

UCU JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 March 2019 in Room 8H08 on the Jordanstown Campus.

Present: Professor C Gormley-Heenan, Dr L Moore, Mr P Davidson, Mrs C Irwin, Mrs K McBride, Professor B Murphy, Dr A O'Beirn

Apologies: Ms G Horgan, Mr D McAlister, Mr L Dawe

19.01 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018

Minor typographic amendments were noted and amended.

19.02 Matters arising from the Minutes of 27 November 2018

As a follow up to minute 19.02 it was agreed that a copy of the Facilities Time should be sent to UCU in advance of the next meeting of the JUCNC. **Action 1:**

Following discussions on minute 19.09 it was agreed to amend as follows; Staff out of courtesy and to aid planning should discuss with their HoS annual leave arrangements. All agreed that on the whole the current annual leave arrangements worked well for the majority of academic staff.

19.03 REF2021

Professor C Gormley-Heenan provided an update on REF 2021, in particular an update on SSR process at Ulster University. It was noted that a number of queries and data remains outstanding from some areas. **Action 2:** It was agreed that the PVC R&I will share details of the schools where there are queries/outstanding data and provide overview on final position to UCU.

In response to UCU concerns over any potential equality issues with the SSR process, assurances were given that once all the data is returned from each school Angela Getty, from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section will undertake an equality impact assessment. **Action 3:**

In addition, Professor C Gormley-Heenan advised that a draft Code of practice has been developed, whilst still in draft form it was the intention to now share a copy with UCU. It was noted that a University wide consultation on the code of practice was due to take place and the views of UCU would be very welcomed, in particular, their views on accepted outputs. Following discussions it was agreed that UCU would review and revert to Professor C Gormley-Heenan formally with their position and comments. **Action 4:**

Linda Moore (President UCU) advised that there is an industrial ballot for strike action at University of Liverpool on an issue related to SRR, which relates to an automatic link to capability proceedings in situations where a persons with SRR doesn't have sufficient research outputs.

UCU stated that they are strongly opposed to including staff made redundant in 2016 being submitted in REF2021. Following discussion it was agreed that the PVC R&I would give

consideration to this matter and to put a stated position in the code of practice document.

Action 5:

19.04 Sabbatical Leave

Professor C Gormley-Heenan provided an update on Sabbatical Leave advising that the call for applications had just closed. It was noted that the number of applications this year had increased and more encouragingly it was also noted that there was an almost 50% split in the number of male and female applications. **Action 6:** Professor C Gormley-Heenan to review the stats on the number of part time associate lecturers on sabbatical leave across each Faculty.

19.05 Workload

It was noted that Damien McAlister, Director of People and Culture, had written to UCU to clarify the purpose of the working group that he is chairing which is a fact-finding group on academic workloads and the applications of our current model. It was highlighted that the current workload model was developed in 2013 and whilst it was working well in some Faculties this was not the case in others. On this basis, it was felt that it was timely to undertake a review of current practices with a view to bringing a paper to UCU JNC for consideration.

Whilst UCU acknowledged that policy should be reviewed they advised that they would have welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the initial discussions. Linda Moore stated that it is their opinion that schools which follow the 2013 principles are working well and that it is the schools which have introduced a metrics approach which are having difficulties. They further advised that they are opposed to a metrics based model and feel that a principles based approach works much better at Ulster University.

19.06 PS 5&50 Completion of Structural Elements

It was noted that the restructuring elements of the PS 5&50 project are nearing completion, with only three workstreams left to complete in ISD, Finance and Campus Life. As a consequence the PS 5&50 project office will closed at the end of March 2019 any outstanding actions will be subsumed by the Resourcing Section.

Action 7: UCU enquired on the status of an individual case and it was agreed this would be picked up outside of the JNC.

19.07 Review of the Academic Promotion Scheme

The committee received an update on the review of the Academic Promotion Scheme. It was noted that the process started in the early part of the academic year, with eight open campus consultation events and meetings with key stakeholders.

An initial draft of the new scheme will be shared with UCU following which a period of deep consultation with UCU will commence. An indicative timeline of dates during May/June were discussed with a possible launch to staff early in June.

