

Summary of Joint Trade Unions meeting, Thursday 21st January 2015

UNISON, UCU and Unite held a joint meeting open to all staff to discuss potential cuts; over 100 professional and academic staff from all grades attended. University management had indicated through informal channels to the trade unions that they wanted to attend the meeting. The trade unions were willing to give management the opportunity to address staff at the beginning of the meeting however in the end no members of University management attended.

There had been no further information from management following the email sent by UCU the week before last. Some Professional Service Directors have been talking to their staff about the proposals they have been asked to make for cost reductions of 3%, 6% and 9%. We understand that Deans of Schools have been told to propose ways to increase revenue or reduce costs. Management rationale as explained in December by the University's Chief Finance Officer (Stephen Avery) is that the University:

'will be facing a particular budget challenge in 2016/17 caused predominantly by the following factors:

- *an increase in employers' NI contributions of 1% from April 2016;*
- *an increase in employers' USS contributions of 2% from April 2016;*
- *our primary source of income, student fees, being held at £9k when the costs of Universities are continuing to rise through inflation and other pressures.*

The University has committed to achieving a 5% surplus. Without this measure of financial sustainability we have no headroom for investment in the student experience, new or refurbished buildings and would have difficulties in raising credit facilities to fund significant capital projects.'

The three Trade Unions are united in opposing all cuts and we will work together to support and protect our members.

The Unions object to the rationale behind the need to cut. We question the financial figures given by the University management and challenge the need to achieve a surplus at the expense of staff. The University staff are what make City, not the real estate, and any cuts will do damage to the student experience. Furthermore, the division between Schools as income generating and Professional Services as non-incoming generating is a simplistic analysis. The obvious examples of DARO, Research & Enterprise and Marketing are all incoming generating but more than that, Schools and Professional Service departments do not exist in isolation of one and other. We all know that cuts in one department will impact on all.

The Unions also condemn the secretive way in which the University operates. The limited information we have so far on these proposals has come as a result of pressure from the Trade Unions. We call on the University Management to sit down with the Unions to discuss their financial plans and to involve staff in the decision making process.

In the discussions that followed the update, staff expressed frustration and anger at potential of another round of cuts after PSR1, PSR2 and other cuts/reorganisations going further back. The trade unions stressed the need to organise collectively, across all of City, to set the agenda before any cuts and consultation are announced.

There were several suggestions of action:

- Collect specific examples of the risks cutting jobs would pose
- Lobby Exco and Heads of Service/School Deans as individual members of staff for management to inform staff what plans they are considering

- Campaign for a more open and transparent University that truly consults staff in the decision making process.
- Campaign for a more open and transparent University that truly consults staff in the decision making process: not when decisions have been made by those at the top and the only consultation is the statutory requirement to consult over redundancies

A strong desire for action came out of the meeting and we will be setting up activist groups to work on the actions above. Please email us at one of the addresses below if you want to be involved. Other ideas for ways we can begin to take action are also welcome.

Please share these notes with colleagues and talk to colleagues about the meeting and what we can do. Encourage your colleagues to join a trade union. The more union members there are, the stronger we all are.

UNISON and **Unite** represent represent administrative, technical and support staff (Grades 1 – 5) at City.

For further information on **UNISON**, and to join online, see <http://www.unison.org.uk/> The UNISON branch email is unison@city.ac.uk

For further information on **Unite**, and to join online, see <http://www.unitetheunion.com/> The Unite branch email is unite@city.ac.uk

UCU (University & College Union) represents administrative, library and computer staff on academic-related pay scales (Grades 6 - 9), as well as academics and research staff. For further information, and to join online, see <http://www.ucu.org.uk/join> The UCU branch email is info@cityucu.org.uk

In solidarity,

UNISON, UCU and Unite