

Notes of General Meeting

Monday 8th February 2010, Fulwood Room, University House, 1-2pm

1. Introduction and welcome to members

Craig Brandist, Vice President, welcomed all members to the meeting and introduced Mark Oley, Regional Official and Marianne Quick, Regional Support Official.

2. Notes from previous meeting were not available they will be put onto the SUCU website when prepared.

3. Workload, pay, job protection

Craig Brandist talked about a recent meeting attended by SUCU representatives alongside other members of the Joint Union Consultative Committee (JUCC) convened by university management and used by them to give information regarding the current financial position of the university. Those attending were told the university is expecting further cuts in funding to be announced in mid-March. During this meeting a number of cost-cutting scenarios, some of which could achieve considerable savings in staff costs, were put forward and campus unions were asked to comment on the acceptability of these measures. The university stressed the confidentiality of the documentation circulated. A second meeting involving Regional Officials has been organised for 3 March to take the discussions further. Craig noted with regret that Unison has since circulated the content of the confidential documentation to its members.

Mark Oley gave background to national issues. He said that he believed the university should currently be consulting under redundancy legislation and questioned the purpose of the meeting. Mark went on to talk about the situation at University of Leeds where the employer has recently terminated ACAS sponsored negotiations on the threat of job losses currently being imposed on nearly 30 staff and refused to mitigate and discuss redeployment or retraining. He encouraged all members to sign up for the University of Leeds UCU blog (<http://leedsucu.wordpress.com/>). He went on to talk about similar situations being found at York, SHU, Bradford, LMU and the Leeds College of Music.

He noted that these proposals are on the back of previous cuts such as VSS.

In discussion the meeting agreed that the university be asked to make the current position clearer, and to account for efforts being made at the moment to minimise any need for

staffing cuts. The meeting did not accept that because staffing costs account for the largest chunk of the salary bill that job should be the main casualty in any cost cutting exercise. The meeting further agreed the importance to work with the other campus unions, both in this university and at other institutions, and to ensure constant dialogue with students and the Students Union.

Mark Oley was able to reassure members present that the full weight of UCU will be behind members both collectively and individually in the future.

4. Proposal to increase local subscriptions to enable appointment of part-time Branch Organiser

The following resolution was put to the meeting. Proposer: Jonathan Perraton, Treasurer
Seconded: Gillian Brown, Honorary Secretary.

Jonathan Perraton stressed the importance of having a current and correct membership list to give the branch the ability to react quickly and professionally to future threats to members jobs and careers. The appointment of a Branch Organiser with excellent administrative skills together with the ability to work with the branch committee and activists to drive forward priorities is a corner stone in supporting members collectively and individually.

Current situation

A local sub of 70 pence is currently paid by all members of University of Sheffield branch of UCU who earn £5k or more. Those earning less than £5k are exempt. The local sub has not been increased for over 10 years.

Background

Until Aug 2009 the branch had clerical support from Christine Methley and is currently employing a temporary Branch Organiser from existing funds. In order to recruit to an open ended Branch Organiser post at 0.4 fte it is necessary to ask for an increase of local subscription to cover this cost. The job summary for this post is attached and would be filled using UCU grading structure (University of Sheffield equivalent of grade 7).

Proposal

To protect those earning lower salaries, no local subs payable by members who earn less than £10k

Increase local sub:

From September 2010 to £1.50 per month

From September 2011 to £2.00 per month

Future increases to in line with percentage increase on national subs on the uppermost payment band.

The resolution was passed overwhelmingly. 48 votes in favour; 1 against; and no abstentions.

5. Any other business

There was no further business