It was acknowledged by all that communications to staff around the new scheme will be critical to success. Paul Davidson, Deputy Director of People and Culture, confirmed that a Comms plan had been developed and a series of information sessions for staff would be arranged which would highlight changes in the new scheme and how to apply.

UCU queried if the policy had been equality screened and it was confirmed that a meeting to screen the scheme was due to take place within the section lead of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. **Action 8:**

19.08 Review of Redundancy Policy and how to deal with long FTCs

Paul Davidson advised that it is timely to undertake a review of the 2017 Redundancy Policy and in particular how we manage fixed terms contracts.

UCU advised that they would welcome a review.

Action 9: P&C to bring proposals to JUCNC

19.20 Casualisation

UCU raised concerns over some practices in regard to the use of fixed term contracts at Ulster University. Following discussions it was agreed that this should be a standing agenda item at future JUCNC with the P&C SAR section providing a report on staff stats. **Action 10:** SAR to meet with UCU and agree information required.

It was noted that Paul Davidson had issued guidance to HoS on use of casual contract and it was agreed that this guidance should be shared with UCU. **Action 11:**

Linda Moore raised concerns over an individual case it was agreed that the details should be forwarded to Paul Davidson to investigate. **Action 12:**

19.21 CAIN Consultation

UCU stated their strong opposition to the proposal on CAIN, expressing deep concern over its proposed closure. Paul Davidson advised that the proposal is not for 'closure', rather it is to move CAIN from a curated archive to a static archive. He further advised that a number of targets were set two years ago when the financial viability of CAIN was first raised and the driver for change stills remains one of affordability.

Linda Moore raised the issue of Equality Screening. Paul Davidson reiterated the University's position on not screening restructuring exercises. UCU indicated that given the potential impact on 'good community relations' and 'peace process' type issues, it may be appropriate to do a screening on this one. Paul Davidson agreed to give consideration to this request. **Action 13:**

19.22 Equality Issues

Linda Moore expressed concerns over a potential gender imbalance in terms of a perceived male dominance in the number of course directors and research directors.

Following discussions it was agreed that Angela Getty from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section should undertake a review stats and if any areas of concern are identified then work will be undertaken with the PVC R&I to develop an action plan. **Action 14:**

UCU requested an update on the Gender Pay Gap review. It was agreed that an update would be sought from the P&C Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section. **Action 15:**

19.23 On-line Assessment

Professor Brian Murphy, Director of Access Digital & Distributed Learning provided an update on rationale for the introduction of On Line Assessment. In response to concerns raised by UCU on the issue of reasonable adjustments, Professor Murphy explained the protocol.

Linda Moore expressed concerns over Health and Safety impact of On Line Assessment. Following discussions it was agreed that UCU should take these concerns back to the HSW committee. **Action 16:**

Professor Murphy agreed to undertake a 'lessons learnt' exercise on the first year of implementation. **Action 17:**

19.24 PREDICT (Blackboard Learn Tool)

UCU requested an update on PREDICT, stating that there needs to be a better flow of information and improved communication on any future projects and initiatives planned by the Education portfolio. Kelly McBride, Section Leader – Employee Relations confirmed that the PVC Education had committed to a half day planning workshop with the TUs. **Action 18:**

Professor Brian Murphy provided an update on PREDICT, advising that it is currently being trialled in certain areas. It was noted that the principle driver for PREDICT is to help students and in particular those who may be at risk. UCU stated that going forward they would like to be involved in discussions and for an equality screening to be undertaken. **Action: 19**

19.25 Petra Shiels Investigation - Request for Update

UCU requested an update on the timeline for the release of the report following the investigation by Petra Shiels. Paul Davidson advised that as he understood it the report will be shared with Council within the next 3 weeks and thereafter it will be made available to UCU. **Action 20:**

19.26 Health and Wellbeing Update

UCU raised the issue of the campus conversations and expressed disappointment at the lack of academic staff attending. Linda Moore advised that they had expressed these concerns to the Director of P&C. Linda Moore stated that the academics on the Belfast campus did not attend as they haven't seen outcomes or actions from the AHSS Stress Survey. Paul Davidson undertook to feed back to Mark Latuske and to consider ways in which we can ensure that the academic voice is heard in the consultation. **Action 21:**

In terms of the AHSS Stress Survey, Linda Moore indicated that discussions had reached an impasse on the issue of access to the individual 'comments and scores'. Following discussion it was agreed that the appropriate forum to progress this discussion was at the working group rather than JNC. **Action 22:**

19.27 Transition Arrangements in the Partnerships and Services Division

Paul Davidson provided an overview of the transition arrangements in place during the transition from Human Resources Business Partners to the People Partner Role.

