

Annual General Meeting, Thursday 12th June 2014

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 19th June 2013

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

2. Guest Speakers – UCU Lambeth Branch visiting strikers

Mick welcomed colleagues from Lambeth College who are taking indefinite strike action against a massive attack on their employment contracts, including fewer holidays, reduced sick pay, and more contact time.

In the UCU strike ballot, a massive 89% of members who voted backed the call for industrial action, on a very high turnout of 72%. Staff had already backed indefinite strike action in a previous ballot, but the College management sought an injunction to challenge it. Members at Lambeth have responded with unprecedented activism, campaigning, and determination to make a stand. There has also been an increase in membership.

Questions and comments from the floor included:

- How have the students at Lambeth responded? The students have been very supportive and have joined picket lines.
- The recent attacks on contracts are part of a trend and this will continue unless a stand is made. This trend is happening in all sectors so the action taken by Lambeth colleagues is everyone's concern.

The following motion was proposed by Gill Brown and seconded by Sam Morecroft.

This Branch recognises:

- That these attacks are having a detrimental effect on the delivery and quality of teaching and learning.
- That these attacks/cuts are the result of government austerity measures.
- This Branch calls on national leadership to launch a campaign of resistance, up to and including industrial action in defence of further and higher education.

A vote was taken and the motion was carried unanimously.

3. Guest Speaker – Sheffield Students Union

Sam Rae, outgoing Education Officer thanked SUCU Committee and members for their support and acknowledged that good communication has made action effective. He encouraged SUCU to continue its very good relationship with the Students Union.

Questions and comments from the floor included:

- Following the introduction of fees students now have more power and the Students Union has used its voice effectively. Its support made a real difference to the pay dispute.
- SUCU and other campus unions have been very supportive of the Living wage Campaign.
- There is a dedicated student campaign against the closing of evening courses at the Institute of Lifelong Learning.

4. Local subscription for 2014/15 :

A proposal was made by Gill Brown and seconded by Debra Green to increase the local subs at the same rate as the UCU general subscriptions (3.5%), taking effect from 1 September 2014. A vote was taken and the motion was carried unanimously.

5. 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 explained that he would be standing down as President this year. He introduced the Annual Report highlighting the pay dispute and campaign, noting that the 2% offer would not have been made without the industrial action. Also, local negotiations have included new Statutes which extend academic freedom, and a new set of policies and procedures that include increased pay protection. Implementation of the new policies needs to be rigorously monitored. There has also been a significant growth in SUCU membership and Committee has been strengthened over the last year.

Comments and questions included:

- There was strong support of the industrial action from members. The Branch makes a stand when called upon.
- Tribute was paid and thanks given to members of Committee who are standing down or have left during the year – Kaye Carl, Daragh O’Reilly, Julian Crockford and Martin Craig.

6. Election of SUCU Officers 2014-15

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	Craig Brandist	Russian & Slavonic Studies
Senior Vice President	Mick Ashman	School of Nursing & Midwifery
Vice President	Jane Simm	Careers Service
Branch Secretary	Jon Benson	Faculty of Engineering
Education Officer	Sam Morecroft	Politics
Equalities/Diversity Officer	Sarah Staniland	Chemistry
Health & Safety Officer	Scott McMullin	CICS
Treasurer	Pablo Stern	CICS
Pensions Officer	vacancy	
Membership Secretary	vacancy	
Communications Officer	Catherine Fletcher	History
Anti-casualisation Officer	Charles Fox	Computer Science

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

7. Election of Ordinary Committee 2014-15(see nominations below).

Craig Brandist took the Chair following his election. Craig 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.

Name	Department
Gill Brown	Journalism
James Crossley	Biblical Studies
Steve DeAlmeida	Sheffield International College
vacancy	
vacancy	
vacancy	

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

8. Report from UCU Congress 2014

This year Congress was held over two days rather than three and was attended by Craig Brandist, Pablo Stern and Charles Fox. Craig Brandist reviewed the key highlights, which included:

- A significant discussion about the pay dispute. UCU successes include: the initial vote in favour of industrial action, effective joint action with UNISON and Unite, and the final 2% agreement which breaks the government’s 1% pay cap and puts the union in a stronger position for the next claim. A motion was passed that the ballot for next year’s claim should take place April 2015 if the pay offer is unfavourable.
- A range of other motions included: Ofsted, opposition to UKIP, and support for Lambeth College.
- It was agreed that the profile of casualised working should be increased, and a fund will be made available so that casualised staff can be supported in taking industrial action.
- There may be further attacks on pensions in particular the final salary scheme. This would likely result in a call to take industrial action.
- There were motions relating to the Research Excellence Framework – to abolish, boycott, and opposing gender discrimination.
- A motion to request information about Vice Chancellor expenses and perks – some examples were given.

9. Any Other Business

None