

SUCU General Meeting Tues 12th May 2015, 1pm

Chair: Mick Ashman, Senior Vice President

Minutes: Jane Rodger, Branch Administrator

1. Welcome and introductions

Mick Ashman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Matters arising from the previous minutes included a brief update about the USS pension consultation that ends on 22nd May. In addition to individual member responses the campus unions will be sending a joint union response which will be circulated in Branch News and on the SUCU website.

3. Reward and Recognition

3.1 Jon Benson (Branch Secretary) gave an update that in the recent e-ballot SUCU members voted overwhelmingly in favour of the negotiated changes. Members of our sister unions also voted in favour, and the agreement has now been signed off. We understand that Human Resources staff will now be meeting with Departments and teams. Some areas have not yet been fully addressed including the grade 6/7 boundary.

3.2 This new agreement is of national significance, as it makes it harder for the Employers to push through the removal of automatic incremental progression nationally now that SUCU has successfully blocked it at the University of Sheffield.

3.3 It has been a long and hard fight to fend off performance related pay and this is a very positive outcome. Those involved in the negotiations were thanked. This success shows how the campus unions have worked together effectively with the support of their respective Regional Officials.

4. Work related stress policy

Over the last few years the University has been reviewing a number of policies for example, grievance, disciplinary and capability policies, and policies relating to the management of change. They are now dealing with developing policies that we believe are important such as procedures relating to domestic abuse and bullying and harassment (Dignity at Work). A

Stress Policy is also now being negotiated - a working group has been set up and it is hoped this policy will be introduced in September. SUCU and the other campus unions want this new policy to provide better Health and Safety protection and more robust risk assessments for staff. It is evident that there is currently no effective risk assessment process.

Questions and comments from the floor included:

- There is concern that staff will not know where to look for policies and procedures relating to bullying and harassment as the University has not publicised it. It was pointed out that one outcome of the staff survey was that staff would not know who to go to about this issue.
- A work related stress policy needs to be linked to the anti-bullying and harassment policy and cross referenced to similar student policies.
- There are other policies that will be negotiated soon including Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

5. AOB

5.1 The election of Branch officers and Committee members will take place at the Annual General Meeting on the 10th June 1pm (in the Council Chamber). A number of new volunteers have joined over the last months adding strength and effectiveness to SUCU Committee. Members of the Branch were encouraged to also get involved and consider putting their names forward. The current arrangement of holding weekly Committee meetings on a Wednesday lunch time will shortly be reviewed. One possibility is holding the meeting on alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was emphasized that there is no obligation to attend every meeting.

5.2 In response to the staff survey results the campus unions decided to investigate Departments with poor results using their Health & Safety powers. This is an ongoing process. H&S is a useful way to address work related stress and management behaviours.

Questions and Comments from the floor included:

- Are other campus unions involved in the H&S inspections?

Ans. Yes we have a very cohesive relationship with our sister unions.

5.3 Concerns about the new government's direction with regard to Higher Education were discussed and possible challenges to trade union powers. Local campaigning is essential and must be inclusive for example around issues such as the ethos of the University and academic freedom. Opposing the move towards a business model must be raised regularly.