

Annual General Meeting, Wednesday 19th June 2013

Council Chamber, Octagon Centre, 1pm

Chair: Mick Ashman

Minutes: Jane Rodger, Branch Administrator

Mick Ashman introduced himself and welcomed all in attendance.

1. Minutes of the last AGM held 13th June 2012

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

2. Local subscription for 2013/14

Daragh O'Reilly reported that the loss reported last year has been significantly reduced. This loss arose originally from the University's withdrawal of paid administrative support. Reserves have been used to absorb the loss, but the objective for the coming year 2013/14 is to balance the books.

Daragh put forward his proposal (seconded by Committee):

- Cut costs without damaging branch effectiveness
- Increase revenues sufficiently to cover costs.

As far as cost-cutting is concerned, the proposal is:

1. To remove catering provision at general meetings and departmental contact meetings, except for the AGM.
2. To raise local subscriptions from the current level of £2.12 to £3:00/month for band F1 only (those earning more than £40,000). This represents an annual increase of $£0.88 \times 12 = £10.26$.

The local sub for bands F2, F3 and F4 will increase by the same percentage increase as the national subs, as agreed last year. Bands F5 and F6 do not pay a local sub.

Gillian Brown reminded members that legal assistance can be refused if a member is not paying the correct sub. This can be checked online.

Daragh O'Reilly explained that the University makes an administration charge for subs paid through salary deductions. He asked members who pay using this method to consider changing to Direct Debit.

A vote was taken and the proposal was agreed unanimously.

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

The Annual Report was circulated and is in the appendix below. Mick Ashman introduced the Annual Report highlighting the work of the previous year, the changes in education, increases in Personal Casework, local campaigns, and the growth in Branch membership. The focus for next year will be on vulnerable areas, and to monitor the implementation of the new procedures and policies. Mick stressed that increases in membership strengthens SUCU's position in negotiations.

Mick talked through the sections of the Annual Report and highlighted the following:

Health and Safety

There have been improvements in the way the University is dealing with its H&S obligations.

Equality

Jane Simm reported that she has been attending the Equality/Diversity Board on behalf of all campus unions. Equality objectives reported on at last meeting are still being implemented. One of these is to look at training for managers and Heads of departments and consider how equality issues are incorporated.

At the recent Congress, new materials have been written to support members including the [Black Workers Survival Guide](#), details of which will also be circulated in Branch News.

Personal Casework is becoming increasingly complex and relates to a range of disabilities including mental ill health. The main issues are return to work and reasonable adjustments.

Atypical Workers

The pursuit of employment rights for casualised workers has been a major piece of work for SUCU Committee. Many members have been helped through Personal Casework and there is now a Joint Review of Hourly Paid Teachers attended by SUCU Committee members.

Membership

Membership has increased generally and specifically amongst atypical workers and post graduates.

Current negotiations

The University is reviewing the Statutes and Ordinances. Statute 6 defines the terms and conditions of employment for academic staff. The University is seeking to remove the detail currently contained in the Statutes to regulations and procedures, and this will make it easier to make future changes. SUCU negotiators want to retain as much as possible in the Statutes and are supported in this by both Regional and National Officials.

There was a proposal to remove UCUs recognition for 'academic-related' staff, and there was a large turnout at the EGM in February to discuss this issue.

There is a current impasse about the resignation period for certain research-active staff.

There seems to be a trend for the University to seek to reduce terms of employment, for example the cut in pensions for lower grade staff and the creation of a subsidiary for catering services with staff employed under worse conditions with no trade union recognition.

Questions and comments from the floor included:

- To what extent did SUCU resist the non-unionised and low wage subsidiary? Mick Ashman explained that SUCU Committee made its objections very clear, and gave its support to the other campus unions Unite and UNISON who would represent this group of staff. It was pointed out that the new University House will now charge for room hire whilst paying staff the lowest wages.
- The large turnout at the EGM was very effective.
- The main threat to our recognition for 'academic-related' staff has been removed, but discussions are still ongoing.
- The University of Liverpool are in the process of sacking all academic related staff and re-appointing them on different terms and conditions.

- The University is undertaking a Reward and Recognition Review, and SUCU involvement has been refused. This may be a focus for next year.

4. Election of SUCU Officers 2013-14

This was overseen by Jane Rodger (Branch Administrator) who acted as Returning Officer.

Jane read out the nominees to Branch Officer Positions.

Members were invited to raise objections to these candidates. No objections were made and the officers were elected for the next year.

| Position | Name | Department |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| President | Mick Ashman | School of Nursing & Midwifery |
| Vice President | Craig Brandist | Russian & Slavonic Studies |
| Branch Secretary | Pablo Stern | CICS |
| Education Officer | Sam Morecroft | Politics |
| Equalities/Diversity Officer | Jane Simm | Careers Service |
| Health & Safety Officer | vacancy | |
| Treasurer | vacancy | |
| Pensions Officer | Hamish Cunningham | Computer Science |
| Membership Secretary | vacancy | |

A vote was taken to confirm the election which was carried unanimously.

5. Election of Ordinary Committee 2013-14

Mick Ashman retook the Chair following his election. Mick read out the nominations for ordinary Committee Members. Members were invited to raise objections to these candidates. No objections were made and the members were elected to the Committee for the next year. A late nominee Charles Fox was also confirmed as a co-opted Committee member by the meeting.

| Name | Department |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Julian Crockford | LETS |
| Kaye Carl | Journalism |
| James Crossley | Biblical Studies |
| Gillian Brown | Sociological Studies |
| Catherine Fletcher | History |
| Daragh O'Reilly | Management School |
| Stephen DeAlmeida | Sheffield International College |
| Vacancy | |

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Charles Fox co-opted | Computer Science |
|----------------------|------------------|

A vote was taken to confirm the election which was carried unanimously.

6. Report from UCU Congress 2013 including pay-claim update.

Pablo Stern gave an update on behalf of the Branch Delegates who attended the National UCU Congress held 29th to 31st May. On all the key issues the Branch Delegates' votes were with the majority.

- The pay offer was rejected. There will be a campaign over the Summer followed by a ballot at the end of September. A special Sector Conference will then meet.
- The Pension Report was accepted. This is a poor deal and there is little prospect of improvement soon.
- There were motions regarding casualisation, workload, stress and academic related members.
- The proposal to raise the higher rate of national sub for those earning over £60K was carried. There will also be an increase in national subs by about 5%, and a modest decrease in expenditure.
- Proposed changes to the NEC will go to the next Congress. The proposals are a reduction in size to 63 which still retains the broad representation of the membership.
- Jane Simm reported that she also attended a number of fringe meetings including: outsourcing at Sussex which is a robust Branch with strong links with the Student Union.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Sam Morecroft (Branch Education Officer) reported that the Branch has affiliated to the National Shop Stewards Network which is supported by a number of national trade unions. Its purpose is to rebuild rank and file trade union membership, and to build support across trade unions, for example, co-ordinated strike action. Recent campaigns have included the black-listing issue. The next Conference will be on Saturday 29th June.

7.2 A collection was taken for the Chesterfield College strike fund. UCU members there were to be holding two strike days that week.