

NOTES OF MEETING - UCU JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JNC)

Date: 5 March 2021.

Present: Damian McAlister (People & Culture); Paul Davidson (People & Culture); Tina Gallagher (People & Culture); Joanne Doherty (People & Culture) ; Kathryn Wills (People & Culture); Linda Moore (UCU); Aisling O'Beirn (UCU), Adrian Grant (UCU); Paddy Mackel (UCU).

In Attendance: Brian Murphy (Interim Dean); Colin Turner (Interim Dean); Edel Griffin (UCU); Christine Irwin (People & Culture)

Format: Meeting held via Microsoft Teams.

21:01 Welcome

Mr McAlister welcomed all to the meeting.

21.02 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2021.

UCU to send revision for the minutes 19 February.

21.03 Global Online.

Prior to today's meeting, UCU wrote to Professor Murphy on 10 February 2021 and Professor Murphy replied on 25 February 2021. The following matters were discussed arising from the correspondence.

- UCU requested clarification on the £40m referred to in the documentation. Professor Murphy advised that this is a forecast of returns from Global Online over the lifespan of the partnership.
- UCU enquired as to whether University Council was involved in the decision-making on this partnership given the £40m involved. Mr McAlister noted that the £40m reflects the level of forecast returns not the level of investment. The decision-making on such matters does not normally come to Council.
- UCU asked about the investment in new staffing in marketing and technology support. Professor Murphy advised that the partnership involves Pearson providing additional direct support for these functions. No University staff are displaced, he noted that this is about additionality. Pearson's deploy addition expertise and resources.
- UCU asked about Pearson's return on their investment of around 1,000 dollars per student . Professor Murphy advised that Pearson's frontload their support and it may be four years before Pearson see a return on their investment.

After much discussion, it was agreed that a separate meeting will be arranged to between UCU and Professor Murphy to explore the detail of how the Global Online Partnership will operate.

21.04 Mock timetable for GBD.

UCU advised that their members have very serious concerns about the mock timetable that was issued. UCU advised that the mock timetable if implemented would be a very significant and detrimental change to working practices.

Professor Murphy advised that perhaps the title 'mock timetable' gave the wrong impression. The timetable issued was simply to test the 'fit' of the teaching. It was agreed that further detailed discussion is required on this issue.

21.05 Library issues.

UCU advised that they had become aware of plans to move the Belfast library to Jordanstown over the Easter holidays. UCU sought reassurance that stock will not be disposed of and asked how consultation will take place as staff and UCU on the plans.

Professor Turner advised that this is a temporary measure to facilitate the move from Block BB to Block BC. Jordanstown is the only available space to accommodate the publications pending the move to Block BC. Books will continue to be available by 'click and collect' and delivered to the Belfast campus. Professor Turner advised that he and his team will work to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on staff.

Mr Murphy left the meeting at 11:20

21.06 Equality Issues.

UCU requested an update on equality issues as a standing item.

Mr McAlister provided the following update.

- **UCU requested an update on work to close the gender pay gap and race pay gap.**
Mr McAlister advised that a working group has been established in P&C to plan how best to progress these issues. They intend to prepare a report for further engagement.
- **UCU requested an update on developments in relation to Athena Swan.**
Mr McAlister advised as follows:
 - All eleven STEM schools now hold the Bronze Award including the Belfast School of Architecture and the Built Environment in September 2020.
 - The School of Psychology submitted a Silver application (currently Bronze award holder) in the November 2020 round and results are expected end of April 2021.
 - Support for colleagues in AHSS continues and submission timeframes are in place from November 2021.
 - Work continues on the Institutional Bronze action plan in advance of the University's Silver submission due in 2022.
- **UCU requested an update on REF and equality.**
Mr McAlister advised that EDI has provided all of the data requested to support this (e.g. equality statements, EO profiles for staff 'pools'/selected etc).
- **UCU requested an update on any EQIAs taking place and information about the stage these are at.**
Mr McAlister advised that work is ongoing in relation to the EQIA on Bilingual signage.

- **UCU requested an update any issues of relevance to JNC have come out of the various staff equality networks**

Mr McAlister provided the following update.

- Launch of LGBT+ network was a great success, with 50+ attendees
- Staff Disability Network members have welcomed the opportunity to provide collaborative feedback to inform policy development (e.g. dedicated session on the flexible working policy) and accessibility issues relating to the enhanced Belfast campus.
- Wo/Men's Network working with Athena Swan colleagues.

Ms Griffin suggest that Covid 19 has impacted women in relation to family commitments and an increase in pastoral care. Discussion took place in relation to the impact on promotions. Mr McAlister advise that the University is currently considering whether any adaptation to the University's promotion scheme are required.

UCU noted that they had raise concerns about one of the topics for discussion at a recent Wo/men's network event. Mr Davidson agreed to discuss with Deborah Sloan.

21.07 Workloads.

UCU requested a workshop to look at workloads, indicating that a recent UCU survey results showed a 60% increase in workloads during Covid. Mr McAlister confirmed that the University has committed to a workshop with both unions.

21.08 Management Reviews.

It was agreed to defer discussion on this issue pending receipt of comments from UCU on Paper UCU/JNC/2021/01.

21.09 Academic promotions (request for update).

Mr Davidson advised that the University is currently giving consideration to when the next promotion cycle will occur.

21.10 Health Sciences relocation.

UCU asked that the minutes record their disappointment about the EQIA. UCU have serious concerns about the impact on people with a disability and/or caring responsibilities.

21.11 Casualisation.

UCU requested that this remains as a standing agenda item. Time constraints did not allow for full discussion at today's meeting, but it was agreed that further discussions will take place at JUCNC.

21.12 AOB

UCU requested that they receive timely updates on CTC and Sports.

UCU to send revision to the minutes of the meeting 19 February.

The meeting ended at 12:40.