

***Branch meeting in votes to reject the deal and in favour of continuing strike action.**

Our branch president Michael Carley is in London and will communicate this decision to the Higher Education Committee on our behalf. We have sent a letter which also provides a record of the meeting to all the relevant members of Higher Education Committee.

*** Other branches vote to reject the deal so far:**

Ulster, Cambridge, Sussex, SOAS, Goldsmiths, Reading, Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester, Warwick, Strathclyde, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Keele, Liverpool, Hull, York, LSHTM, Exeter, Stirling, UEA, QMUL, Bristol, Cardiff, Loughborough

***Strike continues unless you hear otherwise.**

A vote will be held by the Higher Education Committee today on whether to suspend the strike action.

*** Teach out today 3-5pm in The Bell.**

*** Demo on campus tomorrow (Weds 14th March) at 12pm on the parade followed by open meeting in CB2.6 at 1:15 to discuss where we are tomorrow.**

If you have concrete proposals (motions or other issues you would like to discuss) for the meeting then please submit to ucu.sec@bath.ac.uk by 9am tomorrow

***Letter sent to HEC members at the end of this email**

Thank you for all of the responses to the current "deal" that has been offered. The majority of responses received have been in favour of rejecting the deal and the same decision was reached at the branch meeting held on the pedestrian entrance this morning. We await news from London to see what will happen.

In solidarity,

Bath UCU Committee.

Letter sent to members of the HEC:

Dear HEC members,

A branch meeting was held today 9:30am 13th March 2018, at least 95 members were in attendance. Our branch president Michael Carley received over 100 emails overnight, some messages had multiple signatures. The majority were in favour of rejecting the deal.

Two votes were held by the branch:

Vote on the deal

6 – accepted the deal

Over 80 rejected the deal

5 abstentions

Vote to strike action:

5 in favour of suspending strike action

Over 80 rejected any suspension of action as things stand

9 abstentions

A debate followed which we will summarise here. Overall there was a deep feeling of disappointment and real anger that this deal had been put to members especially at such short notice. Members spoke about hearing of the “deal” during meal times and those members with family or other caring responsibilities were particularly disadvantaged by not being able to respond, a greater time scale should have been offered by the leadership.

Protecting defined benefit was seen by a majority of members in the meeting as the main objective of the strike and the reason we took action in the first place. Collective defined contributions was not seen as acceptable and several speakers rejected the idea that defined benefit could not be continued in the future. Climb downs by unions in the private sector over the 1990s left millions of workers in very poor defined contribution schemes and our unprecedented industrial action aims to avoid the same fate.

Many members expressed particular anger at the decisions and strategy taken by central UCU leadership and our representatives on the joint negotiating committee. People have given up their time, money and energy and our local union has had over 100 new members since the dispute was announced, this includes many who have not been active before. Momentum will dissipate if the action is called off now and the deal accepted. Worse than that, one member who joined only two months said he would leave if the deal was accepted. This sentiment was shared by many in the meeting and we would urge HEC, union leadership and the joint negotiating committee to take heed of this groundswell of opinion. If not the leadership will deeply de-moralise members and will chronically weaken the union and the current action. We cannot emphasise this point enough. The only way leadership can regain the faith of the grassroots membership is by rejecting the deal and continuing with the strike action. HEC and our representatives on the joint negotiating committee should consider this carefully before making their decision. If members are ignored there will be serious trouble.

Many members described being fed up with consistent defeats and roll back of our rights at work, as one member put it, “we are not willing to accept crumbs any more”. The strike is not just about pensions, it is about putting a line in the sand against the whole current organisation of higher education. We have taken defeat after defeat allowing UUK and local university management to implement the REF, the TEF, to continue to casualise and erode the conditions of employment for junior staff, to continue with utterly inadequate situation on the pay and promotion of women and staff from ethnic minority backgrounds. If the senior leadership is not willing to see through this dispute when on earth do they think will be the right moment to push back against the current system of higher education? This was a particularly acute point for younger members who face a lifetime working in a sector. Leadership should think seriously about the future for junior staff when unprecedented and

massive action is met with such poor terms. If the intention was to enthrone new and younger members with this deal, then leadership are quite frankly deluding themselves. Members were especially angry about the agreement to re-schedule teaching. Members were livid that this decision had been taken as it involved effectively working for free and also risked dividing students against staff if we reject the deal. We would like to request an explanation of the logic behind accepting this condition.

On the technicalities we heard reports from our pensions rep James Davenport and Guy McCusker who calculated we would lose 4-4.5% Our pensions rep, James Davenport supported the continuation of the strike at this juncture. Students who are currently in occupation also spoke at our meeting backing our position of rejecting the deal and voting in favour of strike action.

Bath University Branch UCU overwhelmingly rejects the deal and is in favour of continuing industrial action for a better pension deal.

In solidarity,

Bath UCU Committee