

Notes from Extra-ordinary General Meeting, Tuesday 14 July 2009, 1pm, Fulwood Room, University House.

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Mick Ashman, Vice President chaired the meeting and welcomed Liz Lawrence, UCU NEC member and Ronnie Kershaw, UCU Official to the meeting

Liz Lawrence updated the meeting on the current situation regarding staff cuts across institutions nationally, noting a lack of willingness from employers to engage positively to reduce potential job losses. A claim to JNCHES (employers negotiating group) containing a suggested agreement on how to work together to mitigate job losses has not been received positively.

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2. Motion on job cuts and workload, with amendment

The following motion from SUCU Committee on job cuts and workload, with amendment proposed by Angela Shann and seconded by George Chapman, was overwhelmingly agreed.

This Branch notes that:

1. The university has published its intention to reduce its ongoing salary costs by £15 million by 2011
2. This represents between six and seven percent of the total salary bill.
3. In his last update (9 June 2009) the VC stated "I gave you my commitment to doing all we can to continue to provide an excellent student experience, preserve our research environment, and to protect jobs. I repeat that commitment."
4. Contracted hours of work for Grade 6 are "35 hours normally worked over 5 agreed days". Contracted hours for Grades 7, 8 and 9 are "A nominal working week of 35 hours
5. The University has recently stopped overtime payments for a number of staff including those in Portering and Security Services.

This Branch believes that:

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2. A workforce reduction of the magnitude proposed will inevitably have a serious impact on any remaining staff, particularly their workload, leading to potentially serious stress-related health and safety issues.
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2. A workforce reduction of the magnitude proposed will inevitably have a serious impact on any remaining staff, particularly their workload, leading to potentially serious stress-related health and safety issues.
3. The proposed cut in staffing levels is a problem for all university staff.
4. The overtime ban not only has a massive financial impact upon the staff directly involved but also affects the ability of those staff and UCU members who provide 'out of hours' services, often to vulnerable students, to provide these services and the ability to work outside nominal 35 hours.
5. The expected shortfall in the University's budget and resultant increase in workloads is not simply a local issue but is part of a national assault on higher education. It reflects the political priorities of this and probably the next government to give precedence to waging war and protecting bankers above protecting citizens from the financial crisis. UCU does not accept these priorities.

This Branch Resolves to:

1. Work collectively with other campus unions to resist all attempts to increase workloads beyond what can be reasonably expected within contracted hours
2. Support any members who find themselves presented with unacceptable workloads
3. Use Health and Safety legislation to protect staff from the potentially deleterious impact of unreasonably increased workloads.
4. Support any action initiated by the campus unions representing staff directly affected by the overtime ban.
5. Support local and national disputes and campaigns to defend education, jobs and pensions.

3. Motion on voluntary severance

The following motion on voluntary severance proposed by Jamie Gough, seconded by Patricia Cowell was agreed:

The university executive's voluntary severance scheme is being implemented without any significant consultation with the university unions, not coincidentally at a time when most staff are at their busiest and therefore in least position to oppose it.

Since the scheme does not involve any cut in the work of the university, it will further intensify the work of many of our members beyond the existing unacceptable and unhealthy levels of work. This extra work will not be voluntary. SUCU therefore opposes the voluntary severance scheme, and will oppose similar future schemes, including voluntary redundancy.

In the event of staff leaving under this scheme, SUCU members will refuse to take on extra work, arising from staff leaving, beyond their contract hours.

4. UCU Campaigning Support

Ronnie Kershaw, UCU Official spoke about the support UCU can give to branches, and the impact a well run campaign can make to a dispute.

Notes from Extra-ordinary General Meeting, Tuesday 14 July 2009, 1pm, Fulwood Room, University House.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Mick Ashman, Vice President chaired the meeting and welcomed Liz Lawrence, UCU NEC member and Ronnie Kershaw, UCU Official to the meeting

Liz Lawrence updated the meeting on the current situation regarding staff cuts across institutions nationally, noting a lack of willingness from employers to engage positively to reduce potential job losses. A claim to JNCHES (employers negotiating group) containing a suggested agreement on how to work together to mitigate job losses has not been received positively.

Mick Ashman proposed a motion that would establish policy and action to be taken by the branch to give support to members in the inevitable consequences of higher workloads and more stress at work that the fall out from VSS will bring.

2. Motion on job cuts and workload, with amendment

The following motion from SUCU Committee on job cuts and workload, with amendment proposed by Angela Shann and seconded by George Chapman, was overwhelmingly agreed.

This Branch notes that:

1. The university has published its intention to reduce its ongoing salary costs by £15 million by 2011
2. This represents between six and seven percent of the total salary bill.
3. In his last update (9 June 2009) the VC stated "I gave you my commitment to doing all we can to continue to provide an excellent student experience, preserve our research environment, and to protect jobs. I repeat that commitment."
4. Contracted hours of work for Grade 6 are "35 hours normally worked over 5 agreed days". Contracted hours for Grades 7, 8 and 9 are "A nominal working week of 35 hours
5. The University has recently stopped overtime payments for a number of staff including those in Portering and Security Services.

This Branch believes that:

1. "The reduction of staff by the proposed amount will seriously undermine this institution's ability to "continue to provide an excellent student experience" and "preserve our research environment"
2. A workforce reduction of the magnitude proposed will inevitably have a serious impact on any remaining staff, particularly their workload, leading to potentially serious stress-related health and safety issues.
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5. The expected shortfall in the University's budget and resultant increase in workloads is not simply a local issue but is part of a national assault on higher education. It reflects the political priorities of this and probably the next government to give precedence to waging war and protecting bankers above protecting citizens from the financial crisis. UCU does not accept these priorities.

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