

Motions passed at SUCU EGM 7th Sept 2016

Motion 1: Impact nationally

a) Protection for EU nationals

This branch believes that the Higher Education sector benefits from its diverse workforce and student population, a significant proportion of which originate from abroad, particularly the EU. It notes that the uncertainty following the EU referendum places Higher Education staff who are EU nationals but who do not currently have Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK in a specifically vulnerable position. This branch calls on UCU and HEFCE to lobby vigorously and immediately for the government to clarify the situation and to confirm that EU nationals currently working in the UK will be given indefinite right to remain.

b) Protection of rights

This branch notes that leaving the EU means that rules on immigration and workers' rights can and will be rewritten. It calls upon UCU's National Executive Committee to forcefully campaign

- for immigration rules which work to encourage international recruitment of staff and students, including the return of the post-study work visa and the removal of students from immigration figures;
- for the protection of employment and trade union rights, particularly opposing the attacks present in the Trade Union bill.

c) Societal benefit

This branch believes that Higher Education is a key export industry for the UK economy, and calls on UCU's National Executive Committee to promote the positive role that universities play in society, highlighting the benefits that come with an educated population. It calls on the union to play a role in helping to encourage debate and counteract attempts to attack academic freedom, and to campaign for better information in the public domain.

d) Funding and cross-border collaboration

This branch believes that EU-funding has played a large part in the success of the UK's Higher Education sector, and calls for UCU's National Executive Committee to

- highlight the funding issues associated with leaving the EU;
- campaign for lost funding to be matched by the UK government;
- campaign to ensure that the ability to collaborate easily across borders is maintained or improved.

Motion 2: HE bill

This branch believes that, with the uncertainty caused by the result of the EU-referendum, this is not the time for rushing through a major change to the Higher Education sector, and calls on the government to delay its Higher Education bill to allow time to properly debate its contents.

Motion 3: Impact on the university

a) Transparency

Directly following the EU referendum, the University of Sheffield announced a 4-month recruitment freeze and the launch of a Strategy Delivery Group (SDG), whose explicit remit has not been circulated to staff. In discussions between university management and the campus unions it has been made clear that this action is based on financial forecasts made prior to the EU vote, and that similar arrangements would have taken place whichever way the vote went.

This branch believes that the university should have been explicit that the recruitment freeze and launch of the SDG is not a response to the EU vote, and calls for the the remit of the SDG to be made clearer to staff.

b) Focus on staff costs

This branch expresses dismay that university has chosen to focus on staffing costs as a way to cap its expenditure, while at the same time spending large sums in other areas, notably development of the estate. It notes that the university has spent around £0.5bn on capital expenditure in the past five years,

and is forecast to spend £80-90m per annum on capital expenditure over the next four years. Meanwhile, staff costs as a proportion of income, and salaries in real terms, have fallen since 2008.

This branch calls on the university to immediately cease and rethink the recruitment freeze and, if not, justify why a financial solution should target staff budgets rather than any other, clarifying whether spending plans for capital expenditure (in particular, the campus masterplan) have been adjusted.

c) Workloads and stress

With high workloads and stress identified priority issues for our members, this branch expresses significant concern over the effects the recruitment freeze is having on staff. In particular, it is leading to the failure (or delay) to replace jobs in a potentially random and unstrategic manner, which is having a detrimental effect on already over-stretched staff who are being asked to compensate for this under-resourcing.

This branch calls upon the university and its Strategy Delivery Group to

- consider high workloads of existing staff members as a valid reason to recruit, and offer a mechanism to alleviate excess stress and workload if posts are refused;
- include in the Business Case for Recruitment form a section entitled 'Effect on staff workloads if the post is unfilled';
- undertake proper staff stress risk and equality impact assessments, and consider other due process in advance of any decision affecting staffing levels, including the refusal of permission to recruit;
- consider whether the increased bureaucracy involved in the recruitment freeze is counter-productive to an efficiency drive.

d) Job security

This branch expresses significant concern over the effects the recruitment freeze will have on the job security of staff. In particular, it

- severely restricts redeployment opportunities for those coming to the end of fixed-term contracts or at risk of redundancy in a review or restructure;
- may affect the ability of casual and fixed-term staff to secure a proper contract.

This branch is clear that the recruitment freeze must not be used as an excuse to keep staff on casual contracts or to stop fixed-term posts from becoming open-ended, and calls upon the university and its Strategy Delivery Group offer assurances that agreements on regularisation are unaffected.

Motion 4: Union representation on the SDG

With the Strategy Delivery Group primarily focusing on staffing matters, this branch demands that the university includes union representation on the committee to ensure that discussions take place with staff interests in mind.

Motion 5: Impact on the pay campaign

Remitted.