

## SUCU General Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013, 1 – 2pm

Chair: Mick Ashman

### 1. Welcome and introductions

Mick Ashman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2. Update following EGM on 28<sup>th</sup> February

2.1 Recognition: Mick reported that SUCU negotiators have met with HR who have withdrawn the initial proposal to de-recognize UCU for academic related staff. The Campus Trade Unions have not yet agreed a unified position on recognition, and there will be a meeting between the local and full time officials with a view to achieving this.

2.2 Statutes: The University is seeking to weaken Statute 6, which gives a higher level of employment protection. SUCU has made it clear to the University that reduced protection is unacceptable. SUCU is working with UCU Officials who have expert knowledge regarding Statutes and an overview of what is happening in other institutions. The University is pressing to move forward with their timetable, but SUCU wants to concentrate firstly on what will remain in Statute.

Comments from the floor included:

- One member asked what the University's timetable is. Management wish to conclude this June and July, but any conclusion will take longer than this. Over the next few months SUCU will be consulting with members.

### 3. Pay Claim update following UCU HE Special Conference on 27<sup>th</sup> Feb

Pablo Stern reported that he and Gill Brown attended a Special Sector Conference for the Branch with 130 other delegates on the 27<sup>th</sup> February. There has been a real pay cut of 13% over four years, and the equivalent of over 1 weeks pay in real terms has been lost last year alone. The Conference agreed the claim for next year:

- Linked to and in excess of RPI.
- Include workload and casualisation.
- Any vote for ASOS to be clearly linked to at least local industrial action as a back-up.
- A timetable of action to start this Summer. There would need to be a ballot in May or June if the claim is rejected.
- Action with other unions if possible, but not to exclude sole action.

The claim will now be discussed with the other HE unions.

Comments from the floor included:

- If ASOS is well timed it will have a big impact.
- Marking could be withheld.
- It is important to link the claim with the workload issue. This could be eg an agreement from the employers that staff should not be obliged to regularly work more than their contracted hours, and a means to achieving this, for example a Workload Allocation Model that quantifies the number of hours.

#### 4. Recruitment

Jane Rodger reported that SUCU membership is increasing. The hardcopy mail-shot has now been sent to the printers. Members will be notified when this is sent out.

Comments from the floor included:

- Personalised contact is an effective way to encourage colleagues to join. Members are asked to speak to, or send a brief email to colleagues when the Branch mail-shot is sent. Suggested wording will be provided.
- Increasing SUCU membership density adds weight to negotiations and sends a clear message to Management.
- Committee members will have a stall on campus for recruiting and speaking to members. Members will be kept informed about this.

Mick thanked everyone who has been involved in building the Branch membership.

#### 5. AOB

5.1 Strategic Plan: Pablo Stern reported that this was approved by Council and presented to Senate. Despite reassurances SUCU Committee is concerned that this rewritten Strategic Plan marks a drift towards a business focused managerialist model. For example The People Section has lost, "All staff, academic and Professional Services, have a role to play in delivering our academic strategy, so it is vital to create an environment where everyone can flourish and succeed." Also lost is, "We will continue to work with the trade unions to maintain and develop good industrial relations". And the Vice Chancellor's 'Introduction' has been radically rewritten significantly changing the tone. This business focus has already been seen in areas of the University such as catering, which is now partly run by a "Special Purpose Vehicle" with rock-bottom wages.

Comments from the floor included:

- Is this the start of privatisation?
- A "Special Purpose Vehicle" seems to have also been set up to run University car parking.

5.2 Workload Allocation Model: Daragh O'Reilly reported that some proposed WAM principles will be going to the next Joint Committee. Members are asked to email [ucu@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@sheffield.ac.uk) with any comments regarding WAM.

5.3 REF: Management have asked for another meeting with the REF sub-committee. SUCU will be raising; fixed term contracts, retention strategy, use of complex circumstance, the timetable, and equality and diversity.

5.4 Mick Ashman proposed that Sam Morecroft is co-opted onto Committee as the Branch Education Officer. This was agreed by the meeting.