

**NOTES OF MEETING - UCU JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JNC)**

- Date:** 7 June 2021.
- Present:** Damian McAlister ( People & Culture) ; Paul Davidson (People & Culture); Mark Latuske (People & Culture); Tina Gallagher (People & Culture); Kathryn Wills (People & Culture); Linda Moore (UCU); Aisling O'Beirn (UCU), Adrian Grant (UCU) .
- In Attendance:** Paul Seawright (Deputy Vice Chancellor); Colin Turner (Interim Dean of Learning Enhancement); Brian Murphy (Interim Dean of Academic Business Development); Michael Chapman (Project Manager, Change); Suzanne Bell (Timetable Planning Manager) ; Christine Irwin (People & Culture).
- Apologies:** Paddy Mackel (UCU).
- Format:** Meeting held via Microsoft Teams.

**21:13 Welcome**

Mr Davidson welcomed all to the meeting . Mr McAlister will be delayed in joining.

**21.14 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2021.**

Minutes from 5 March 2021 agreed as accurate .

**21.15 Matters arising**

*21.03 Global Online:* Mr Davidson and Mr Murphy met with UCU to look at how the Global Online Partnership will operate. UCU advised of concerns around University having a contract with a private company; e tutors and commitments to anti-casualisation. UCU expressed concerns of workload and concerns around academic autonomy.

*21.06 EQIA & Bilingual signage:* Mr McAlister advised that the draft EQIA had been completed and presented to SLT. The final decision may be impacted by the appointment of a Language commissioner for NI .  
UCU noted that they are a human rights based organisation and support minority languages. UCU advised that they want the Irish language supported campus-wide, as well as seeing the Ulster Scots heritage celebrated. Mr McAlister thanked UCU for their contribution to the EQIA .

*21.10 Health Science, Trade Union, Management Consultation & Negotiation Forum:* Discussions are ongoing, the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting is scheduled.

**21.16 Agenda Item 4 - On Campus provision Semester 1 .**

The following issues were discussed:

1. UCU questioned the rationale for return to in person teaching. They also expressed concern about the amount of work that their members had done, in planning for scenario B.

Professor Turner talked about the dynamic context for the decision-making advising that the decision earlier in the year to consider the three planning assumptions was the right thing to do at that time. He acknowledged that in the early stages, scenario B seemed the most likely, however, the context changed with the success of the vaccine roll-out, the re-opening of society generally and the data around the impact of the vaccine on infection, serious illness, transmission and hospitalisation. Professor Turner suggested that the planning work on scenario B is not wasted work, as it will help inform some of the arrangements for scenario A. UCU questioned the logic of the decision.

2. Professor Turner explained the importance of the CA3 process, in that it formalises the decision to move from large group teaching and this can then feed into the revised module descriptor and the timetabling system.

Discussion also took place on when CA3 forms need to be submitted. Professor Brian Murphy indicated that while no definite date had yet been determined, it is likely to be the period up to mid-July 2021.

3. Discussion took place around maximum room occupancy. Professor Murphy advised that Estates would provide the timetabling team with information on the maximum occupancy for each room, and the system would then timetable based on the assumption of full occupancy of each room.

UCU raised concerns about the ventilation arrangements. It was agreed that discussion on ventilation should take place at HSW Committee rather than JNC.

Professor Paul Seawright referred to the timetabling App which will be available to students. Professor Murphy's timetabling team agreed to share an illustration of the App with the trade unions.

4. UCU indicated that they do not accept that scenario B should be ruled out at this point. They suggested that if the pandemic deteriorates again, scenario B may be a better option than scenario C. Discussion took place on the need to give both student and staff as much certainty as possible. The University's leadership team felt that the VC's announcement gave that certainty and clarity.

The discussion moved on to the issue of communication of the arrangements arising from the decision. Professor Seawright suggested an FAQ for staff, and the importance of the FAQs being issued as soon as possible was discussed. UCU requested sight of the FAQs before they are posted.

5. The VC's recent video on Insight mentioned the possibility of staff organising taster session on GBD during semester 1. UCU indicated that staff may feel that organising taster session may add to the workload pressures for staff. Paul Seawright advised that this would be entirely voluntary, and this will be made clear in the FAQs.
6. UCU raised a concern about students being able to access library materials during semester 1. Paul Seawright spoke about work that is ongoing in relation to the collection in Belfast to ensure that students in certain disciplines continue to have the ability to 'browse' material (e.g. to browse the work of different artists). Professor Turner spoke about the 'click and collect/deliver' arrangements.
7. UCU asked if scenario A is based on no social distancing. It was confirmed this would be the case.

8. UCU raised issues in relation to the shuttle bus between Jordanstown and Belfast and also the issue of cross-border travel. Mr McAlister advised of ongoing discussions with Translink in relation to the shuttle bus and fare options for students and staff. Professor Seawright and Mr McAlister referred to ongoing discussions with government on both sides of the border in relation to Covid safety associated with cross border travel. Discussion also took place in relation to an article by Simon Harris (Irish Government minister for HE, research and innovation) on progress with vaccination in Ireland.
9. UCU indicated that they had not received concerns from their members about the use of Jordanstown during semester one, however they were concerned about how this will impact on the packing and relocation arrangements. Professor Seawright indicated that he intends to meet with Mr Shane Fitzpatrick on this issue – further details to follow.

Professors Seawright, Turner and Murphy left the meeting.

### **21.17 Gender Pay**

UCU requested an update on the University's plans to address the Gender Pay Gap and an update on progress with the plan developed in 2017.

Mr Davidson noted that the report produced in 2017 was an Equal Pay Review rather than a specific action plan to address the Gender Pay Gap. Mr Davidson noted that many of the actions have been fully implement and others are now obsolete arising from other policy changes (e.g. recommendations relating to the University's old promotion pathways which became obsolete with the introduction of the new Academic Promotion Scheme in 2019).

Mr Davidson suggested that it is important that we now engage in developing a Gender Pay Gap action plan rather than revisiting the 2017 Equal Pay Review. UCU agreed on the need for a new Gender Pay Action Plan, but indicated that they would also like to see a progress report on the 2017 Equal Pay Review. After much discussion Mr McAlister agreed to send an update.

### **21.18 AOB:**

CTC negotiations are ongoing .

UCU advised that their AGM was 24 June . Adrian Grant is the incoming President .

**16:12 Meeting closed.**