

## University of Bath UCU

Branch meeting 5 October 2016 1.15 pm 1E2.4

### Agenda items for discussion

- 1 **Minutes of branch meeting 27 July 2016 and matters arising (see attached)**

#### **Outcome of dispute over compulsory redundancies in Foreign Languages Centre.**

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.](#)

- 2 **New members of branch committee**

**Megan Robb (SPS)** LGBT rep

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

### **3 National negotiations on pay, casualization and gender pay gap**

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 27<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7959/Holding-down-womens-pay-updated-Apr-16/pdf/ucu_IWDpayreport_rev_apr16_.pdf)

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

UCU and the National Union of Students (NUS) have called a [joint national demonstration](#) 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. Bath SU President Lucy Woodcock will join us for this item.



## 5 Casualisation

The branch made a formal request on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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=](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=)

## **STAFF WORKING CONDITIONS ARE STUDENT LEARNING CONDITIONS**

- 6 Report from JUCNC meeting with HR (22 September)**
- 7 Reports from branch officers**
- 8 Threat to 395 jobs at London Met University and fears of privatisation**
- 9 Proposal to affiliate the branch to War on Want (£25 fee)**  
<http://waronwant.org/what-we-do>
- 10 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** – 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:training@ucu.org.uk)

**Branch representatives (negotiating on behalf of and advising members)**

22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Exeter or,  
22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup>  
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.

**11 Any other business**

**National recruitment week, 21-27 November**

[See here for ideas](#)

## Minutes

### 1 Minutes of branch meeting 6 July 2016 and matters arising

#### EU Referendum

The VC has responded to our suggestion for a joint response to the outcome of the referendum. We have invited her to hold an informal Q and A session with all staff on this matter.

The University has taken an initiative on monitoring the impact of Brexit on the University's business, but this has not so far been publicised widely. Linda Humphreys will follow up on this.

Duncan Allsop drew members' attention to a petition currently circulating "We require any Brexit deal preserves UK access to EU collaborative R&D programs"

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/150220>

Emma Carmel has forwarded information about social security rights of EU citizens

[https://theconversation.com/what-the-eus-rules-on-free-movement-allow-all-its-citizens-to-do-62186#comment\\_1025003](https://theconversation.com/what-the-eus-rules-on-free-movement-allow-all-its-citizens-to-do-62186#comment_1025003)

Two members volunteered to act as international officers for the branch with the aim of addressing concerns of members, and of monitoring University decisions that affect the interests of international members. Palash Kamruzzaman and Alex Masardo will join the branch committee in these roles.

### 2 National dispute over pay, casualization and gender pay gap

Members discussed the next steps in this continuing action. The latest national UCU statement is at

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/pdf/UCUBANHE3.pdf?utm\\_source=lyr-branchroundup&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=UCU+Branch+Officers%92+Update+22+July+2016&utm\\_term=](http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/pdf/UCUBANHE3.pdf?utm_source=lyr-branchroundup&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=UCU+Branch+Officers%92+Update+22+July+2016&utm_term=)

Following discussion members agreed to communicate our support for escalation of the action with a marking and assessment boycott and a further series of strikes in the autumn. Members' welcomed NUS

decision to sabotage the NSS and agreed that any strike action should coincide with NUS action on tuition fees and/or education cuts.

Other points noted include:

- There will be a briefing for branches on September 27<sup>th</sup> and HEC will take decisions about the next steps in this campaign when it meets in early October.
- Nour Alhusein will attend the gender pay briefing in September
- Most academic related staff will not be affected by any assessment and marking boycott so will be looking for ways of supporting the action
- There are a number of high profile events associated with the University's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

### **3 Foreign Languages Centre**

Branch reps met with the Director of HR on 25<sup>th</sup> July to discuss our Failure to Agree over proposed redundancies in the FLC. 'Failure to Agree' is the formal process we have for resolving some disputes with the University. HR are refusing to accept that the current situation is a 'Failure to Agree' because it is the outcome of a consultation process and there is no requirement to agree. Our response to this has been that if the University denies us access to the formal process for resolving this dispute we have no alternative but to move to formal dispute and ballot our members for action in defence of staff in the FLC who are threatened with dismissal. There will be a further meeting with HR on 28<sup>th</sup> July.

The branch is currently conducting a consultative ballot to test the strength of feeling among members on this issue. If you have not yet voted in the consultative ballot on action to support staff who are at risk of dismissal, please do so at <https://www.bath.ac.uk/ucu/ballot/> where you will need to authenticate with the normal University Single Sign-On service. The time you vote is recorded, but the vote is anonymous – only a tally of the total votes is kept. If you have any difficulty with the on-line voting system please contact [Tim Barrett](#).

**The ballot will close on at 5:00pm on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August.**

Your branch committee recommends a YES vote to all three questions. Please note this is a consultative ballot to test the strength of support among members. It is NOT a vote for action at this stage.

#### **4 Support our members at London Met University**

Members were reminded that UCU Branch Reps at London Met have been sacked for opposing redundancies and the threat of privatisation. Please support them by signing the statement at <https://uculondonregion.wordpress.com/2016/07/25/statement-of-solidarity-to-london-met-ucu/>

#### **5 Better Workplaces for Disabled Workers**

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September, but registration ends on August 6<sup>th</sup>. It is open to all workers but especially disabled trade unionists and is being hosted by Bridgewater Trades Union Council.

If you are interested see attached notice for details – open to all, and branch will pay travel costs of members wishing to attend.

Next branch meeting: to be confirmed

Next branch committee meeting: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August 1.15 pm 1E2.1