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Professor Sir Keith Burnett
Vice Chancellor
The University of Sheffield
Firth Court, Western Bank
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18 April 2018

Dear Keith,

Last week UCU members voted to accept a proposal by Universities UK aimed at ending the USS dispute, and as a result the industrial action has been suspended. While we are pleased that the dispute has taken a step forward, we are concerned that the future may not be without further disagreement.

The Sheffield UCU committee had recommended that members reject the proposal on the grounds that it was lacking the clarifications and safeguards we believed necessary to make future industrial action unlikely. As the proposal passed without such safeguards, we believe the university must keep this issue high on the agenda to ensure that we don't see a repeat of this year's disruption.

Below, we outline our ideas for how to proceed, and we would like to take up your offer of a further meeting to discuss these.

- 1. USS Working Group.** We propose that the University's USS Working Group should reconvene to discuss developments originating from the Joint Expert Panel. We suggest that, given the increased interest in such matters, it should be modified and operate in as transparent a way as possible. We propose its membership should be revised, with an equal split of University and UCU-nominated representatives, the former to include a member of the University Executive Board.
- 2. Governance and trade-union representation.** We have previously raised that UCU would welcome our Joint Union Campus Committee meetings being chaired by a member of the University Executive Board. We also believe that it would be healthy to have periodic meetings between the University's vice-chancellor and representatives of the campus trade unions, including the Students' Union. We would welcome discussions of these ideas in conjunction with our sister trade unions.
- 3. Unfinished business relating to the industrial action.**
 - We continue to support the Students' Union's favoured approach to the use of strike pay deductions, and feel that the issue warrants further discussion.
 - We have not yet received an explanation of how the University arrived at its hard-line policy on pay deductions for Action Short of a Strike, subsequently overturned.

In particular, we would like to explore whether the U-turn could be seen as the basis for healthier relationships between the University management and its staff over future matters relating to industrial action.

4. **The University of Sheffield's influence within UUK.** We would like to discuss further how the University's voice can effectively be used to influence the direction of those national issues under the stewardship of Universities UK, of which USS is one example.
5. **International staff.** The dispute brought up serious concerns over the right to strike for staff on Tier 2 visas, and we would welcome further discussions over the current Home Office position and what can be done to ensure our international staff are not put in a vulnerable position by exercising this right.

We believe that the meetings held between UCU, the Students' Union and the University's senior management during the industrial action were an important part of rebuilding trust at this institution, and we hope that we can look for ways of developing this further in the coming months.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Brandist', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Prof Craig Brandist, President
on behalf of Sheffield UCU

cc Paul Blomfield MP
JUCC Staffside Representatives
Kieran Maxwell, Sheffield Students' Union President
Stuart McMillan, Sheffield Students' Union Education Officer