

SUCU General Meeting Thurs 23rd Jan 2020, 1pm
Council Room, Firth Court

Chair: Sam Marsh, Branch President

Minutes: Lauren Selfe, Branch Secretary

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1. Sam Marsh welcomed all members to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

2.1. Minutes of the previous General Meeting held on 21st Nov 2019 were agreed as a true record.

3. Brief round-up of news

- ACP meeting took place between members and HR on 22.01.2020 - more to follow soon
- A member has been newly coopted onto the branch committee (Elena Simon) as an informal "Green Officer". We hope to formalise that role in the branch rules at a future meeting.
- The national Fighting Fund and local hardship fund are available to help members. Get in touch with us if you have questions regarding applications
- 10 month contract survey - 40 responses so far. Initial meeting scheduled with HR on 24.01.2020. Please fill this in if you haven't done so already.
- NEC elections. Ballots open 31.01.2020. All of the candidates are listed on the UCU website. A branch slate will follow. Please vote!
- 10.-15.02.20 is the UCU national week on workplace racism and climate learning. These will be the subject of teachouts if the second wave of industrial action goes ahead.
- UCU Equality Research Conference cfp deadline 17.02.2020. Contact Mark Pendleton E&D officer for further info.
- Holocaust Memorial Day event 30.01.2020 6-8pm with Brian Klug. Entry free and tickets available via Eventbrite link circulated in member emails.

4. Update on Disputes

- Four Fights dispute: Negotiations are ongoing, with the next meeting scheduled for tomorrow. Details yet to be published. HEC meeting 30.01.2020 will be informed by the results of these negotiations. A further HEC meeting is scheduled 14.02.2020.
- USS dispute: tripartite talks ongoing (UUK, USS and UCU). There are 3 meetings between now and the next HEC meeting. Details of these talks cannot yet be disclosed. Alongside these negotiations, talks continue between UUK & UCU. The new chair of the board Kate Barker will take over from David Eastwood in the summer.

There were questions from the floor regarding UCU stance on external examination as part of ASOS, and the recently updated national guidance on ASOS. There may be a legal issue with UCU telling members to resign from external examination, as members are in dispute with their own employer only (and external examination is contracted by a different institution(s) to members' primary employer).

The branch will organise a further meeting on ASOS and issue a statement regarding Saturday open days.

5. Branch motions

Proposed motion:

Title: N/A

'In the interests of reaching an acceptable settlement with employers in advance of further industrial action (Four Fights dispute), this branch calls on national negotiators to prioritise the claims relating to casualisation, gender and race pay gap, and workload, and in relation to pay, the claims of staff employed on contracts at

grade 8 and below. This branch calls on HEC to put any deal that represents significant progress on these areas of priority to a members' ballot.'

Proposed by Tom Leng.

Seconded from the floor.

The proposer spoke in favour of the motion and gave some background.

Some clarification on the wording of the motion was requested from the floor, but no official requests for amendments made.

Four abstentions, none against, approx. 76 in favour. Motion passes.

Proposed motion:

Title: Continued coordination of USS and Four Fights disputes

This branch acknowledges the need to fight back against increasing casualisation, damaging workloads, antiquated gender and race pay gaps and a decade long erosion of our pay.

This branch notes the decision from HEC to coordinate ballot distribution and strike days for the Four Fights and USS disputes. This strategy allowed for UCU's most successful ballot turnout results on pay ever and led to eight days of impactful strike action which is empowering our national negotiators.

This branch recognises the need to increase pressure at this point and that in order to win we have to move towards escalating our industrial strategy.

This branch supports this existing strategy towards our two ongoing disputes in HE, and believes that strike action in pursuit of the Four Fights should continue to escalate simultaneously with action over USS, beginning with the 14 days endorsed by HESC in December 2019.

Proposed by Sam Marsh on behalf of SUCU Committee.

Seconded from the floor

The proposer spoke in favour of the motion and gave some background. The motion was written by four of the negotiators on the Four Fights dispute.

Comments and questions from the floor included whether post-92 branches had been consulted on this strategy.

The proposer replied that all branches had been asked to consult their membership on the dispute and feedback to HEC.

Seven abstentions, none against, approx. 73 in favour. Motion passes.

Proposed motion:

Title: Pause and reschedule motion

This branch believes that running the two disputes (USS and Four Fights) together maximises our national and local strength and solidarity. But believes that we need a plan for how to respond when one dispute reaches an agreement.

The problem is that, if there is a win in one dispute, but the other dispute is ongoing we can't simply end action. On the other hand, continuing as if we've made no progress at all may be a disincentive to reaching a deal and disheartening to members. Given this, this branch recommends HEC adopts a 'Pause and Reschedule' plan as follows:

Should an agreement (in either dispute) be achieved and be good enough to put to members, the HEC will suspend action, and reschedule any remaining days for two weeks in the future (same days of the week etc).

The two weeks would provide time:

1. To put the deal to members;
2. For negotiators in the remaining dispute to reach agreement and/or reconsult with members.

Two weeks is suggested here because it:

1. Is the minimal notice required that we give employers when scheduling action;
2. Means that the rescheduled action falls within what is (in most institutions) still term time (finishing at most two weeks later than scheduled)

This would avoid either of the following (otherwise likely) scenarios:

- a) The HEC pauses the action for consultation on one of the disputes, and by the time the consultation is complete and HEC reconvened, it's too late to call any action before the end of teaching and so the dispute fizzles out
- b) The action formally continues as is, despite agreement in one dispute but, perhaps becomes less cohesive, weaker and there is little consultation or recognition that there has been movement.

Proposed by Warren Pearce

Secoded from the floor.

The proposer spoke in favour of the motion and gave some background.

Comments and questions from the floor included if the motion was legal and if it might cause a clash with Easter vacation. These questions were not resolved.

12 abstentions, seven against, approx. 61 in favour. Motion passes.

6. Getting involved

Jess Meacham referred members to the recent email on getting involved in UCU locally and nationally. Please contact the branch if you have questions.

7. UCU annual meeting for academic related professional staff 12.03.2020

Covered in item 6

8. UCU annual meeting of staff on casualised contracts 29.02.2020

Covered in item 6

9. UCU migrant members' conference 27.02.2020

Covered in item 6

10. Solidarity with Indian Universities

A message of solidarity was read by member Arushi Garg

11. AOB

None