

u+we in solidarity

Newsletter of UWE Branch of the UCU

26th January 2012

The Future of the Pensions Campaign

Maeve Landman, (who is elected to the UCU Higher Education Executive Committee by the national membership of the Union) presented the current situation to a recent Branch Executive Committee Meeting and outlined four points:

1. An increase in members' contributions and a decrease in employers' contributions (paving the way for further privatisation) at a cost to most members of between £28 and £100 per month take-home pay (i.e. a pay cut);
2. A cut in pensions from the shift from RPI to CPI adjustments;
3. An increase in the normal pension age to 68 (and then its further rise in line with the state retirement age);
4. The abolition of the final salary scheme (in favour of one based on average career earnings).

The Exec passed the following resolution:

“UWE UCU Branch Executive Committee does not consider the Government's proposals to have gone far enough to require a reconsideration of our campaign in defence of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. It believes that the UCU should join with the other unions that have rejected the Government's 'Heads of Agreement' proposals, and should plan a continuation of our campaign in conjunction with the other unions that have rejected the proposals.”

A copy of this resolution was sent to Sally Hunt (General Secretary of the UCU)

The Branch Exec called an Emergency General Meeting of the Branch for Wednesday 24th January.

Academic Workload Model

This is not an issue that will go away or be ‘mended’ if left alone. This Branch remains in dispute with management about the imposition of the University Workload Model. Specifically, there are 3 issues outstanding:

1. There should be an absolute maximum of 550 workload bundles that would only be breached in extraordinary circumstances, with the full consent of the employee, with stringent safeguards and in the full knowledge and with the permission of Executive Deans;

2. That Section 7 of the Workload Model (dealing with provision to work beyond 550 bundles) be removed from the Model;
3. That the number of weeks of teaching (the value of W in the calculations) be set to 30 weeks rather than 24 weeks. This would increase the ‘spend per student’ much closer to national averages in the sector and appropriately and properly recognise the work involved in teaching.

Members are telling us about problems with increasing workload and so to get a better idea of the patterns of increasing workload across the University we intend to issue a brief 10 question survey to see how the WLM is affecting members. We also continue to meet with representatives of University Senior Management to press for changes to the Workload Model and that implementation of the model is carried out fairly and transparently. Any problems should be discussed with your local Reps or you can email Mal.Hughes@uwe.ac.uk or phone the branch mobile 07824 408723 and speak to Mal Hughes.

TravelSmart Proposals

The TravelSmart proposals were discussed in detail at the last Branch Exec Meeting and it was noted that members’ comments and concerns had been taken forward to TravelSmart but they had not yet responded. It was felt that consultations should not close when UCU was still waiting for a response. Subsequently the full proposals have been circulated to all members along with the following 3 questions:

1. Which of these proposals can you support?
2. Which proposals do you not support and why?
3. Are these proposals ‘missing a trick’?

If you wish to respond you can do so directly to Andy Tubb – Branch Organising Officer and our representative on the TravelSmart Working Group or to your Negotiating Secretary Mal Hughes away from UWE servers on mal.ucu@fsmail.net.

At a meeting of the Joint Union Forum (JUF) working group your representatives Mal Hughes and Catherine Fletcher insisted that the Consultation should now run until 23rd February and that the Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the TravelSmart proposals should now be re-written, fully evidenced and put to the University equality groups.

Replacement Treasurer required for Branch Executive Committee

We are looking to co-opt to the Branch Executive a member who will be willing to act as Treasurer for the Branch until the AGM in May. Facility time is available – just a few workload bundles remain for this year to count towards your workload total but this may suit somebody in the short term or as a beginning to become more active in the Branch. Exec meetings are fortnightly, usually the first and third Wednesdays of the month during term-time, 10.00 to 12.00. Members are always welcome to attend Exec Meetings. Please let our Branch Secretary know you are coming and he can advise the location. The Branch Meetings Calendar is available on the UCU Branch website.

Branch Secretary: Bob.Lang@uwe.ac.uk

Branch Website: <http://www.uweucu.org.uk/>

Branch General Meeting

Date: 1st February 2012

Time: 2.00pm

Room: 2B067

There will be a great number of items to discuss at this meeting, so please come along and make your voice heard. Remember, the branch executive can only negotiate successfully with your continued support.