

USS Pension Scheme: resolution agreed at University of Bath UCU Branch meeting 24 November 2014

This Branch:

1. Reaffirms the position on USS negotiations adopted by HESC in September 2014 (see below)
2. Was dismayed that the UCU leadership published counter proposals at the start of action which were not put before members in the campaign preceding the ballot
3. Calls for a Special HE Sector Conference to debate the campaign to defend pensions in HE

PRE-92 DECISION-MAKING MEETING ON USS: 19 SEPTEMBER 2014

Recommendation 1 (as amended) – that the meeting approves the following guiding principles for negotiators:

- a. UCU recognises that the attack on our pension scheme by employers is part of a politically motivated attack, not only on the fundamental contract of defined benefits pension schemes, but also on the future of HE;
- b. The new methodology adopted by USS for valuing the scheme should be fundamentally challenged;
- c. UCU recognises that the funding situation may require an increase in employer contributions and that pension provision should be set at a level which is affordable for the institutions in the long term;
- d. UCU considers it vital to maintain a defined benefit scheme;
- e. Acceptance that there could be a limited increase in employee contributions in return for benefit improvements to the CRB section *[note: a proposal to replace this with 'Seeks benefit improvements in the CRB section to achieve parity with TPS and/or final salary section' was remitted to HEC as was a proposal to delete the entire principle];*
- f. Considers that any changes to the benefit structure should provide for, and foreground in negotiations regarding USS, inter-generational fairness and benefit the vast majority of members in the future;
- g. Requires any improvements in the funding position to be used to improve defined benefits;

This decision making meeting believes that the action on student assessment and examination activity noted in recommendation 4 of the Negotiators' Report is one of UCU's most effective means to achieve its objectives in this dispute and that the ballot material sent to members must therefore include detailed information about its practical application and clarity on the extent to which the ASOS proposed does or does not have legal protection from punitive deductions.