

UNITE JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JNC)

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 06 February 2020 in Room E213 (Coleraine Campus).

PRESENT

Richard Young (UNITE), Paul Agnew (UNITE), Judith Hough (UNITE) Gareth Scott (UNITE), Ivor McAleese (UNITE), Paul Davidson (People & Culture),

APOLOGIES

Rhonda Black (UNITE); John Mullholland (UNITE)

IN ATTENDANCE

Christine Irwin (People & Culture),

Mr Davidson opened the meeting and welcomed all.

20.01 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 19.6a **Facilities time.** Mr Davidson advised that the University's offer of 0.5 FTE backfill remains open to UNITE, but as yet a formal response to the offer has not been received from UNITE. The offer has been available since mid-2019 and UCU have availed of the offer. Mr Young advised that there are a number of practical issues which make it difficult for some senior UNITE representatives to avail of this offer.

Mr Young and Mr Scott requested that the offer is increased to 1 FTE. Mr Davidson advised that the amount of backfill allocated is directly related to the number of members in each trade union. While the original offer cannot be increased, Mr Davidson advised that the University is open to requests for additional facilities time to support the GBD project. This will be discussed further at a future meeting of the GBD trade union/management consultation forum.

Mr Scott advised that UNITE will formally respond to the offer of 0.5 FTE backfill.

20.01 MATTERS ARISING

Some discussion took place in relation to the UCU strike action, which is due to commence on 14 February 2020. Mr Scott advised that during the UCU strike action, UNITE will not attend joint meetings with management. Mr Young raised an issue in relation to the communication from People and Culture in relation to the UCU strike in November/December 2019 where it stated, 'Only members of UCU can legally participate in any UCU mandated action'. Mr Young advised that he did not believe this to be accurate. Mr Scott stated that he wished to make clear that UNITE is not calling on its members to participate in the strike. Mr Davidson advised that for the upcoming UCU strike the communications from People and Culture will state 'It is only UCU that has called for strike action. The other unions are not participating in strike action'. "

Minute 19.14(ii) **Trade Union Rooms.** Mr Davidson advised that Mrs McBride has submitted a request to the GBD Project Office in relation to the allocation of a trade union room on the Belfast campus.

Some discussion took place in relation to the current trade union room on the Coleraine campus. It was agreed that Christine Irwin would contact Professor Karise Hutchinson and request a good quality room in an appropriate location. The room would be a joint union room, so would need separate, lockable, filing cabinets and separate PC access.

Minute 19.18 **Grade 6 hours of work.** UNITE welcomed the decision in relation to the hours of work for Grade 6 staff but noted that it would be their view that this should also be applied to other grades.

Minute 19.20 **Health Sciences.** Mr Davidson advised that the University intends to open further consultation on a preferred option.

Minute 19.21 **Pre-retirement course.** Discussion took place in relation organising a 'pre-retirement' course for employees. It was agreed that Alastair Smith, Section Leader, Employee Wellbeing, will meet with Mr Young to discuss further.

Minute 19.22 **TU Web Page.** Mr Young welcomed the work that has been done on the trade union webpage. Mr Young to have further discussions with Mrs Irwin in relation to wording issues.

20.02. ISD AND FACULTY IT RESTRUCTURING.

Mr Young expressed concern about a recent decision to retain some faculty-based technicians in the faculty rather than transferring them to ISD as part of the 'hub and spoke' restructuring. Mr Young noted that this is an alteration to the structures presented as part of the consultation.

Mr Davidson advised that the original restructure plan was based on faculty IT technicians transferring to ISD (except in CEBE where there are more specialist IT requirements). Mr Davidson advised that more recently the faculties of LHS and UUBS had requested that four posts are retained as faculty posts and do not transfer to ISD. Mr Davidson advised that this change would have no impact on the total number of posts available.

Mr McAleese (UNITE) left the meeting at 12:30

20.04 GBD

A general discussion took place in relation to the plans for a new joint trade unions/management consultation forum on GBD issues. Mr Davidson advised that the terms of reference are currently out for consultation.

As part of this general discussion, Mr Young raised the issue of the draft flexi-time policy. He advised that the proposed start time for core hours should be reviewed. Mr Scott noted that any change to policy will need to go to JUCNC.

20.05 PS5 & 50 UPDATE

Mr Davidson provided an update on PS5&50 as follows:

Estates: consultations commenced on Monday 3 February 2020. UNITE representatives attended this consultation. The consultation includes an additional phase involving external consultants. Mr Young advised that UNITE has significant concerns about lack of consultation on the remit of the external consultants which includes the possibility of recommending some outsourcing. Mr Young advised that UNITE will oppose any recommendation to outsource any part of Estates.

ISD: Mr Davidson advised that the outcome from the matching phase was communicated to all staff before Christmas and work has commenced on departmental trawls.

Mr Agnew noted that '5 working days' to respond to a matching offer was insufficient, particularly in the run up to Christmas.

Strategy, Planning and Performance: Mr Davidson noted that consultation had taken place in relation to this restructuring. This particular restructuring involves an increase in the number of employees from 9 to 11.

Finance: The Department are still considering the way forward.

Student Administration: The Department are considering options.

20.06 Policy Consultation meetings.

Mr Davidson invited discussion in relation to the way forward with the monthly policy consultation meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to facilitate early engagement prior to policies coming to JNC and JUCNC. Broad discussion took place and it was agreed that Employee Relations will facilitate a working group with the unions to explore options.

Mr Scott noted that the consultation on sickness absence appeared haphazard.

People and Culture to bring Policy Consultation as an item to a future JUCNC.

20.07 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Pay Day: Further to the recent consultation on a possible change to the monthly pay day, UNITE advised that their preferred option is the 28th day of each month with the exception of December, where they would prefer that the current practice of an earlier pay day in December should continue.

Meeting Closed 13.10.