

CLOSURE OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

It is well known that each College within the university is trying to save money and they are looking closely at the viability of courses. The first casualty of this is the MA in Social Work.

Setting aside the argument of why education is a good investment UCU is concerned at the models and decisions that are being made. UCU would expect the University to ensure the information it has is complete, correct and up to date before the decision to close a course is made. In the case of the MA in social work it is our belief the decision has been made without the due regard to all the facts. There are also some difficult operational issues that are yet unresolved regarding student support arising from the closure that have not been considered fully. Closure at this stage could cause serious damage to the University's relationship with its students and to its reputation. The effect of the closure is that the School will close just before it celebrates its 50th anniversary at the University.

Your Union tried to raise these concerns at Senate during the brief part of Senate they are allowed to attend. We regret to advise that the Vice Chancellor prevented us from speaking on the issue, advising that Senate has a policy that does not discuss individual subjects or



departments. UCU queried this assertion, given that the closure of the course was to be specifically debated under Senate agenda. We then raised concern that your University will not listen to the views of its staff. Unfortunately, we were told that any debate is a matter for Senate. The University did not want to listen to the concerns of its staff. At a time when the University is rightly keen to expand the involvement of students in each of the decision making bodies of the institution and departments, it seems peculiar that staff are not given the same voice.

UCU understands that budgets are tight and difficult decisions may need to be made. But the haste and offhand way this decision has been made is a disgrace. The branch asks your support in challenging this proposal.

Verves and redundancies

Members were contacted recently by the Branch to advise what to do if you were approached to consider voluntary early retirement or voluntary early severance. We have tried to help all that have approached us to accompany them to meetings. Members are reminded of the following;

- You should be informed in advance of the purpose of the meeting and be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a work colleague or their union representative.

- If a member of staff finds themselves in a meeting with a manager where the subject of VERVES is raised, and feels uncomfortable about this discussion, they have the right to ask that the meeting be adjourned.

- Having had an initial conversation about VERVES, the manager should not make any further approaches. At this point it is up to the individual concerned to decide whether they wish to take the matter further.

Recruiting new members

The industrial action over the last 6 months has been another reminder of how important recruitment is to being a successful trade union. It is only by providing a strong united voice that staff at the university can really have an influence on working conditions.

The Leicester branch of UCU has historically had good membership numbers and as a union we still represent a large proportion of staff. However it is also clear that, in some departments, we have not been as good at recruiting new members as we should be. With this in mind the branch is once again starting a drive for new members.

Organisation within departments:

On the back page of this newsletter you will find a list of department representatives. In the next few days we will email all members a list of the members in their department who have not opted out (email Val Burns: vab4@leicester.ac.uk if you would like to opt out).

If your department does not have a representative then please let Val know if there is someone who is willing to put up posters and possibly speak to new staff.

Postgraduate Students:

Postgraduate students who intend to have a career in Academia are allowed free membership of the UCU. We will try and distribute flyers to students to inform them of this, but please let us know of any opportunities you know of to recruit students.

Joint membership:

Members of other unions such as the RCN, MRC, NUJ, NUT, RCM and SOR amongst others are allowed discounted membership to the UCU. If you know any staff who are members of one of these unions but might also want to be in the UCU then please let them know.



Pay campaign and strike deductions

The recent industrial action has been cancelled as a deal was agreed. The deal is seen by some as disappointing as union members are in effect accepting the 2013-14 offer of 1% as well as the 2% for 2014-15; however it is considerably better than that which has been offered to other parts of the public sector.

- 2014-15 NHS Staff: No increase for those receiving an increment. 1% for those not receiving an increment.
- 2014-15 Senior Civil Service: 1%
- 2014-15 Prison Service: 1%

It is clear that without the action taken the deal would have been much worse.

One of the most disappointing aspects of the dispute has been the reaction of the University of Leicester. You will know

that during the recent industrial action a handful of institutions deducted a full day's pay for a two hour strike and UoL is one of them.

Members were encouraged to take out a grievance against the University. The response has not been to reverse the decision but to stick to the UCEA line.

UCU is now progressing the matter through the court, which we all know can be a lengthy process.

Members will be updated as and when information is available.

In the meantime please keep safe a hard copy your original grievance (and appeal if made) and UoL response safe, pending the outcome of the legal process.

Reorganisations

The campus unions have been made aware of a number of proposed reorganisations in the near future. Where we have been informed of potential changes to business areas and departments, we have been involved and supported staff. If you

hear that a reorganisation is planned where you work, please let us know. There have been instances where managers have undertaken changes without following appropriate processes or informing unions or HR. So please let us know.

New employment right

Since 30 June 2014, all employees have a right to make a request to work flexibly. While this right was previously open to parents and carers, it is now available to all staff who have been employed continuously for 26 weeks. Flexible

working can take different forms: part-time work, job sharing, homeworking, compressed hours, etc. A request need to be considered in a reasonable manner by the employer and a response should be provided within three months.

Review of ordinances (staff policies and procedures)

We have been in talks with management over the past few months to encourage a review of the ordinances. The University's ordinances govern many of the staff management processes that affect staff, such as discipline, grievance and performance management.

UCU and its sister campus unions have raised some concerns about how the ordinances function. We are pleased to say that Unions are working in partnership with HR to determine a priority of the areas that should be reviewed.

Update your UCU membership online

Did you know you can update your membership details online?

You can change:

- Contact details
- Employment details
- Update your subscription
- Transfer to direct debit from other payment methods
- Change from Student to Full membership or Full to Retired membership
- Notify us of maternity leave or tell us if you are unemployed

To register – click on the Log in link on the website www.ucu.org.uk. You will need the email held for you and your membership number. If you have forgotten your membership number, please email membership@ucu.org.uk

Once registered you will be able to log on to your record at any time via our website at www.ucu.org.uk. Just click on the Log in link on the UCU website.

UCU departmental representatives

Administration	Steve Rooney	sg3@le.ac.uk
Archaeology and Ancient History	Deirdre O'Sullivan	dmo
Cardiovascular Sciences	Emma Chung	emlc1
Chemistry	Paul Cullis	pmc
Criminology	Tracey Dodman	tld4
Economics	Sebastian O'Halloran	sdo2
ELTU	Jenny Warren	jmw35
Engineering	Andrew Norman	nja
English	Mark Rawlinson	mjr1
Health Sciences	Alun Evans	te45
Infection, Immunity and Inflammation	Shaun Heaphy	sh1
Institute of Lifelong Learning	Malcolm Flaherty	mtf3
IT Services	Nicholas Adkins	nja8
Law	Steven Cammiss	sc293
Library	Andrew Dunn	ad158
Management	David Harvie & Jo Grady	dh98 & jkg10
MRC Toxicology Unit	Kelvin Cain	kc5
Museum Studies	Viv Golding	vmg4
Politics and International Relations	Steve Hopkins	sh15
Psychology	Todor Gerdikov	tv3

If you're willing to be a departmental representative in a department that is not currently represented then please contact Sebastian O'Halloran sdo2@le.ac.uk.