

ULSTER UNIVERSITY

CONFIRMED UNITE JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JNC)

Notes of meeting held on 7 December 2022

Present: Paul Davidson (People & Culture); Mark Latuske (People & Culture); Kathryn Wills (People & Culture); Tina Gallagher (People & Culture); Richard Young (UNITE); Paul Agnew (UNITE); Rhonda Black (UNITE); Tony Starrs (UNITE); Gareth Scott (UNITE); Christine Irwin (People & Culture).

Apologies: Damian McAlister (People & Culture); Christine Irwin (People & Culture); Judith Hough (UNITE).

Format: Meeting held via Microsoft Teams.

22.14 Welcome & Housekeeping

Mr Davidson welcomed all to the meeting.

22.15 Accuracy of the Minutes of meeting on 17 June 2022

The minutes of the meeting 17 June 2022 were accepted as accurate subject to feedback from Unite.

22.15 Matters arising from meeting of 17 June 2022

Dignity at Work & Study Policy (refers to minute 22.10). It has been agreed by UNITE, UCU and management to revert to the 2010 version of the policy, pending a full review of the policy.

Right to question witnesses under the Grievance Policy (refers to minute 22.11), UNITE has not yet met with colleagues from UCU and so can't provide further comment on this matter, but assured management that the meeting with UCU was to take place.

Hybrid & Flexible Working Framework (refers to minute 22.12). Following a collaborative review with union colleagues, the all-staff survey is live until 9th December. UNITE confirmed that they have encouraged members to complete. UNITE also clarified that staff should not have to choose to have their full peripheral equipment at either home or on campus and believe that the same equipment should be provided for each work location.

Update re Academy Restaurant (refers to minute 22.13.1) – meeting to be arranged between UNITE and the new Head of School for Hospitality & Tourism Management.

Library (refers to minute 22.13.2) – a meeting took place between Joanne Doherty, People Partner, Paul Davidson, library management and UNITE on 29th November. UNITE

colleagues were advised that a member of the library management team has suffered a bereavement and a further meeting will be arranged in due course.

22.15 Introduction of Tony Starrs as UNITE representative

Richard Young introduced Tony Starrs as UNITE representative, requesting that he be included in all JNC/JUCNC correspondence. A request to move agenda item re grading concerns relating to DWU staff up the agenda was agreed to facilitate Mr Scott's availability.

22.15 Strike action – 30 November

Mr Davidson led general discussion on the recent strike activity, expressing disappointment that Ulster University had been one of the 10 universities included in the recent UNITE strike action given the commitment of UU to the Foundation Living Wage plus 50p being paid to our lower graded staff, plus cost-of-living payment made in June 2022.

Both Mr Scott and Mr Young advised that UU were not targeted in the action that was taken – that is a national pay dispute, and the industrial action taken was local effort to support that dispute.

Mr Young advised that the commitment to the Foundation Living Wage by UU is much appreciated by both UNITE and indirect employees.

22.15 UU DWU – Grading concerns

Mr Starrs introduced discussion on this item. This relates to concerns raised by DWU staff who are of the view that they are a full grade below comparable roles in QUB/Belfast Met/ the Health Trusts. The DWU team want UU to pay the same rate as those stipulated by SNJIB and SNIPEF. Their opinion is that they are being paid less than contractors being brought in to do work, which they then fix at a lower hourly rate.

Mr Davidson referred to the institutional wide job evaluation system used in UU and that it ensures equal pay of equal value, avoiding any potentially discriminatory practices that could be aligned with a 'rate' for one group of staff and not another, and that legislation relates to internal comparators not external, so other employers couldn't be used to determine salaries at UU.

General discussion about the HERA Scheme occurred and how the roles are evaluated. Mr Starrs referred to several colleagues who pre-covid left due to the rate of pay. Mr Scott keen to enter discussion about this matter and work with UU to address this.

It was agreed that a further meeting will be arranged – preferably before the next JNC.

Mr Scott left the meeting at 3.20pm

22.15 Estates Survey

Mr Starrs introduced this agenda item referring to an Athena Swan survey issued to all staff in June 2022, with a further survey issued to only Estates staff in September, without consultation or advance notice. The purpose of the 2nd survey was unclear.

Ms Wills advised that she was aware that the second survey had been at the suggestion and approval of Michael Fitzpatrick and Stephen Doherty to gain staff feedback from a culture perspective, and a survey was issued to customers to understand their perception of the services provided. Colleagues in OD were collating the results, and in the New Year an update would be given to staff, and their input requested to develop action plans.

22.15 Use of Reed Recruitment

Mr Young referred to a previous recruitment campaign via Reed during the summer 2022 to recruit for positions with the Student Administration Directorate. Concerns had been raised at that time from staff, and subsequently addressed.

Mr Young referred to 2 advertisements that Reed had posted but that did not refer to UU as the employer. Ms Wills requested a copy of these to explore the matter further.

Ms Wills advised that she was aware a decision that was made by Amanda Lane & Sarah Hudson to use Reed to fill 6mths FTC x 5 backfills for the acting ups (until March 2023) as the posts needed filled quickly, nobody was on temporary register, internal notice etc would have delayed filling the posts, with overall concern for staff wellbeing, which led to this process being facilitated by Reed to fill the posts.

22.15 Workload Allocation

General discussion invited in relation to workload for non-academics following the JUCNC & HSW Policy sub-committee meeting last week, and how workload allocation needs to be looked at for all staff as the principles are the same.

This matter may require joint negotiations as Grade 7 – 9 are represented by UCU. This will be discussed at the next Policy Sub-committee meeting (scheduled for Wednesday 18th January).

22.15 AOB

Mr Davidson raised the matter of a recent incident on Campus where a member of staff fell ill and no next of kin or emergency contact details were on People XD for that person. An email is to be sent to all staff asking them to review the details held on XD and to update accordingly, for this purpose. UNITE see no issue with this proposal.

Meeting ended 16:17