

UCU Executive Committee, 14 April 2015, AG04, 1300-1430
Minutes (status draft)

Attendance

Member	02/09/2014	26/09/2014	07/10/2014	04/11/2014	02/12/2014	06/01/2015	03/02/2015	03/03/15	14/04/15
Keith Simpson (KS)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chris Flood (CF)	P			P	A	A	P	P	P
John Saunders (JS)	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P
Swetha Bobba (SB)	P	P	P	A		P	A		P
Andrew Lack (AL)	P	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Greg Wellington (GW)	P	P	P	A	P	A	A	P	P
Morris Pamplin (MP)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Rebecca Lewis (RL)	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Suzanne Reece (SR)								-	-
Jon Eilenberg (JE)			P			P	A	P	P
Aljosha Schapals (AS)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Olivia Fox (OF)	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	A
Rachel Cohen (RC)	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
Alison Macfarlane (AM)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Leon Cuthbertson (LC)	P		P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Chantal Hill (CH)	P	A		P	A	A	A	P	A
Grietje Baars (GB)	A		P	A					
Hayley McBain								A	A

1 Apologies

Apologies received from HM, OF, RC, CH

2 Minutes of last meeting

These were approved. No matters arising.

3 Drop-in times

RL queried the current times of the drop-in. KS suggested moving to a lunchtime slot, Mondays 12-2.

This was agreed by the committee as easier for members to attend and also for KS to delegate case work if fewer drop-ins are met by him personally.

SB suggested a contact form would be a useful addition to the website. MP agreed and work on the website is ongoing.

Action: RL to organise a rota to organise for committee members to sign up to slots for the drop in.

4 Researchers' terms and conditions

AM presented a report on the work she, RF and HM have done to evaluate implementation of researchers' terms and conditions, with suggestions for gaps in the implementation can be addressed. Many of the current problems for researchers hinge on the lack of role profiles for research staff.

KS noted that while researchers' role profiles need to be addressed this is in the context of the academic role profiles which have been implemented without consultation or negotiation and that this is a wider issue which must first be addressed. It was expected this would be discussed at JCNB and/or ACAS. Discussions about researchers' terms and conditions should be raised as part of discussions about academic staff role profiles.

5 Special HESC on Pay, 29th April, Manchester

Committee was reminded of the special higher education sector conference on pay in Manchester on 29th. The conference will hear and consider a report on the process of the 2015 pay negotiations. The branch is entitled to send 2 delegates. KS noted the need to send a delegate. No committee members have yet told MP they are able to attend. KS can attend if no-one else.

Action: MP to send a final reminder to the committee.

6 Developments in schools

KS, CF and MP attended a meeting with staff from Economics on 23 March, regarding a rumoured plan to transfer the department from SASS to Cass. The meeting was well attended with around 20 staff from the department. Little concrete information regarding this move is known by the staff. The general feeling was that a move of the entire department would not be opposed but it was more likely that Cass would not want to subsume the department in its entirety which would entail job losses.

Action: MP to write up notes from the meeting and forward to staff in the department.

KS and MP met with Roger Crouch, Dean of SMCSE, on 27 March. At this meeting we were presented with a summary of plans for the restructure of the school's UG programmes offering. Roger is not currently considering staffing or student numbers implications but the concern is that decisions are being made on the basis of finances and that the restructure will result in staff and/or student reductions whether or not these are explicitly planned. It is clear that the school is being pressured to restructure and transform in line with the VC's vision for the university.

KS has requested another meeting with Roger Crouch and will organise for some departmental reps to attend.

Action: the Recruitment and Comms group to work on a newsletter edition which informs staff of developments in these two schools and draws attention to the pressure on some academic departments to conform.

8 JCNB report

This item was moved up the agenda.

MP presented a brief summary of the discussion from JCNB on 16 March attended by KS, CF, MP and OF on behalf of UCU.

JS questioned what management's response to the staff survey results had been, after 2 years of negative results with only a slight increase in the Pulse survey. The university's response to these results is that they are addressing the problems which the surveys highlighted. There was concern among the committee of the engagement of senior management in the problems highlighted by the survey and the representativeness of the Culture Committee set up to oversee the work to address issues raised in the survey. JS suggested that the university should engage an external consultant to analyse how to address staff relations at City.

There was discussion over the extent to which Council as the governing body are aware of the state of staff/management relations and how much news of the staff surveys reaches them. KS suggested a lobby of the next council meeting emphasising the poor staff engagement under the VC and in light of news of his recent bonus.

Action: MP to research date of next Council meeting and organise lobby with an open letter to Council inviting them to a meeting with UCU and emphasising the state of staff morale and relations with management.

LC suggested this open letter should subsequently appear in the newsletter.

MP pointed out that staff have also been invited to volunteer to facilitate future strategic planning sessions and on a smaller scale this may be a way to engage in the discussion about staff satisfaction and ensure feedback from the staff surveys is acted on.

Action: MP to write to Leadership and Staff Development regarding the scope of the job of facilitating these workshops.

7 ACAS

UCU's attendees for ACAS were confirmed as KS, JS, RL and OF.

Action: to ask at the informal meeting with HR whether the VC will be attending at any point.

Action: MP to look for dates for a pre-meet for those attending the ACAS meeting.

9 Student competitions

SB gave feedback on the recent student competition, CitySpark, which she attended and felt that the level of competition is not helpful to many potential competitors including research students and staff, who could be UCU members. The competition is ostensibly open to all students and staff but the quality of submissions and focus of the competition is such that it can be seen to exclude more

“serious” academic-focused submissions. Feedback on reasons for acceptance or refusal are sometimes not given.

JS and KS recommended caution as a competition which is open to undergraduate students as well as other groups may need to be judged with different criteria compared to e.g. a research student-only competition.

Action: KS to write to organisers offering to contribute to feedback on the competition and raising concern that research students and others are not properly served at present.

10 Any other business

KS, MP and LC confirmed as attending the informal meeting with HR following Committee Exec.

MP and KS both raised the AGM which needs to be organised. MP proposed a Tuesday in June.

Action: MP to arrange a Doodle Poll to select the best date in June for committee members.

KS noted the university quiz is this week and suggested that the branch forms a team.

MP noted that LC had been awarded the Student Support Award at the Student Voice awards.

JS gave a report into work with Peter Brooks to improve treatment of VLs at the university. He has drafted a letter to Deans asking for better treatment of VLs when contracts come up for renewal in July, and to ensure the VLs Policy is followed.