months we have had to get on with it, and she played the leading role in the most demanding of times for UCU and the other unions representing staff at the University of Bath. Over the last five years we have faced unprecedented attacks on our terms and conditions of employment, culminating in two major disputes during 2014.

National negotiations and campaigns: pay

After five years of pay cuts which saw 13% knocked off the value of pay, we finally secured a partial victory. Three one day strikes followed by three two-hour strikes in January led to a settlement of 2% on all payscales. The pay settlement did nothing to restore the value of pay lost since 2009, and it took the combined efforts of all three unions (UCU, UNISON and Unite) to achieve the result, but it was a victory of sorts. The settlement was reached following a consultative ballot of members voting 4-1 in favour. The much closer result among Bath members (less than 2-1 in favour) was probably related to the higher cost of living in Bath.

UCU has supported UNISON's campaign for a Living Wage to be paid to everybody who works at the University, including hourly paid staff. The Vice Chancellor initially rebuffed UNISON's demand for the Living Wage to be paid, but at the start of this year she announced that permanent and fixed term staff who were paid at a rate below the Living Wage (£7.65 an hour) would receive a pay supplement. The unions did not stand in the way of the money being put in to the pockets of the lowest paid members of staff, but we did not agree the move for two reasons. First, the supplement is not consolidated into pay – it can be withdrawn at any time. Second, it is not paid to the hundreds of hourly paid workers at the University. 28 of the University's 80 casual job titles are paid at a rate lower than the Living Wage. Many of those who would benefit from the Living Wage in the University are students who work in the shops, bars and food outlets.

A lobby of University Council on November 27th led by UNISON and supported by UCU, Unite and the Students Union called on Council members to establish the university as a Living Wage employer - a step already taken by some other universities with far smaller surpluses than Bath's £16.9 million. Several members of Council signed the petition and this campaign is set to run into next year.

We had the support of the Students Union in our campaign for fair pay, and Chris Roche in particular played a key role in forging better links with students than we have ever had. We have reciprocated the support we received from students by supporting their campaigns on fees, and through our support for the Living Wage.

National negotiations and campaigns: pensions

No sooner was the pay dispute settled than employers made clear their intention to push through changes to the USS pension scheme that would make the scheme more costly, more risky for members and offer fewer benefits. Less than three years after forcing through changes that leave new entrants to the scheme considerably worse off than existing members, the employers set out their plans to shift USS away from a Defined Benefit model (in which you know what you pay in and what benefits you receive) to a Defined Contribution model, in which benefits are unknown and risk is borne by scheme members. The proposals led to a ballot of UCU members in all 69 pre-92 universities, including Bath. The 78% vote for strike action and 87% for action short of a strike were the biggest votes for action in UCU's history. Members started an assessment boycott on 6th November, and most employers, including Bath, threatened to dock 25% of the pay of anyone participating in the boycott. Within a fortnight the employers agreed to further negotiations and the boycott was suspended to January 16th to allow the negotiations to take place. No pay was docked.

The employers are divided on the proposals, with some universities, including Oxford, Warwick, Imperial and Aberdeen making their criticisms public. Bath's VC has refused to publish the position taken by this university, despite a Freedom of Information request. The refusal of the FOI request is subject to review and appeal.

Branch pensions officer James Davenport adds:

Pensions, and the employers' attack on USS, have been a major feature of the year. The Committee are grateful to Tim Barrett for standing in for James Davenport at several of the national meetings. We should be pleased that the BBC, in reporting the current truce (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-30129729>), said "And a number of professors of mathematics and statistics at leading universities challenged the reliability of the projections underlying the proposed pension changes." Our own Simon wood was prominent here.

It seems likely that members will be called on to resume the assessment boycott in January, and to escalate the action if the benefits of the USS pension scheme are to be preserved. Once again we had the support of the Students Union for our action, and we will need to work hard to keep this if the dispute continues.

Local negotiations, campaigns and casework

The branch has continued to take part in local negotiations on a range of policies and reviews carried out through the Joint Academic Consultation and Negotiating Committee (JACNC - UCU's twice yearly meeting with the VC and her team) and through the Joint Union Consultation and Negotiating Committee (JUCNC - 5-6 meetings a year between HR and all three trade unions at the university).

