

**UNITE JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JNC)**

**Notes of meeting held on 10 January 2022**

**Present:** Damian McAlister (People & Culture); Paul Davidson (People & Culture); Mark Latuske (People & Culture); Tina Gallagher (People & Culture); Kathryn Wills (People & Culture); Richard Young (UNITE); Paul Agnew (UNITE); Rhonda Black (UNITE); Judith Hough (UNITE); Pearl Bartley (UNITE); Gareth Scott (UNITE); Christine Irwin (People & Culture)

**Attending:** Brian McAuley (Director of Faculty Operations Life & Health Sciences).

**Format:** Meeting held via Microsoft Teams.

**22.01 Welcome & Housekeeping**

Mr McAlister welcomed all to the meeting.

**22.02 Update on Technicians Commitment Scheme**

Mr McAuley updated the meeting on the Technicians Commitment Scheme advising that significant progress had been made since the last meeting. Ms Heather Burgess has been elected as a Senior Representative of the Scheme and will co-chair the Technical Committee with Mr Damian McAlister.

Ms Burgess and Mr Paddy Porter attended a conference on 23 November 2021 where they signed the Technicians commitment on behalf of the University.

A draft 2-year action plan, broken down into 6-month quarters, is in place for the scheme – this is ahead of schedule. The next step is to hold the first formal meeting of the Technical Committee since officially signing up to the Scheme. There still needs to be work on deciding who is to be on the Committee.

Formal signing by the University to the Commitment will be marked by an event with the VC and SLT members present – details to be confirmed of where and when in due course.

A framework on Research Focus is coming out, the first call for Technician-led research papers has been circulated.

Mr McAlister advised that he was pleased to be asked by the VC, to co-chair the scheme. This is an opportunity to show the University's appreciation of the Technician role and the value it brings to the University. As well as putting a focus on the future for Technicians, it allows a celebration of the important work undertaken by Technical staff to date.

UNITE welcomed the commitment to Technical staff and acknowledged the scheme as a useful way forward . UNITE advised that as well as up-to-date training and skills, Technicians should be provided with the responsibility to be in control of their area, equipment and have the recognition, credibility and full integration required for their role - integration that is, in their opinion not currently fully in place at the University.

Mr McAuley advised that there was opportunity to be involved in the broader piece, for example, staff that were retiring from the University could mentor new staff. UNITE welcomed the option for experienced staff to stay on to assist newer staff advising that it was important that the University provided the budget to allow this to take place.

UNITE queried whether a UNITE Representative would sit on the forum in partnership with the University. As the committee will become the means to update staff on matters such as job evaluation and training, a representative would be required as UNITE has the negotiating rights on these matters.

Rhonda Black is to continue her involvement and it is to be recognised that she is in attendance on the committee both as a Technician and as a Union Representative.

Mr McAlister advised that the focus of the committee would be on delivery by results. A formal UNITE seat on the committee would be arranged and the message given that the University was working in partnership with UNITE on this scheme.

#### **22.03 Accuracy of the Minutes of meeting on 20 September 2021**

- Item 20.08.02 , to read Technicians, not Apprentices
- 21.22 , to read '2 or 3 months', not '2 or 3 years'
- Item on Health and Safety to note that meeting had not been held.

No further amendments required.

#### **22.04 Matters arising from meeting of 20 September 2021**

##### *21.18.03 Update on Restructures: Estates and Academy Restaurant.*

Ms Wills updated the meeting on the restructure of Estates. 3 staff had been matched to roles on a competitive basis and had opted not to participate. 2 of those had taken voluntary redundancy and left the University, the 3<sup>rd</sup> staff member was due to leave on similar terms, at the end of April 2022. 1-1s had been conducted appropriately with staff, and the matter was now closed off.

UNITE advised that it was their role to secure staff posts and to protect roles in the move to GBD, as such, they requested an understanding on how the 3 staff leaving the University, would positively impact the remaining staff. Mr Davidson advised that the number of jobs in the structure had not altered.

Mr McAlister advised that the Estates restructure was now considered closed, in terms of what was proposed and what had been implemented .

##### *21.23 Registry*

Ms Wills advised that there had been confusion in relation to the messages that staff from the Registry Office (Student Administration) had been communicating to the UNITE representatives. It had been raised that personal circumstances were not considered by the Registry Office manager and supervisor when considering the rotas for working from home, where possible. Ms Wills had clarified this matter with the Acting Director of Student Administration and explained that the nature of the role for those working in Registry required an on-campus presence. The increased necessity for staff to be on campus had been due to severe staff shortages in September, coinciding with the start of the new academic year. The situation has improved due to the recruitment of new members of staff to the team.

UNITE advised that staff had informed that they had attended campus to find that everyone else was also back on campus. Staff shortages did not provide an acceptable explanation. Meetings had been held on campus that could have been held via Skype. IOP was not being adhered to. Staff had been waiting for 5 & 50 only to be told that this was not happening, yet they were still restructured, but without the consultation afforded under 5 & 50.

Mr Davidson advised that Registry and Exams were sharing the same geographical space, this was not a re-structure. The 5 & 50 corporate plan has come to an end, but restructures will continue where necessary.

UNITE advised that some of the confusion for staff was that 5 & 50 and the Organisational Structural Change Policy had been intrinsically linked in the minds of staff. Mr Davidson clarified that restructures under the 5 & 50 Strategy had ceased but OSC policy is what applies to all restructures. Mr McAlister advised that it would be made clear to staff that the OSC policy remains in place and that the association between the two needs to be broken.

#### **22.04 Facilities Time**

Mr Agnew's facility time in the GBD role is extended until 31 July. Mr McAlister thanked Mr Agnew for the work he had done to date and advised that he was pleased to see Mr Agnew continue in the role.

#### **21.24 AOB**

UNITE asked for an update on Reprographics. Mr Davidson advised that it had been proposed that this goes to SLT by the start of February.

No further items raised.

**Meeting Ended 12:47**