

Annual general meeting 24 May 2023 (hybrid)

Meeting has started at 1.15pm.

Chair: Fran Amery (Vice-President)

36 members in attendance (24 on-line, 12 in person)

1. Welcome

Chair introduced herself and welcomed new and old members. Chair explained the President was unable to attend and wished him a speedy recovery.

2. Report from branch officers

Chair drew attention to the reports that had been received and explained these will be uploaded on the branch's website after the meeting. Chair invited the officers to provide a verbal update on their reports.

President's Report (Vice-President gave verbal update):

The President has announced he had decided not to stand again for President. He shared his reflection of the last 4 years in the president role:

- The negotiation and signing of four local agreements with the University of Bath
- A global pandemic that led to over a year of daily close working with the University on issues surrounding health and safety, workload, online teaching, working from home, and threatened 'cost savings'
- Strike action every single year, with strong local turnouts and involvement: 8 days in 2019, 14 days in 2020, 3 days in 2021, 18 days in 2022 and 12 days in 2023 (making a total of 50 days) running into the current Marking and Assessment Boycott.
- Personally, two kids born, both (inevitably) during strike action.

The President has thanked all support he received from his predecessor, and has expressed his offer to support the new President when/if requested.

The president has summarised the local "wins" of the branch during the last four years:

- Negotiated an agreement that saw all teaching fellows gain employee status with an attached change of title to Lecturer (Teaching) / Senior Lecturer (Teaching).
- Negotiated an agreement around a new Teaching Capture Policy that guaranteed members' rights.
- Became the first UCU Branch to both (i) win recognition of the professoriate via referendum and (ii) negotiate a collective agreement on the introduction of a professorial pay and reward system.
- Negotiated a "ground-breaking" collective agreement on anti-casualisation
- Have signed seven joint statements with the University of Bath focused on commitments to local negotiations and putting pressure on national negotiations. These have seen Bath assert positions on USS pensions, in particular, that placed us as the progressive forefront of the national disputes.

The president highlighted the tireless and unseen work the UCU reps do to fulfil their trade union duties.

The president shared on his report with some personal thoughts on national strategy and concluded the report with a note of thanks to the branch committee and the workplace contacts for all their work and support to the branch.

Membership Secretary's Report

The Membership Secretary gave an update on the current membership numbers and the difference from last year:

- The overall membership (as of 23rd May 2023) stands at **740** (of which 71 students, 14 retired and 3 attached)
- This represents an **increase of 5.4%** compared to May 2022.
- As of 23rd May 2023, full members represent 88% of the branch.

Recruitment Officer

The Recruitment Officer gave an update on recruitment drive, where last year, due to the strains of constant disputes, ballots and industrial action, the focus was on making sure a UCU representative was present at induction days for new staff.

The main improvement was in relation to the workplace contacts. A new workplace contacts system was developed and relaunched, improving the representation and members assistance in all Departments. Plans are to further strengthening the workplace contacts system and utilise it to improve the recruitment and retention of members.

Treasurer's Report

Accounts at 31/08/22 had a surplus of around £8800. Although this surplus is significantly lower than the £20K available at 31/08/21, this has been mainly affected by the transfer to the Hardship Fund to support the strike action.

Expenses in the year:

- Travel expenses: £330.85
- Transfer to the Hardship Fund: £10308.24
- Donations: £720.00
- Other expenditure: £283.00

There has been however, a significant amount of donations received to support the Hardship Fund: £3136.53

3. Vote on the Levy/finances

Chair as requested a vote on agreement of the levy/finances, which the members have unanimously voted to agree.

4. Election of branch officers

Chair explained that nominations had been received and duly seconded for a number of branch officer positions. There were no posts for which more than one nomination had been received, therefore the posts were filled unopposed. As a number of posts remained unfilled, the chair has listed the vacant positions and have queried if any of the attendees would like to volunteer for any of the unfilled positions. No volunteers have expressed their interest during the meeting. The Chair explained the importance of filling these crucial roles and highlighted the expressions of interest would remain open, and member can be co-opt at any point after the meeting, to ensure these crucial roles were filled.

Chair presented the list of post-holders for year 2023-4:

President: Ben Ralph
Vice-president: Kate Ehrig-Page
Secretary: Brigitte Nunes Simoes Rodrigues
Treasurer: Tim Barrett
Membership secretary: Kate Ehrig-Page
Recruitment officer: David Moon
H&S Officer: Michael Carley
Equality Officer: Fran Amery
Anti casualisation officer: Mihika Chatterjee
Pensions Officer: James Davenport
Casework coordinator: Tim Barrett
Green/Environment Rep: Sandhya Moise
Women and non binary: vacant
BME members: vacant
LGBTQ+ members: vacant
Disabled members: vacant
International members: Galadriel Ravelli
Postgraduate members: vacant
Academic related and professional services: vacant
Academic Research-Only Staff Rep: Andrew Brennan
Academic Teaching-Only Staff Rep: vacant
Academic Teaching & Research Staff Rep: Ben Radley
Professors: Peter Hall

5. Motions

From this item, the meeting was Chaired by the new President.

A document containing a large number of motions to be presented at Congress was circulated ahead of the meeting via email, with proposal to discuss two of these motions at the meeting. The opportunity was given to members, ahead of the meeting, to propose other motions to be discussed at the meeting.

Motion 1: SFC23 Composite: - Censure of UCU general secretary (Bournemouth University, Cardiff University, Imperial College London)

Motion 2: SFC24 Composite: No confidence in the general secretary (University of Sunderland, Ulster University, Kingston University, University of Oxford, Royal College of Art, Southern regional committee)

There was a lengthy discussion in the room on these motions. There wasn't a strong position either in favour or against. The general view in the room was for the branch to abstain in principle on both motions, but to take the final decision on the day based on the discussion in Congress. The Chair has requested a vote on this proposed approach.

Vote results: clear majority voted in favour.

4. AOB

4.1. Update on MAB

An update on MAB was given and there was an extensive discussion around the various issues and inconsistencies that have been observed/experienced, and the way MAB is being dealt by the University. Main discussions were around:

- Advanced salary deductions in May's payslip – payslip processed on the 25th May, included deductions covering the period from 25th to 31st May.
- University's proposed options to allow students that are affected by MAB to graduate

4.2. Update on the USS legal Action

The Treasurer gave an update on the current USS legal action. The treasurer explained the importance of this action and has informed the branch has donated in support, that will be returned if the action is won.

Meeting has finished at 2.30pm.