

Annual General Meeting, Thursday 8th June 2017
Council Room, Firth Court, 1pm

Chair: Craig Brandist, SUCU Branch President
Minutes: Jane Rodger, Branch Administrator

Craig Brandist introduced himself and welcomed members to the meeting.

1. Minutes of the last AGM held 8th June 2016

The minutes were accepted and passed from the previous year. There were no matters arising.

2. Local subscription for 2017/18

It was noted that the local subs change at the same rate as the national subs (as agreed at our 2013 AGM) and this year have increase by 1.86% taking effect from 1 September 2017.

3. Reports - To acknowledge written reports and take questions on the Annual Report

3.1. Craig Brandist introduced the SUCU Annual Report which was circulated and is in the appendix below. Craig read from his President's report highlighting the following. Congress has decided the way forward for pay negotiations will be discussed by a Special Sector Conference. The Branch has been working hard to expose how the way University management have presented financial information obscures the reality of reducing expenditure on staff costs, whilst spending on building is at historic highs. Our campaign to highlight this matter was followed by the announcement that some building projects have been postponed. The new Education Act has been an impetus to further use of metrics across the University. We are seeking to mitigate the worst effects of this and are working closely with the Student Union - a good example of which is the successful boycott of the National Student Survey. We are also working closely with the Student Union and have formulated a joint position on the use of lecture capture. SUCU is working towards a University wide workload policy to protect staff from the pressures many are currently experiencing. Currently workload management is devolved and there are no standard units of measurement. Craig made the meeting aware that Jane Simm (our Vice President), and Pablo Stern (our Treasurer) will soon be leaving the University. He thanked them both for their huge contributions to the running of the Branch, and for the differences they have made to the working lives of many people at Sheffield University. This was followed by a round of applause.

Questions and comments were taken on the annual report and included:

- Branch Officers are involved, along with our sister unions, in the widespread University reviews and restructures. SUCU is seeking to ensure that agreed change management procedures are followed, such as processes for staff at risk or pooled etc. The University Strategy Delivery Group is concentrating on Research Innovation Services first and this is linked to research support in Engineering. SUCU is keeping a list of all reviews and restructures, and we continue to need information from members. The review of research support can be seen as a dress rehearsal for the reviews in Student Services. Jane Simm is currently writing guidance for members involved in a review or a restructure.

- We need to work with the Student Union on the review of Student Services to ensure any weakening of the service provided to students is resisted.
- What is SUCU doing to progress EU colleagues' concerns?
Ans. We have held an Action Group to better understand members' concerns and have been pressing the University to assist this group of staff further. We are also broadening out the scope of our campaign to include other international colleagues. The University wants to maintain its reputation and has been highlighting cost factors.

3.2. There was also a brief update on the Prevent agenda which is in the process of being implemented, and the University has produced an action plan. Members are encouraged to feedback any concerns they may have to SUCU Committee. This could include effects on academic freedom and students. There was also a motion passed at UCU Congress to redouble efforts to defeat Prevent in education.

Questions and comments from the floor included:

- The training on prevent is terrifying.
Ans. There seems to be a change in approach locally.
- The previous approach to Prevent at the University was a focus on student wellbeing which has been discussed in meetings with management. We certainly do not want to see any knee jerk reactions.

4. Election of SUCU Officers 2017-18

This was overseen by Jane Rodger (Branch Administrator) who acted as Returning Officer. As there was only one eligible candidate for each Officer vacancy, the candidates could be declared elected. Jane read out the nominees to the Branch Officer positions. Members were invited to raise any objections to these candidates. No objections were made and the officers were elected for the next year. Late submissions for the positions of Branch Secretary, Education Officer and Anti casualisation Officer were dealt with separately. There was only one eligible candidate for each of these positions. Jane Rodger read out the nominations, no objections were raised and the officers were declared elected. A vote was taken to confirm the election where all were in favour with one abstention.

Position	Name	Department
President	Craig Brandist	Russian & Slavonic Studies
Senior Vice President	Mick Ashman	School of Nursing & Midwifery
Vice President	Jon Benson	Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health
Branch Secretary	Sarah Staniland	Chemistry
Education Officer	Jess Meacham	Journalism Studies
Equalities & Diversity Officer	Azadeh Madanian Mohammadi	ELTC
Health & Safety Officer	Mick Ashman	School of Nursing & Midwifery
Treasurer	Pablo Stern	CICS
Pensions Officer	Matthew Malek	Physic & Astronomy

Membership Secretary	Rob Stanton	CICS
Communications Officer	Sam Marsh	Maths
Anti-casualisation Officer	Sam Morecroft	Politics
Post Graduate Researcher Officer	Emma Nagouse	Careers Service

5. Election of Ordinary Committee 2017-18

This was overseen by Jane Rodger (Branch Administrator) who acted as Returning Officer. As there was only one eligible candidate for each Officer vacancy, the candidates could be declared elected. Jane read out the nominees to the Ordinary Committee member positions. Members were invited to raise objections to these candidates. No objections were made and the officers were elected for the next year. A vote was taken to confirm the election where all were in favour with one abstention.

