

University and College Union
University of Bradford Local Association



Co-Presidents: Gary Slater & Dave Ewen

Minutes of the General Meeting held at 1.00pm on Thursday 17th February 2011

Chair: Gary Slater

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received and assumed from a number of members who turned down the meeting maker request. The list is too extensive to list here.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting.

Minutes of the General Meetings held on 15th December 2010 were approved.

3. Matters Arising since the last Meeting.

3.1 HERA role profiles – The Chair gave a brief summary of the use of HERA role profiles at Bradford, and reported that the UCU had spent a considerable amount of time (60hrs+) in negotiating meetings with HR to re-draft the profiles. It was acknowledged that this had caused the promotions exercise to be delayed, but it was felt that it was essential to ensure that the process was fair, equitable, and robust. Then LA was hopeful that negotiations would be concluded by early March, but it was unclear whether the University would back date promotions due to this delay.

3.2 Invigilation – The Chair asked for feedback on the invigilation process from members. A member from SLS reported that in general it had been a positive experience, and that non-academic staff had acted in support of the process. It was acknowledged the SLS had a large pool of staff and consequently staff had not been overloaded.

4. Ballots for industrial action

The Chair reported that the ballots should be received by members imminently, and that the close of the ballot remained the 2nd March. 2 ballot papers should be received.

4.1 Ballot on USS pensions – The Chair reported that the LA had contributed to the consultation on behalf of members.

As a result of the consultation, the USS Board had not totally accepted the employers proposals, and had asked the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) to look again at 2 aspects of the proposals.

1. To extend the period in which a member would be allowed to re-enter the scheme after leaving it (proposal was 6 months).

2. To increase the cap on inflationary increases applied to pensions.

The UCU still had serious concerns with other element of the proposals:

- Increase in retirement age
- Introduction of CARE scheme for new entrants
- Increase in contributions
- Stopping on automatic pension access on redundancy after age 55

And it is the UCUs view that these proposals are no longer necessary, and should not be implemented until the outcome of the upcoming valuation of the scheme proves they are needed.

It was noted that the CARE scheme accrual rate was considerably lower than was necessary and represented a serious detriment to members.

4.2 Ballot on the national claim – The Chair reported that the University of Bradford would be paying staff the 0.4% pay increase even though UCU had failed to agree the proposal. It was noted that other elements of the claim included negotiations on redundancy avoidance, and proposals to reduce the gender pay gap.

Members reported that it was difficult to vote for industrial action on anything that involved a pay claim, and it was noted that the campaign leaflet that had been circulated included material related to the pay claim.

The Chair reported that locally there was better news on redundancy avoidance, and that the University was making more encouraging noises on this issue.

5. March for an alternative to cuts – 26th March

The Chair encouraged members to attend this event if at all possible, and noted that the train that the TUC had chartered to take members to London was now full.

6. Financial Report 2009 – 2010

The treasurer gave a brief commentary to the financial report which had been circulated to members. The treasurer noted that income and expenditure was in line with previous years, and that a surplus for the year was reported as £3961.60.

A question was received regarding the interest rate on the loan the LA had made to HQ, to which the treasurer responded that the interest rate received was the same as the bank interest rate applicable, which was 0%.

7. Promotions and re-grading

The Chair reported that the University was proposing to move to a rolling promotions process with regular meetings of panels. The proposals meant that back pay would no longer be paid back to April, but would in future be paid from the point at which the promotion was agreed. Negotiations have centred on the inclusion of a mechanism for self initiation and the inclusion of appeals processes. The LA feels that we now have something that is almost acceptable, and have provisionally agreed an interim process.

The Chair noted that HR are developing 2 additional policies (restructuring, and career development) to complete the full suite of promotions policies, but that the LA had not seen either of these yet. Final agreement on the full suite of policies would only occur when the LA was satisfied that all eventualities were covered, and consequently the interim promotions policy would be reviewed in 6 months.

8. Blog

The Chair acknowledged that it was difficult for members to attend General Meetings, and therefore the LA Committee had decided to establish a BLOG to keep members updated with issues and negotiations that the LA was engaged with. The Chair noted that the BLOG could be used as a mechanism to get feedback from members, and it was hoped that it would be a more user friendly tool than Blackboard.

It was hoped that the BLOG would be launched soon, and would be available at

<http://uobucu.wordpress.com>

A question on feedback post moderation was asked, and it was the view of the Chair that feedback should be moderated.

9. Any Other Business.

9.1 PTHP policy – The Chair reported that the part time hourly paid contract policy had been agreed by the LA, and had now been ratified by the national UCU. The policy would be implemented from September 2011.

9.2 Joint Committee – The Chair reported that a Joint Committee of the University on the UCU had been scheduled for the 7th March, and asked member to send in possible agenda items. An item was received at the meeting asking for the University to consider reducing top slicing for schools that are in deficit.

9.3 Hefce teaching grant – The Chair noted that the University had received notification from Hefce that the 2010/2011 teaching grant had been reduced, but that the University was expecting this cut and had been prepared for it.

10. Dates of Meetings.

The date of the next General Meeting would be Thursday 14th April 2011

The meeting closed at 14:00.

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