It was agreed that details of new roles and role holders would be sent to UCU for information. **Action 23:**

Action No	Date	Agenda item	Action	Owner	Status/Update
1	12/03/19	19.02 Matters arising from the Minutes of 27 Nov 2018	The Facilities Time to be sent to UCU in advance of the next meeting of the JUCNC.	PD	
2	12/03/19	19.03 REF2021	The PVC R&I to share details of the schools where there are SSR queries/outstanding data and provide overview on final position to UCU.	CGH	
3	12/03/19	19.03 REF2021	Once all the SSR data is returned from each school Angela Getty, from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section to undertake an equality impact assessment.	AG/CGH	
4	12/03/19	19.03 REF2021	UCU to review and revert to Professor C Gormley-Heenan formally with their position and comments on the draft Code of Practice.	UCU	
5	12/03/19	19.03 REF 2021	The PVC R&I to give consideration to staff who were made redundant in 2016 being submitted in REF2021 and to put a stated position in the code of practice document.	CGH	
6	12/03/19	19.04 Sabbatical Leave	Professor C Gormley-Heenan to review the stats on the number of part time associate lecturers on sabbatical leave across each Faculty.	CGH	
7	12/03/19	19.06 PS 5&50 Completion of Structural Elements	UCU enquired on the status of an individual case and it was agreed this would be picked up outside of the JNC.	UCU/PD	
8	12/03/19	19.07 Review of Academic Promotion Scheme	Equality Screen Academic Promotion Scheme	KMcB/AG	
9	12/03/19	19.08 Review of Redundancy Policy and how to deal with long FTSs	P&C to bring proposals to JUCNC.	PD	
10	12/03/19	19.20 Casualisation	SAR to meet with UCU and agree information required.	RC	
11	12/03/19	19.20 Casualisation	The guidance issued to HoS on use of casual contract to be shared with UCU.	PD	
12	12/03/19	19.20 Casualisation	UCU raised concerns over an individual case it was agreed that the details should be forwarded to Paul Davidson to investigate.	PD/UCU	
13	12/03/19	19.21 CAIN Consultation	Paul Davidson to give consideration to UCU request	PD	

			to Equality Screen CAIN proposals.		
14	12/03/19	19.22 Equality Issues	Angela Getty from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section to undertake a review stats and if any areas of concern are identified then work will be undertaken with the PVC R&I to develop an action plan.	AG	
15	12/03/19	19.22 Equality Issues	P&C, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section to provide UCU with an update on Gender Pay Gap.	AG	
16	12/03/19	19.23 On-line Assessment	UCU to take their concerns back to the HSW Committee.	UCU/GG	
17	12/03/19	19.23 On-line Assessment	Professor Murphy to undertake a 'lessons learnt' exercise on the first year of implementation.	BM	
18	12/03/19	19.24 PREDICT (Blackboard Learn Tool)	PVC Education to hold a half day planning workshop with the Trade Unions.	KMcB/PD	
19	12/03/19	19.24 PREDICT (Blackboard Learn Tool)	UCU stated that going forward they would like to be involved in discussions and for an equality screening to be undertaken on PREDICT.	BM/AG/UCU	
20	12/03/19	19.25 Petra Shiels Investigation – Request for Update	UCU requested an update on the timeline for the release of the report following the investigation by Petra Shiels.	PD	
21	12/03/19	19.26 Health and Wellbeing Update	Paul Davidson to feed back to Mark Latuske and to consider ways in which we can ensure that the academic voice is heard in the consultation on Health and Wellbeing.	PD	
22	12/03/19	19.26 Health and Wellbeing Update	AHSS Stress Survey discussion should be raised at the working group rather than JNC.	PD/UCU	
23	12/03/19	19.27 Transition Arrangements in the Partnerships and Services Division	It was agreed that details of new roles and role holders would be sent to UCU for information.	PD	