Name	Department
Jane Simm	Careers Service
Rita Hordosy	Projects and Development
Seth Mehl	School of English

6. Report from UCU Congress 2017

This year SUCU sent four delegates to the national UCU Congress: Craig Brandist, Jess Meacham, Sam Morecroft and Emma Nagouse. Craig Brandist gave an overview of groups within UCU – the Independent Broad Left, and UCU Left. Many matters were discussed at Congress and good solid policies were adopted. Unfortunately we were unable to submit a late motion regarding cyber bullying of women, but Emma spoke in support of another motion dealing with similar issues. We need members to support our taking this matter forward locally. Congress also voted to convene a Special Sector Conference which would include Congress attendees at times when industrial action is being considered by the union. This was thought to be more democratic. It was also decided that a ballot on the pay campaign should be preceded by a proper campaign.

Questions and comments from the floor included:

- What was discussed regarding USS Pension?
Ans. A whole session was dedicated to this. The importance of pressing the Employer to advocate a different valuation method was passed. The question of industrial action would be covered by a Special Sector Conference.

7. Any Other Business

None.

SUCU Annual Report 2017

President's Report

Craig Brandist

2016-17 has been a year with a significant number of challenges. Last year's pay campaign was unsuccessful, resulting from a national strategy this and other branches regarded as unwise, and we now face yet another effective pay cut under new and more restrictive conditions that make the winning of a national ballot for industrial action more difficult. We and many other branches continue to press for a more effective strategy and Congress decided there will be a special sector conference to discuss the way forward.

The 3-yearly review of the USS pension scheme, the benefits for which were significantly downgraded some years ago, is approaching and we have been pressing hard for the University to advocate a different way of assessing the health of the scheme than the highly questionable method that was used last time and which led a significant deficit to be returned.

University finances remain generally healthy, with senior management making a deliberate choice to reduce the proportion of expenditure dedicated to staffing costs, which for the first time has fallen below 50% of expenditure, while capital expenditure remains at very high historical levels. We have worked hard to expose how the University has presented figures which obscure this reality, which was followed by the announcement that some building projects have been postponed. The Staff Release Scheme (SRS) took place in this context, and we note with some disquiet the significant number of job losses across the sector. The launch of the Strategy Delivery Group has resulted in a range of University-wide reviews of Professional Services, academic departments and now the Faculty structure itself. Thus far large numbers of staff have not been placed at risk, but this is a time of considerable discomfort for many, and the reviews prove very time consuming for the committee.

The new Education Act, which includes the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework, has provided an impetus for a number of unwelcome changes across the institution, including the creeping expansion of the use of metrics in performance management. This is a general trend across the sector and it will take considerable efforts at a national level to stop it, but here we have sought mitigate the worst effects of this initiative and to keep the membership informed about negotiations in this area. We have been working closely with the Student Union to support their campaign against the National Student Survey, which is a crucial data set for the new system of metrics, and this has proven very significant with large swathes of the university being unable to reach the necessary threshold to make the results usable. This successful model of drawing up a joint position with the Student Union has just resulted in a joint position on lecture capture, which we are using in negotiations to ensure all compulsion to participate in capture is removed, the performance rights of staff to decide what the recordings may be used for are retained, and to ensure managers cannot use the recordings for any other university procedure. The input of members, sharing their concerns about lecture capture, has been crucial in these negotiations, which are still ongoing but are showing signs of progress.

We are also pressing the university for a policy on workload to protect staff from the pressures many are currently experiencing. We are arguing this is a key element of the employer's duty of care toward its staff. Management constantly support devolved workload management, but have no case for refusing a standard unit of measurement across the institution or for trying to evade its duty of care. This is part of a wider focus on health and safety at the institution, encompassing the physical environment and issues such as bullying. Tackling these issues collectively is the best way of defending members of staff since particular problems are often common in certain departments or faculties. Dealing with such problems individually can lead to avoid spiralling levels for casework, which takes up a considerable amount of Committee time - it is worth noting that in the last academic year we have had 90 requests for assistance from individuals.

A number of new committee members have come forward this year and this is reflected in the Committee's slate for the next year. A new influx is crucial to keep the Committee fresh and active, and the combination of youth and experience will be crucial in facing the many challenges ahead. That said, however, we will soon be losing Jane Simm, our Vice-President, who will be retiring but promises to maintain her contacts with the branch. Jane has made a huge contribution to the running of the branch and has made a significant difference to the working lives of many people at Sheffield University. Our treasurer, Pablo Stern will also be retiring this year, though has agreed to stay on

as branch treasurer. Pablo has played a really important role in the branch over the years, especially when statutes and procedures were overhauled a few years ago. I would like to pay my tribute to their efforts and I'm confident the branch more widely will want to do the same.

