

SAUT AGM 6 June 2005

13:00 Fulwood Room, University House
75 SAUT members attended plus 3 AUT Officials, SAUT President in the chair.

Minutes of the 2004 AGM held 19 May 2004

These were accepted as an accurate record.

Matters arising

None.

Officers reports

These were distributed in advance and also made available via the SAUT web site at: <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/aut/>

Election of Officers and Ordinary Committee members

The following Officers were elected:

Ms T V Clarke (President)
Dr S Ludlam (Vice-President)
Dr T M Searle (Senior Vice-President)
Ms G Brown (Hon. Secretary)
Mr M Ashman (Assistant Hon. Secretary - Personal Case Officer)
Dr J Perraton (Assistant Hon. Secretary)
Ms E J Hall (Equal Opportunities Officer)
Ms M McPherson Hon. Treasurer
Prof G Turner (Hon. Assistant Treasurer)

The following Committee members were elected:

Mr S Collier
Dr D Hislop
Ms A Shann
Ms J Simm
Dr R Balthazor
Dr K Farnsworth

The following Committee members were co-opted:

Mr A Madden
Dr J Foley

Recruitment

Ronnie Kershaw from AUT spoke about the importance of maintaining a high recruitment profile. More members recruited to SAUT would translate into higher membership density figures which would in turn increase negotiation leverage.

Pay & grading

Rachel Curley (AUT Assistant General Secretary) gave a summary of the history and recent progress of pay and grading negotiations with respect to the Framework Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding at Sheffield. The following emergency resolution was moved and carried unanimously.

The Association notes:

That its negotiating team has reported that the University of Sheffield has satisfactorily addressed SAUT's outstanding issues over grade boundaries for future and promoted staff, over procedures for withholding annual increments, and over harmonisation of annual leave entitlement.

That the recent movement followed intensified campaigning and publicity by SAUT locally and AUT nationally.

That, however, there remains an unresolved issue over progression within one grade which will need to be resolved in order for SAUT to be able to state unambiguously that the University has undertaken to fully implement the Framework Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding.

That other campus unions have been supportive while SAUT has pursued its outstanding issues.

That other campus unions have outstanding issues to resolve before a proposed final agreement can be announced.

The Association resolves:

To continue negotiating, campaigning and publicity activity until the unresolved issue is satisfactorily settled.

To support other campus unions in the resolution of their remaining issues.

To conduct a members' ballot on the proposed final agreement.

To hold a General Meeting to discuss the proposed final agreement before a members' ballot is conducted.

Mover Geoff Turner

Seconder Steve Collier

Brunel

Tim Searle gave an outline of the highly unsatisfactory situation at Brunel where compulsory redundancies (including those of AUT representatives) is threatened. The following emergency motion was moved, amended from the floor (Pablo Stern – last sentence added) and carried unanimously:

The Association notes:

That members at Brunel University are taking action short of a strike because the university refuses to lift the threat of compulsory redundancies, which arose when the university announced an intention to sack sixty academic staff in order to improve its income from the current Research Assessment Exercise.

That the AUT has set up a fighting fund for members at Brunel, after the university management announced that a day's pay will be deducted from staff salaries for every day they take part in action short of a strike.

That AUT General Secretary Sally Hunt has called on all AUT Associations to contribute to the fighting fund.

The Association resolves:

To donate £250 to the fighting fund and to send a message of solidarity to Brunel AUT. This meeting permits the SAUT Committee to respond to similar requests for assistance in the future.

Mover Tim Searle
Seconder Geoff Turner

Justice For Colombia

Steve Ludlam described the background and context to this debate, in the absence of the speaker from Justice For Colombia. It was agreed that in view of the unforeseen travel problems encountered by the person scheduled to speak from Colombia, SAUT would invite a speaker to a subsequent meeting. A debate followed during which one member expressed his opposition to such a motion on the basis that he did not see this as relevant union business. The motion was moved and carried (55 for, 1 against, 0 abstentions) as follows:

The Association notes that:

according to the International Labour Organisation, Columbia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist, and that among trade union victims of the death squads, teachers are the largest group;

according to the AUT website, 'Human Rights Watch estimates that in the last 10 years, army-backed Colombian paramilitaries have murdered 15,000 trade unionists, peasants and local leaders. In 2002, the teaching trade union FECODE lost 70 members to assassins';

the leading role played by AUT nationally in helping to promote the TUC-backed trade union campaign Justice for Columbia and its programme of 'rest and respite' for threatened Colombian trade union activists;

AUT's advice to local associations to affiliate to Justice for Columbia.

The Association therefore resolves to affiliate to Justice for Columbia as an act of solidarity, and in order to receive regular reports on the progress of the campaign.

Moved Steve Ludlam
Seconder Mick Ashman

Friends of Palestine

Hilary Smith summarised the background to this motion. There was a lively debate resulting in the motion being carried (30 for, 4 against, 11 abstentions).

SAUT notes:

1. That AUT nationally is affiliated to the Trade Union Friends of Palestine, and urges AUT members and local associations to support the aims of that organisation and to "establish links with Palestinian universities, including campaigning for formal twinning arrangements between Palestinian and British institutions, to support colleagues and students there, and resist the narrowing of their opportunities and suppression of their academic freedom by the oppression of the occupation." (<http://www.aut.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=122>)

2. That the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University (<http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/news/catindex19>) is a means of building an international coalition of organisations to collectively campaign in support of the rights of Palestinian students, teachers and educational institutions.

SAUT resolves:

1. To make a donation of £50 to Trade Union Friends of Palestine;
2. To affiliate to the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University;
3. That SAUT committee will contact the Right to Education Campaign with a view to establishing a twinning link with a Palestinian university.

Proposed: Hilary Smith, Sociological Studies

Seconded: Pablo Stern, CiCS

AOB

Responding to an item sent by email, the President clarified that AUT had been consulted about the new Teaching Only Roles recently introduced by the University.

Mick Ashman thanked members for their feedback about Saturday working in relation to open days and reiterated the advice he obtained from HR and circulated at the time.