Through the JUCNC we have secured an agreement on disability leave.

Through the JACNC we have entered into negotiations with HR about the use of hourly paid workers at the university, and we have been well supported by our Regional Officials Catriona Scott and Nick Varney in this. We are assured that 'the VC wants to see a reduction in the university's use of hourly paid staff'. The negotiations will resume in January 2015.

Also through the JACNC we have continued to press the claims of teaching staff who are paid at Grade 6 to be allowed to progress to Grade 7. The agreement we have with the University from 2006 clearly allows for this, but so far there has been no response from HR.

The branch scored a notable victory on the question of holiday pay for hourly paid workers. Hourly paid workers are paid an element of holiday pay on top of their hourly rate. Owen Cranshaw, a postgraduate member of UCU working on a piece of research about the casualisation of academic labour, noticed a discrepancy between the element of holiday pay added to the hourly rate of the c2000 hourly paid workers at the University of Bath, and the amount set down in ACAS guidance. HR acknowledged the mistake and started paying the new higher rate from October 1st. The unions submitted a claim for backpay on behalf of members who had been underpaid before October, and this has been agreed. For some hourly paid workers who have worked at the university for some time, this could amount to several hundred pounds.

At the other end of the payscale, the trade unions published a follow up to the High Earners report two years after the first report. It showed the gap between the 50 or so high earners (£100K+) and everybody else continued to grow. The University Remuneration Committee that determines the pay of many of the high earners continued to reject demands to publish the performance indicators used to make decisions about high earners' pay.

The branch has continued to provide support to individual members facing redundancy, disciplinary process or unfair treatment, and we owe thanks to Cynthia Spencer who was persuaded to take on the role of casework co-ordinator by Marie earlier this year.

Cynthia adds:

We still have 21 personal cases on the books for 2014, 14 new cases and 7 carried over from previous years.

In the course of our casework we have supported and advised members across the university on issues such as flexible working, phased return to work, capability, bullying, probation, organisational changes, changes to contracts and working conditions, reasonable adjustments, and disability.

In September, the trade unions lost the use of the shared office in 1West. This has made it difficult for us to operate effectively. We were offered an alternative in Eastwood, but all three unions agreed this was unsuitable, and we have insisted on adequate accommodation for the work we do. We have now been offered a more suitable space early in 2015 and look forward to being able to provide a more visible and accessible service to our members.

Looking ahead

The campaigns to defend our basic terms and conditions of employment and to resist the trend to casualisation have taken up most of the branch's time, energy and resources in the last 12 months, but in my view we are stronger now than we have ever been. For this we have to thank all members of the branch committee and the growing number of members who take on small roles as departmental contacts and reps. This work is absolutely vital, and I hope you will consider taking on one of these roles if you do not already have one.

We particularly need more health and safety reps, and if you want to take on a more active role in UCU that does not take up too much time, this is something that any of our members can take on. You would receive time off work for the training need to carry out the role.

We are also indebted to members who take on representative roles in UCU outside the branch (Michael Carley succeeded Marie Morley as Chair of the South West Region of UCU in May), and who represent our branch at national delegate meetings of UCU.

We sent a full complement of delegates to this year's Annual Congress in Manchester, and won Congress support for our motion to campaign with student unions and other trade unions for the abolition of student tuition fees and for a fundamental reversal of the policy changes of the last decade. The campaign for accessible, high quality education for all was a cause dear to Marie Morley, and the best tribute we can pay her is to make sure we win it

Hedley Bashforth

3 December 2014

Report of the UCU Membership Secretary to the AGM of the Bath UCU Local Association, December 2014

Current state of membership

The very gradual upward creep in member numbers continues, in spite of higher-than usual numbers leaving the branch. A significant number of long-term members have retired; a similar number resigned from UCU, either because of the increase in subscriptions, or in response to the action over pensions.

As always, membership numbers are quite volatile, with peaks in leavers around the end of each semester and in September-October. As is to be expected, the top month for joiners is October, but we had more people join in November than usual this year, in response to the recent action.

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Membership at last 1st December	474	468	450
New members joined	83	78	76
Members left	79	72	58
Total membership on 1st December	478	474	468

Full members	462
Student members	13
Retired members	1
Attached members	2
Total	478