To end on a high note, however, the branch has seen another increase in membership over the last 12 months. It is essential that we keep this growth going if we are to face the many challenges that lie ahead.

Branch Secretary Report

Jon Benson

Following the pay campaign last year, the Branch has prioritised local Claims around the non-pay elements - tackling casualisation and action towards eliminating the gender pay gap.

Casualisation

In December 2016 we surveyed members and non-members about their experiences of casualisation at the University where we received many hard-hitting responses of experiences of those on zero-hours contracts, Graduate Teaching Assistants and other similar types of engagements. This campaign led to a Claim to the Employer which was supported by several local MPs to further raise awareness. We are in the early stages of agreeing the formation of a new group to negotiate on behalf of casual staff undertaking teaching and related activities.

Gender pay gap

This year Sheffield UCU, working jointly with our sister campus unions submitted a Claim to agree actions that will push to close and eliminate the gender pay gap at Sheffield. We now have a representative on the University's equal pay group and input to the outcomes of the report to ensure the action plan is timely and meets the needs towards ending this long standing unfairness.

Action Groups and communications

Over the last year the Committee has been running monthly 'Action Groups' as a practical way for members to get involved with the Branch. Each month is a different theme and it's through these groups that we are able to hear your contributions on a variety of areas including lecture capture, health and safety, stress, overseas staff visas and much more. We will continue to run these groups and please do let us know of any themes you would like to raise. We will also continue with our usual branch updates by email to keep you up to date on what the Branch is working on and how you can get involved. You can also pick up a copy of our annual Bulletin at the meeting today.

Committee

As our membership has grown over the last year, as has our Committee and I am pleased to welcome several new committee members to the AGM. I would like to echo Craig's tribute to Jane Simm and Pablo Stern. They have both made an immeasurable contribution in so many areas to the Branch, our members and all staff at the University.

The Branch is in a strong position to be ready for the many challenges ahead coming from within the University and also with many external changes on the horizon.

Treasurer's Report

Pablo Stern

I am pleased to report that the branch finances continue to be healthy. Our income is from the 'local' element of your monthly subscription, graduated according to income (see below). Our funds continued on a sound financial footing, with a slowly increasing balance over the last year.

Our main expenditure is for our excellent Branch Administrator. Her pay is on the same scale as ours, so there was a (too small) increase in August 2016.

For the coming year we can expect our normal income and expenditure to be again roughly balanced, depending of course on future events.

Campaigning and Industrial Action

Our financial health means we are in a strong position for supporting campaigning activities, and if necessary industrial action, supplementing any national funds which are made available. Although there is no local or national action currently planned it is important that we are in a position to support it financially if it becomes necessary.

Trust Fund

There has been for some years a small residue amount left in the dormant John Bunt & Roger Richards Memorial Scholarship Trust, which was administered by AUT and then UCU. We are pleased that we have been able to transfer

this amount to the Students Union Participation Fund, which has an appropriate remit, so it will be used as intended. The fund is now formally closed.

Reports

Below are:

1. UCU national and local subs rates from September 2017
2. Donations and subscriptions since the last AGM
3. Financial Reports
 - a. The accounts for the last UCU financial year, to 31 August 2016, approved by UCU head office.
 - b. An interim financial statement for the first six months of 2016/17 (September to February).

1. UCU subscription rates 2017/18

The tables below set out the national subscription rates which will apply from September 2017. They have increased by 1.85% from 2016/17.

The local subs change at the same rate as the national subs, as agreed at our 2013 AGM, so also increase by 1.85%.

Subscription rates from Sept 2017			
	Monthly national subscriptions		SUCU local
	including political fund	excluding political fund	subscriptions
£60,000 & above	£24.15	£23.92	£3.22
£40,000-£59,000	£22.01	£21.80	£3.22
£30,000-39,999	£20.01	£19.82	£2.45
£20,000-29,999	£18.88	£18.70	£2.45
£10,000-19,999	£11.50	£11.39	£2.45
£5,000-10,000	£5.21	£5.16	NIL
Below £5,000	£1.02	£1.01	NIL
Retired/attached members	£2.73	£2.71	NIL

2. Donations and subscriptions June 2016 to date

Campaign against Climate Change	Affiliation - annual	£25.00
CND	Affiliation - annual	£25.00
Hazards magazine	Affiliation - annual	£15.00
Jobstown Not Guilty	Donation to Jobstown Not Guilty campaign	£100.00
Justice for Columbia	Affiliation - annual	£90.00
Labour Research Department	Affiliation - annual	£232.75
London Metropolitan UCU Branch	Donation to campaign	£100.00
National Shop Stewards Network	Affiliation - annual	£50.00
Sheffield Peoples Assembly	Affiliation	£20.00
Sheffield Students Union	Donation towards coach to demo on 19 th Nov	£100.00
Sheffield Trades Council	Affiliation - annual	£311.00
Sheffield Trades Council	Donation to Sheffield Needs a Pay Rise campaign	£200.00
Stand up to Racism	Affiliation - annual	£50.00

Tamil Solidarity	Affiliation - annual	£50.00
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3. Financial reports

The accounts for the year ended 31 August 2016 follow, together with the interim I&E report for the current year, September 2016 to February 2017.

