

## Sheffield UCU General Meeting Tues 10th March 2022, 13.00-14.00

**Chair:** Sarah Staniland, SUCU President

**Minutes:** Jane Rodger, SUCU Administrator

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1. Sarah welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Branch Rule change motion

2.1. A proposal to move the date of the Annual General Meeting from June to April was presented. The proposer gave background. Here are our branch rules, and the rationale for the rule change can be found here. The motion was seconded from the floor.

**Rule change motion:**

In branch local rules 13.1, replace the word 'June' with 'April'.

2.2. There were no comments from the floor. A vote was taken and the motion was passed nem con. Based on the outcome of the vote, the next AGM will be held on Tues 26th April 1-2.

3. Committee: what we do, Resignations and nominations

3.1. Sarah presented an overview of SUCU Committee activities and this was followed by a number of Committee members talking about their roles and experiences. Sarah invited members to consider getting involved as a member of SUCU Committee or SUCU more generally.

4. Congress motions

4.1. This year the national UCU Congress will be held on the 1st to the 3rd of June. This includes the HE Sector Conference. Our deadline to submit motions is the 18th March, and we can send one to Congress, and two to the HE Conference. Congress meets annually and sets the policy agenda for the union. In advance of Congress, there will be two separate Special HE Special Sector Conferences in April to discuss the national disputes.

4.2. The following motion was proposed on behalf of Committee to go to Congress and the proposer gave background. The motion was seconded from the floor

**Congress motion - fair pay for parents**

Congress notes:

- That employers across further and higher education offer differential access to additional maternity and other parental leave and pay, including the length of time of qualifying employment required
- That this causes unequal treatment for people who give birth, depending on their place of work
- The ongoing work of UCU with groups such as Maternity Action to achieve progress on these issues

Congress resolves:

- To call on all education employers to provide equal access to additional maternity pay and other parental leave and pay at sector leading levels from the commencement of employment
- To develop a public campaign that highlights inequalities across employers
- To develop guidance around best practice for additional maternity pay and other parental leave and pay to assist branch campaigns

After a discussion a vote was taken and the motion was passed by a majority.

- 4.3. The following motion was proposed on behalf of the Committee to go to the HE Sector Conference. The proposer gave background and the motion was seconded from the floor.

#### **Higher Education Conference motion - fair pay for all our labour**

Conference notes:

- The hugely differential, unregulated, and often inadequate, rates of pay for ad hoc labour in higher education, such as external examination, PhD examination, and guest lectures
- The absence of centralised UCU guidance on pay for these kinds of labour, akin to nationally negotiated salary scales, despite various discussion papers over the years, such as to the 2010 Review of External Examining Arrangements
- Grassroots resignations of external examiners in solidarity with recent industrial action
- Attempts by some employers to move away from established quality assurance mechanisms such as external examining in an attempt to undermine solidarity actions

Conference resolves to:

- Instruct HEC to develop centralised guidance on appropriate rates for the range of external and ad hoc roles that members undertake for universities
- Develop this as a component of the next UK-wide JNCHES pay claim

After a discussion a vote was taken and the motion was passed by a majority.

5. Just eat strikers donation of £400

5.1. A donation to the strike fund for Just Eat Couriers was discussed at the most recent EGM and a proposal is now brought to members to donate £400. A vote was taken and the donation was agreed by a majority.

6. Industrial Action update

6.1. An update on the USS Pension dispute was given. Since the last Joint Negotiating Committee held on the 22nd February, UUK has pushed through the cuts. USS are now busy implementing the cuts that start on the 1st April. These cuts can still be reversed by our action. There is also hope in the legal action that is being taken. An application to the High Court is being heard on the 28th March to sue USS using USS's money to do so. If the case is won the judge could also issue an injunction. A proposal to donate £1000 to the legal fund was put to the meeting and seconded from the floor.

6.2. Comments and questions on the proposal included:

- What would the injunction be?

Ans. It is possible that an injunction could prevent the imposition of the cuts. It is more likely that there will be a full hearing.

- Why is UCU not funding this?

Ans. There is still a possibility that UCU can bring action.

A vote was taken and the donation of £1000 was agreed by a majority.

6.3. The next round of strike action, continuing ASOS, and the rebalot were discussed. The Dispute Committee has been making plans for coordinated withdrawal from voluntary labour. More details will be circulated by email. So far four weeks of teaching has been disrupted and we need to make it clear that learning outcomes have not been met. We will provide clear guidance about the forms you will be asked to complete. Our next Extraordinary General Meeting has been called for the 24th March.

7. AOB

7.1. There will be training during the week after next based on feedback around organising & recruiting activities in the Faculty of Engineering. The activities were successful in engaging staff in conversation. Many people said that they had never been asked to join the union before and this resulted in some new members. The trainings are very participatory and are open to all members.