

# CONGRATULATIONS!

Today is a special occasion for all of you, the culmination of many years of hard work. We are very pleased for you: from all the staff in the School of Management, WELL DONE!

In usual circumstances, we would be seated on the stage of De Montfort Hall, watching and applauding as you ascend the steps, hear your name read out and receive your degree from the University's vice-chancellor. Unfortunately, these are not usual circumstances.

At the moment we, your lecturers, are involved in several disputes with our employer, the university. Given their refusal to listen to our concerns, to properly consult with us, to negotiate in good faith, we feel we have been left with no alternative but to take industrial action.

In the past two months we have taken strike action (withdrawing our labour) on three occasions. We are also engaged in ongoing *action short of a strike*, specifically *working to contract* – and it is for that reason we sadly cannot be at the ceremony today. This is a shame for us, as we would love to be able to applaud your achievements.

We are therefore taking this opportunity to both congratulate you and explain what our dispute is about, and hope you understand why this means we cannot celebrate with you.

## WHAT IS THIS DISPUTE ABOUT?

### Loss in the value of our pay

- Since 2009, the cumulative loss to our pay (compared to rises in RPI) is **14.5%**.
- If inflation increases as predicted then by the end of this year the total real terms decline in our pay since 2009/10 could be as high as **17.5%**.
- Meanwhile, in 2014/15, university managers awarded themselves salary and benefits increases that averaged **6.1%**. The average remuneration of a university head is now £252,745 – or £275,405 once pension contributions are included. In November 2015, the *Daily Mail* referred to the 'shameless greed of university fat cats', whilst in March 2016 concerned government ministers called for 'much greater restraint'.
- In 2014/15, University of Leicester's new vice-chancellor Paul Boyle enjoyed 'emoluments' (salary, benefits and pension contribution) of £257,000, for just ten months' work – more than six times the average salary.

## OTHER ISSUES WE ARE CAMPAIGNING ON

### Shameful pay inequality

- Nearly half a century after the Equal Pay Act, **female academics earn more than £6,000 less than their male colleagues**.
- Even by the generally poor national standards, however, the University of Leicester's record is scandalous. In fact, just as the city's football team was winning the Premiership, University of Leicester was topping another league table: it is the higher

education institution with the largest pay gap amongst academic staff, with women earning on average **£9,793** a year less than men.

- Discrimination in promotion is rife. For example, women make up more than half the university's academics, but fewer than one-quarter of its professors. As well as contributing to the gender pay gap, this suggests women's work is not valued.

### **The scandal of casualisation**

- Two-thirds of research staff are on fixed-term (and thus precarious) contracts – and around a third of these are contracts of 12 months or less.
- This in involves precarious employment, low wages, no maternity pay, or proper holidays, fragmented working patterns. This is the reality for many workers in universities today. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, of 198,000 academic staff in the UK, 75,000 are on highly casualised, 'atypical' contracts – and almost 22,000 are on zero-hours contracts.
- The University of Leicester even makes use of Unitemps – an agency set up to find temporary and part-time work for students – to employ its casualised teaching staff. Many of these staff remain on precarious contracts for their whole career – or until they leave the sector and the profession they love, because they cannot cope with the hand-to-mouth existence any longer.
- Casualised academics do the same high-quality work as other staff. They deserve the same employment rights, on the same pay scales as their colleagues.

### **Redundancies, 'institutional transformation', institutional priorities**

- In 2014/15, the University of Leicester made a surplus after tax of £15.6m; over the preceding five years its annual surpluses averaged roughly £8.8m. For 2016/17, university managers are anticipating a shortfall in predicted student fee income of £23m – it is unclear how they arrived this figure – and are using this as a pretext to accelerate a process of 'institutional transformation'. They are threatening **150** redundancies.
- Already the University has announced the closure of its Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning – and the loss of 30 or more full-time jobs. Established in 1862, the Vaughan Centre predates the University itself by more than half a century, and allowed countless people access to learning and a 'second chance'.
- Rather than invest in its employees – the University is seeking to push down staff costs. When he was appointed vice-chancellor in 2014 Paul Boyle said he was inheriting a 'strong estate' which on the whole was 'in great shape.' Two years on, senior managers claim we need a 'significant retooling of our estate – which is not particularly attractive or competitive'.

**If you wish to find out more about our dispute(s), search 'UCU', 'Leicester UCU' or 'Save Vaughan Centre'.**

Twitter: @UCU, @LeicesterUCU, @SaveVaughan #fairpayinHE #savevaughan

If you wish to express concern directly to those in senior posts in the university please contact them on the emails below:

Dr Bridget Towle, Chair of Council (University's governing body): **bt82@leicester.ac.uk**

Professor Paul Boyle, President and Vice Chancellor: **vc@leicester.ac.uk**

Rt. Hon. Lord Grocott, Chancellor: **grocottb@parliament.uk**