

University of Bath

Claverton Down

BATH

BA2 7AY

7th July 2017

Dear Member of University of Bath Council

I am writing to you on behalf of staff trade unions to ask for your support in making the University Remuneration Committee more transparent and accountable. Students and staff have made representations to the Remuneration Committee for several years, but to no avail. If you attended the annual meeting of Court in February of this year, you will know that the matter was raised there. The relevant minute of the meeting is shown here.

Remuneration Committee and the Emoluments of the Vice-Chancellor

A member of Court highlighted page 45 of the Financial Statements which provided details of the emoluments of the Vice-Chancellor. It was questioned how the Remuneration Committee had come to its decision regarding the Vice-Chancellor's salary. He asked that Court send a note to Council requesting that the decisions of the Remuneration Committee should be taken more openly and that there should be representatives of students and staff on the Remuneration Committee.

The Chair of Council outlined the membership and role of the Remuneration Committee, and stated that the Committee had a responsibility to do all it could to ensure the ongoing success of the University. It considered data from a variety of sources and made its decisions in the best interests of the University. There was significant competition amongst Universities for the employment of effective leaders, and the Remuneration Committee wanted the University to hold on to the best people for as long as possible. He was satisfied that the Remuneration Committee had made the right decision in respect of the Vice-Chancellor's salary, but would be happy for Council to look again at the role of the Remuneration Committee as part of the regular review of the University's governance structure, which was next due in 2018.

A motion was proposed:

"That Court makes representation to Council that it is concerned at the lack of transparency and accountability of the Remuneration Committee and the decisions the Remuneration Committee has made in the past year".

On being put to the vote, the motion was defeated.

33 members present voted against the motion and 30 voted in favour. However, the 33 voting against included enough members and beneficiaries of the decisions of the Remuneration Committee to change the outcome of the vote. The vote at Court is, in our view, tainted by doubts about the propriety of those members and beneficiaries of the Remuneration Committee taking part in the vote.

Three weeks ago the Times Higher Education Supplement published its annual survey of Vice Chancellor's pay.

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/times-higher-education-v-c-pay-survey-2017>

For the first time The University of Bath's VC tops the list, despite being much smaller than many other universities such as Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Cambridge, Oxford and the London universities.

The University Remuneration Committee meets on Thursday 13th July, immediately prior to the meeting of Council. It will consider the annual pay awards to the Vice Chancellor and a number of other high earners. Most staff at the University are facing the 8th year of a pay cap that has reduced the value of pay substantially since 2009. We ask you not to wait until 2018 to start thinking about the way the Remuneration Committee operates, but to suspend any decisions it makes on 13th July, pending the outcome of an immediate and thorough review by University Council of its decision making processes. Our view on these processes is further elaborated in our letter to members of Court, reproduced below for your reference,

yours sincerely

Hedley Bashforth

Acting Secretary, University of Bath University and College Union,

and also on behalf of University of Bath Unite and UNISON.

Letter sent to members of University Court in advance of the annual meeting of Court in February 2017

Dear Member of Court,

Staff and students are lobbying Court today and writing to you to express our worry and concern about pay inequality at the University of Bath, particularly in regards to embarrassing press attention over recent months.

For a number of years, the staff unions have made representations to the University Council about the decisions of its Remuneration Committee. The Remuneration Committee is a sub-committee of Council, but acts with full delegated powers.

This year, the Remuneration Committee awarded the Vice Chancellor a pay rise of 11%, equivalent to £45,000, ten times the 1.1% rate imposed on other staff. Times Higher Education believe that this makes Dame Professor Breakwell the highest paid Vice Chancellor in the country, with a salary and benefits in excess of £450,000 per year. Meanwhile, the university still does not pay staff in line with the Living Wage (£8.45/hour) and exploits staff through the excessive use of zero hour and other insecure contracts. On top of this inflated salary, the Vice Chancellor also lives in an expenses-paid rent-free apartment. This revelation garnered significant negative media attention in October, during the University's 50th anniversary celebrations.

On campus, the students have now passed policy that calls for increased transparency on the Vice Chancellor's pay, and have voted overwhelmingly (92% of those who voted in favour) for a motion of no confidence in the Remuneration Committee. The policy states that "the VC's pay and expenses have become a national news story and a source of embarrassment, detrimental to the reputation of the university as a whole." It adds: "Our tuition fees would be better spent on learning resources and on ensuring that our lecturers and other staff are treated fairly, than on the VC's excessive pay and expenses."

We believe that this is a deeply inequitable state of affairs, not least because the actions of the Remuneration Committee are cloaked in secrecy. We have requested on multiple occasions to be informed of the parameters the committee uses to make its decisions but has been denied every time. There are no elected staff or student representatives to the committee, and the minutes of the meeting are not made available, even to Council.

We are concerned that these arrangements compromise public perceptions of the University's commitment to principles of trust and transparency in its decision-making processes, and the levels of pay inequality at the University reflect a failure of governance.

We believe action must be taken to address the situation before further damage is done to the reputation of the University of Bath. We urge you to raise and support these issues in today's meeting, to urge the University to:

- Include democratically-elected staff and student representatives on the Remuneration Committee.
- Publish minutes of the Remuneration Committee, and a list of Key Performance Indicators used to justify executive salaries.
- Take action to address the growing and unjustifiable wage gap.

Regards,

University of Bath branches of UCU, Unite and Unison, and University of Bath Students' Union