- These accounts were prepared by the branch accounting service. We get quarterly summary accounts as well as the full end of year accounts.
- The year-end accounts for 2015-16 have been signed off by UCU head office.

3.a.1. Income & Expenditure Account 2015-16

Income		<i>Totals</i>
Subscription Income	60,514	
		60,514
Expenditure		
Subscriptions Payable to Head Office	23,450	
Subscription Collection Charges	656	
		24,106
Gross Income/(Expenditure):		36,408
Administrative expenses		
Travel	304	
Postage & Carriage	3	
Telephone/Internet	6	
Office Stationery	238	
Printing	1,213	
Catering	1,785	
Donations	181	
Subscriptions/Affiliations	797	
Repairs & Renewals	491	
Miscellaneous	265	
Clerical Assistance	20,599	
Hardship Support	2,101	
Pension	2,725	
Admin/Ins Cost	95	
Bank Charges	15	
Accountancy Fees	600	
		31,418
Net Income/(Expenditure):		4,991

3.a.2. Balance Sheet 2015-16

Fixed Assets		<i>Totals</i>
	0	0
Current Assets		
Cash	25	

Alto Card	450	
Bank Account	41,671	
		42,147
Current Liabilities		
Creditors and accrued income	2,138	
		2,138
Total Assets less Current Liabilities:		40,009
Accumulated Funds		
B/fwd	35018	
P&L Account	4991	
		40,009

3.b. Interim Income & Expenditure Account 2016-17
Year to date September 2016 – February 2017

Income		<i>Totals</i>
Subscription Income	31,029	
		31,029
Expenditure		
Subscriptions Payable to Head Office	11,233	
Subscription Collection Charges	311	
		11,544
Gross Profit/(Loss):		19,485
Administrative expenses		
Travel	370	
Postage & Carriage	8	
Office Stationery	0	
Printing	0	
Catering	736	
Donations	400	
Subscriptions/Affiliations	849	
Repairs & Renewals	0	
Miscellaneous	2	
Clerical Assistance	10,513	
Pension	1,751	
Hardship Support	150	
Admin/Ins Cost	48	
Bank Charges	0	
Accountancy Fees	400	
		15,227
Net Profit/(Loss):		4,258

Equality and Diversity Officer

Jon Benson

As outlined in the Branch Secretary report we have submitted a joint Claim with sister campus union to have input into the equal pay report and agreement on substantial actions to come out of it that will move towards eliminating the gender pay gap. We continue to monitor progress in this area.

The campus unions have one representative on the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board and we have been collaborating to have a collective input to the group where possible.

Health & Safety Report

Jon Benson and Mick Ashman

Jon Benson has recently completed training to be a Safety Representative to work with Mick on Health and Safety matters, including input to the University Health and Safety Committee.

A recent Action Group was focused around workplace caused stress in the context of Health and Safety law and guidelines and we hope in the following year to further raise the profile of H&S matters across the membership.

If you have a Health and Safety concern you can contact the Branch.

Membership Report

Rob Stanton

The branch has held several recruitment stalls during the last year including a recent joint event with our sister unions, and the number of full members of the branch has increased by 4.5% during that time. Our stalls help raise union visibility in Departments and give potential members and members alike the opportunity to talk to us about their important issues. Direct contact remains the most effective way of introducing colleagues to union membership. The essential work done by SUCU Departmental Contacts in providing information to potential members is vital to building the strength of the union. The University also continues to provide the campus unions with monthly lists of new staff. This is used for organising and recruitment purposes - an initial email invitation to join SUCU is sent to individual eligible staff, and occasional group emails are sent to make staff aware of what SUCU members have achieved on their behalf.

The 2016 Trade Union Act has made it compulsory for a valid ballot for strike action in the education sector to have a 50% or higher turnout. This makes it more important than ever to ensure our members' contact details are accurate so their ballot papers are delivered to the correct address and they can return a vote.

The single source of truth for membership details is the UCU central database and over the last 2 years we have sent an individualised email to sheffield members with their contact details together with instructions for updating any inaccuracies. This year 137 members accessed their account so the strategy seems to be working.

Our recruitment efforts will be continuing in the coming year.