

Sent to all Leicester UCU members on 14 October 2016



Campaign against redundancies reaches crucial stage

Our campaign of opposition to compulsory redundancies has reached a crucial stage. To date, we have successfully confronted and publically dismantled ULT's [spurious argument](#) that job cuts are needed because the University is in financial crisis (since June Leicester has [advertised for 155 job vacancies](#), which is comparable to many larger universities and more than [Warwick's 151](#)). We have mobilised many members and even non-members to oppose compulsory redundancies and closures through a variety of imaginative ways as we sought to 'light a hundred fires of resistance' across the university. Our poster campaign on office doors, notice boards, and even toilet cubicles has been especially effective (HR has accused us of 'flyposting'). Our [No Redundancies, No Confidence petition](#) has nearly 4,000 signatures from across the world. At the same time, LUCU membership is growing, and the number of local departmental and School representatives has doubled.

Pressing pause on preparations for industrial action

Contrary to indications, the University Leadership Team (ULT) has not issued any new business cases since Maths in early September. Instead, we have recently learned that in the Geography and Geology departments (and we hear similar statements are being made in the School for Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour) ULT are no longer planning to force through compulsory redundancies. It is even reported that senior management are increasingly talking of now pursuing 'transformation with a small t'. We hope that these positive signs are an indication that ULT are beginning to listen to our argument that by threatening to sack us and force us to reapply for our jobs they are tearing the heart out of the university and doing irreparable damage to its reputation as a good employer.

LUCU continues to be willing to negotiate on organisational change providing the threat of compulsory redundancies and forcing staff to reapply for their jobs is removed from existing business cases (see below) and any future 'transformation' proposals. What this means is that LUCU will pause its preparations for industrial action. However, should further business cases be presented involving compulsory redundancies and/or staff being forced to reapply for their existing jobs we will move immediately to an indicative ballot on industrial action, as a first step towards preparing for industrial action. This also includes exploring the possibility of UCU greylisting, i.e. organising an academic boycott of the university.

Birmingham UCU faced similar threats earlier this year of 100 compulsory redundancies and successfully forced their [management to back down](#) after threatening to strike.

Opposing existing business cases

For the existing business cases for Criminology, Condensed Matter (Physics and Astronomy), Natural Sciences and Mathematics, management is consistently failing to engage in meaningful consultation in order to seek alternatives to compulsory redundancy as is required under the law and the University's own redundancy ordinance. We are continuing to press the case that there is no academic or financial justification for compulsory redundancies, especially given the significantly better than expected student recruitment for this year. Members in several of the departments are campaigning vigorously among academic peers, professional associations and alumni against the redundancies and/or closure of sections. LUCU is currently exploring additional means to bring pressure on ULT to withdraw the threat of redundancies in these departments.

Are staff being intimidated into resigning?

While there have been no new business cases, we are receiving shocking and disturbing news from two departments that individual members of staff are being subjected to heavy-handed pressure by managers to coerce them into resigning as a so called 'voluntary redundancy'. They are being told that this is because of departmental restructuring, yet there have been no business cases. This is wholly unacceptable and would appear to be outside of the University's own legal obligations on statutory consultation for collective, university-wide redundancies, its own ordinance procedure and, of course, is potentially workplace bullying and harassment. If you are being subjected to the same pressure or know of such instances then please contact LUCU urgently (write to ucu@le.ac.uk).

We will continue to investigate these cases but if they are confirmed then UCU will write directly to the VC and Director of Human Resources to demand that they publically repudiate such instances and to reassure the targeted individuals that this intimidation will cease immediately, that their jobs are safe and that they will receive a full apology from the university. This type of disreputable and sinister tactic is something that is more reminiscent of murky, rogue employers like Sports Direct. It should have no place in an internationally renowned public university that seeks to stand for the highest ethical standards of behaviour.

Communicating with students

LUCU has recently written again to the students' union asking for a meeting to discuss the impact of Institutional Transformation. We are still waiting for a reply. In the meantime, we have produced a leaflet for students entitled 'Transformational Times' that explains what is going on and LUCU's campaign against redundancies and closures (attached). Please feel free to distribute the leaflet.

Lastly, but not least, we have some brazen hypocrisy

If you thought that the university's [He-for-she](#) campaign was hard to swallow, after it was revealed Leicester has one of the [biggest gender pay gaps](#) of any UK university, then try this for crass insensitivity and brazen hypocrisy... No sooner had the University Council confirmed the closing of the 154 year-old Vaughan Centre for Life Long Learning on 16 September – despite angry opposition from LUCU, Leicester MPs, the City Council, City Mayor, Leicester Mercury, and many, many more – then what better than to announce three weeks later that the University is to [host a national summit on adult learning](#).

Sent on behalf of the LUCU Committee (14th October 2016)

Contact on at ucu@le.ac.uk