

UCU JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JNC)

**Date:** 15 September 2020

**Venue:** Via Skype.

**Start Time:** 15:00

**Present:** Damian McAlister, Director of People & Culture; Paul Davidson, Deputy Director of People and Culture; Linda Moore President UCU; Aisling O'Beirn, President UCU, Adrian Grant, Vice President UCU; Lindesay Dawe, UCU.

**In Attendance:** Christine Irwin, Employee Relations Partner.

**20.29 Welcome**

- Mr McAlister welcomed all and advised that Mr Davidson would be late to join the meeting.
- Dates to be sought for upcoming 2020 /2021 JNC's.
- It was agreed that formal Minutes of JNC's, be limited to recording key points and decisions.

**20.30 Minutes of JNC 07 April 2020.**

*20.22 Gender Pay Gap*

Mr McAlister advised that a working group has been established in People and Culture to develop proposals to help address the gender pay gap. UCU requested an update on progress with the recommendations of the previous equal pay report. Mr Davidson noted that the actions in the previous report focussed mainly on conducting further reviews, however People and Culture are keen to develop a plan of proactive measures rather than just further reviews.

*20.23 Financial Situation of the University*

Some discussion took place in relation to the funding situation for the University generally. It was agreed that this will be discussed further at the meet between UCU and Professor Bartholomew.

*20.24 GBD*

Mr McAlister advised that funding had been secured for additional facilities time to support trade union involvement in GBD. UCU welcomed the release of funding.

*20.25 Restructure:*

In relation to the relocation of Health Sciences, UCU requested confirmation that limits on the space available on the Belfast campus would not be the sole determining factor in relation to the future location and that the outcomes of an EQIA are acted upon. Mr

McAlister advised that a decision would be made considering all factors including any equality issues identified. Mr McAlister also noted that the current space configuration in Belfast could be adjusted.

Mr McAlister advised that Health Science will remain in Jordanstown until 2022. Mr McAlister to update UCU on the communication that went to those in Health Sciences, advising of same.

UCU request to be kept updated on progress with the consultation plans.

UCU asked about colleagues in Health Science who were recruited recently and have a clause in their contract that indicates that pending the relocation they can claim some travel allowances. Mr McAlister confirmed that the contracts will be honoured.

Mr Davidson to write to the unions with an update on the restructures in Estates and ISD.

### **20.31 Approach to Reviewing Casual Employment**

Mr McAlister advised that the University is keen to work with the unions to explore ways of reducing the reliance on fixed-term and hourly paid contracts. Mr McAlister advised that the University would be keen to establish a working group with the unions and will bring forward Terms of Reference for discussion at the next JUCNC.

Dr O'Beirn noted a linkage between the use of casual contracts and workload issues.

Mr McAlister advised that the University would be keen to explore that linkage, but the conversation should include discussion around workload planning, prioritisation of workloads and the need to focus on activities that are most beneficial which may mean de-prioritising some activities e.g. research that does not directly contribute to REF. Dr O'Beirn countered by stating that research purely for the sake of building knowledge is valuable and there doesn't always have to be a publication or other output.

### **20.32 Academic Contracts**

Mr McAlister advised that the University would wish to review the academic contract.

A discussion took place in relation to how to quantify workloads. UCU requested that it be noted in the minutes that they wish to register their offence on behalf of their members at any suggestion that staff were not working to full capacity.

UCU advised that they are not willing to renegotiating the pre 92 academic contract, indicating that in their opinion academic contracts are part of national bargaining. Mr McAlister disagreed, noting that the only item in the contract that is subject to national bargaining is annual salary.

UCU requested that a workload survey be conducted as a health and safety issue.

Dr O'Beirn requested that note-taker support is provided for lecture captioning.

### **20.33 School of Sport**

Mr McAlister confirmed that the School of Sport will remain on Jordanstown Campus, until at least September 2022.

#### **20.34 Academic promotions**

Prior to the meeting People and Culture provided the unions with equality data in relation to the outcome from the academic promotions round. UCU indicated that their initial review of the in data would indicate that there may be equality issues that should be discussed further. A meeting will be arranged to discuss these issues.

#### **20.35 Research promotions**

UCU raised concerns that the contract researcher promotion round has not taken place since 2018. People and Culture advised that there are plans to develop a new scheme, but this has been delayed due to the pandemic. People and Culture will consider running a final round of the previous scheme.

#### **20.36 Research and teaching fellow contracts**

UCU raised concerns in relation to the use of Teaching Fellow contracts, noting that the contracts for Teaching Fellows had not been negotiated with UCU. Mr Davidson noted that the main terms and conditions of employment for Teaching Fellows are the same as those for other academic staff, it is simply that their duties focus on teaching and related activities.

Referring back to the discussion noted at minute 20:32 above, Mr McAlister re-stated the need to review the academic contract. It was suggested that 'academic contracts', could be a single item agenda at a future meeting.

#### **20.37 Unitu**

UCU raised concerns that UUSU are piloting the use of Unitu. Mr McAlister agreed to look into this issue.

#### **20.38 Recording Lectures**

UCU raised concerns about a decision to allow students to record lectures without the consent of the lecturer. It was agreed that Professor Turner would be invited to one of the fortnightly JUCNC meetings to discuss this issue.

#### **20.39 AOB**

No AOB issues were raised.

Meeting ended.