

UCU NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JNC)

Date: 19 November 2019

Venue: Jordanstown Campus

Present: Paul Davidson, Deputy Director of People and Culture (PD); Lindesay Dawe, President UCU (LD); Linda Moore Vice President UCU (LM); Aisling O'Beirn, Vice President UCU (AO'B).

Apologies: Lindesay Dawe to arrive late to the meeting.

In Attendance: Christine Irwin, Employee Relations Partner (CI); Rhona Reid, Clerical Assistant, Employee Relations (RR).

19.45 Welcome and Housekeeping

Mr Davidson welcomed all to the meeting.

UCU requested that gender pay be added as a discussion item under 'matters arising'.

Ms McBride raised that a People Partner would attend each future JNC. UCU advised that they would reserve the same right – to bring people into the meeting. Mr. Davidson confirmed that he would put a proposal together for discussion of same.

19.46 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2019

Minutes of the JNC meeting of 20 June were considered and agreed as accurate.

19.47 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting 20 June

i. (Ref: 19.32 IT Review).

UCU referenced the Effectiveness Review of the University Council, as reported on Insight. UCU questioned whether the review was underway as an outcome of the Industrial Tribunal.

UCU advised that as well as being interested in the origin of the effectiveness review, they wanted to know the detail of those appointed to conduct the review and whether there was an intention that Trade Unions be approached for comment. UCU requested that they be advised of the timeframes for review and report. Mr. Davidson action, to check and revert to the meeting.

UCU acknowledged the apology received by Jenny Piper.

ii. **(Ref: 19.33 Sustainability Review)**

UCU raised concerns about the proportion of University money going to buildings, compared to the amount going to staff (GBD). UCU requested an understanding of spend and to receive an update on London and Birmingham campus costs.

UCU asked how people in London and Birmingham, would be told about right to join a Trade Union. Mr Davidson said that this was a matter between those employee/employers. Ulster University does not have an employer relationship, rather, a business relationship with London, Birmingham and Beijing.

UCU raised the Magee Medical school and asked for an update from the VC on plans for continued development. Mr Davidson advised that the Magee Medical school plans are being delayed by the lack of devolved government. UCU requested that they be kept informed .

19.48 Strike Action commencing 25 November 2019

Mr Davidson spoke about maintaining good relationships. Referring to 2018, Mr Davidson said that those taking strike action have always behaved with dignity, and respect. Mr Davidson advised that Ulster University 2019 strike action communications would be careful to note its employees' entitlement to strike whilst informing of impact on salary and suspension under the pension scheme. Mr Davidson said, whilst recognising that there was no legal requirement to communicate strike activity to Managers, the University was going to ask staff to inform their Manager of their own intentions. Mr Davidson said that he was keen to avoid a situation where Ulster University asked staff to communicate their personal strike activity to their manager's and the Union advise staff not to communicate their action.

Regarding salary deductions, Mr Davidson confirmed that salary deductions were likely to be made in January - with a consideration to phasing deductions. UCU asked that the University consider avoiding deductions in January to reduce staff hardship. Mr Davidson explained that there are issues at stake bigger than Ulster University. UCU expressed that consideration regarding pay, would give People and Culture communications weight and understanding.

Mr Davidson advised that People and Culture will make information available on pay deductions and pension implications for those participating in strike action.

UCU advised that the VC pick up phone to USS to try to resolve member concerns. UCU seek a written response to the concerns raised in the letters to the VC cc Damian McAlister, Director of People & Culture. Mr Davidson commented that the VC had replied to letters. UCU agreed that this was the case, but they are unhappy with level of detail given in response.

19.49 Workload Allocation

UCU expressed concerns of a move towards a metric approach of workload allocation. Mr Davidson advised that Mr McAlister had met with many Heads of School and that the University is keen to work with UCU. An initial meeting at which Dr Adrian Moore, Senior Lecturer is to present, was agreed, with UCU raising concern that the model to be presented by Dr Moore may breach University Policy and that a principle based model such as that looked at by Ruth Fee in AHSS would be worth considering, as one size does not fit all .

19.50 CAIN

UCU acknowledged and welcomed the £100,000 for CAIN. Mr Davidson advised that a review was scheduled for April 2020 at which point, If there were no sustainable funding there would be a transition to a static archive at 1st August 2020. UCU urged that the University consider CAIN's World-wide prestige and vital political importance.

19.51 Management Review – Incident at Magee Library

Mr Davidson advised the meeting that a Management review, conducted by external reviewers, is almost complete. Action for Mr Davidson to resend a fact sheet on the management review, to UCU and add the Management Review as an item to JUCNC. UCU concern that the Management Review was not discussed with UCU before commencement, particularly in making decisions around who is bought in, to conduct a review. Mr Davidson advised that a Management Review, by process, does not call for consultation. The University is keen to learn lessons for future exercises.

19.52 Casualisation / fixed term contracts – standing item

Mr Davidson requested feedback to proposals around the redundancy scheme and how long-term fixed term contracts are ended. UCU expressed unhappiness with any of the given options. Mr Davidson requested written feedback on the 4 points and determined that the item be brought to JUCNC.

Action: Christine Hayes, Systems Analytics and Rewards Officer to provide statistics in graph format, of casual hours and the number of people the hours are distributed amongst, by gender.

19.53 Restructure updates

Mr Davidson updated the meeting:

- i. ISD restructure. The restructure is in final phase and closes 28 October. It has resulted in placing additional staff. Most posts are campus neutral and/or there is growth. In some previous restructurings, up to 92% of staff were matched. Most activities are required in the new structure or there are promotional opportunities.

- ii. Student Admin Mr Davidson meeting weekly with Ruth Wasson, Director of Student Administration and Registry re: restructure either early December or January.
- iii. Finance considering how to move forward
- iv. Estates Needs of estate services are different in a suburban campus to a state-of-the-art modern city campus. There is a requirement to restructure between now and getting the keys to Belfast. C100 staff involved. Transferrable experience will be considered.

19.54 **AOB**

- i. **GBD:** A group involving the trade unions will look at a programme of work considering the 'people aspect' of the move. Meetings will be held once every 4 to 6 weeks. UCU to send a formal response re: new ways of working that will affect how academics do their job in Belfast. GBD, People, to be included as an item for JNC.
- ii. **Facilities Time** - to be kept on the agenda for on-going consideration.
- iii. **Gender Pay:** Action Mr Davidson to update UCU on the action plan. UCU request for a meeting to discuss, once received.
- iv. **Online Marking:** UCU reported significant and outstanding points. A concern that online marking should be voluntary rather than by exception; concern that a legal requirement to consult for Health and Safety purpose has been missed. Mr Davidson advised that display screen equipment has been screened. Mr Davidson action to speak with Professor Murphy regarding a report and revert.
- v. **Academic Promotions Scheme.** UCU understood that there was an agreement to run the old system concurrently with the new and this is what they advised their members. Mr Davidson advised that this was an early stage discussion item which has since been removed. UCU to consider their response. UCU concern re: scheme - whilst there are some areas of improvement, the criteria are unclear and open to subjectivity.
- vi. **Climate Emergency.** UCU advised of a strike on 29 November and an associated Rally, in Belfast. UCU to communicate with Mr McAlister ahead of any action. UCU welcomed previous climate communications from the University.

Meeting ended 13:02.