

## Pay campaign

The employers' organisation, UCEA, has offered staff on the 51 point scale a 1% increase in their pay this year. UCU has rejected this offer and has entered into ACAS dispute resolution procedures. As highlighted by Warwick UCU previously, real pay for staff on all scales has decreased significantly in recent years.

However, possibly the most insulting element of the "offer" is that the employers made participation in equality working groups, such as those looking into the gender pay gap and disability leave, conditional on the unions accepting the 1% pay increase: i.e. they are only interested in beginning discussions on these issues if we accept a miniscule pay increase.

The UCU Higher Education Conference, held on 28 May, agreed to carry out an indicative ballot of HE members from July to September with a recommendation to reject the offer. If this indicative ballot indicates strong rejection, we will be moving to a full ballot for industrial action in the autumn term. The local committee supports the national position: since 2009, members have seen four years of real pay cuts across the sector.

Universities are increasingly seeking to push up their reserves despite the funding situation being more stable. At Warwick, significant building plans are in progress but management should be asking what use are shiny buildings if you do not appreciate the staff within them? And what does it say for Warwick as an employer if they agree with the UCEA position of tying discussion on equalities issues to accepting a 1% pay offer? Even if you disagree with this analysis, the most important thing you can do is vote in the indicative ballot to let the national negotiators know your feelings.

## Report on UCU Congress, 29-31 May

This year's UCU Congress, and Higher Education Sector Congress, took place in Brighton. A full order of business can be found at: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/congress2013>. The focus of the discussion was on opposition to attacks on our pay and conditions in post-16 education. There were important resolutions passed to fight privatisation, casualisation and the ongoing real-terms pay cut. Delegates sent unanimous messages of solidarity to Bahraini teachers, Professor Davinder Bhullar in India and many others facing violations of their trade union and human rights. Motions were also passed on equalities issues, recognising that women, black and minority ethnic, disabled, and LGBT, members are particularly affected by austerity, with negative implications for education.

Warwick UCU put forward motions to Congress opposing the threats to academic freedom posed by the current model of Open Access publishing and supporting the organisation of highly casualised staff. We sent two branch delegates and an NEC member. The theme of congress was

“Build the Union”, which clearly has to be a priority at the moment. UCU faces a tough fight ahead in order to improve the current employers’ pay offer of 1%, as well as serious challenges to the public university and anti-casualisation (see other articles in this newsletter).

The most hotly debated issue at Congress this year was related to the union’s financial situation. UCU is facing a deficit, and various proposals were put forward to remedy this. In the end, Congress decided to increase annual subscriptions by inflation plus a 5% real increase for 2 years (for those who earn between £40,000 and £59,000, it means that monthly subscriptions will increase from £19.07 to £20.59 in 2013/14 and to £22.24 in 2014/15). The NEC is being reduced in size by 12.5% to reduce costs while keeping representation and our motion on a new, low-rate subscription for the lowest-paid staff was passed.

## Warwick Institute of Education Update

As members of UCU are aware, the Warwick Institute of Education (WIE) has undergone a lengthy process of review over the past 18 months, the result of which will be the closure of the WIE and the launch of two new centres: the Centre for Educational Studies (CES) and the Centre for Professional Studies (CPE). Management have told UCU negotiators that they are trying to avoid and mitigate redundancies. To realise this commitment, we believe there will need to be a very strong commitment to the Centre for Education Studies, the research-led academic unit, and the Centre for Professional Education, the entity that focuses upon initial teacher training and continuing professional development.

We welcome the statement that the job losses “will be achieved through voluntary means and redeployment”. At every stage UCU has highlighted that we believe the adjustments can be met through voluntary means. A recent letter sent to all ‘stakeholders’ updating them on the closure of the WIE and the reorganisation of education from Pro-VC Stuart Croft states, “There will be a need to marginally reduce the number of education staff in some areas”. In fact, the plans would reduce the academic staff from 19 to 10, research staff from 10 to 4 and administrative staff from 33 to 18 by September 2014 and increase teaching-only staff by 5. Clearly, these figures are not marginal. Management has stated at this stage that the number of jobs they expect to lose is 12 although we have concerns about the medium term. For instance, we and staff in WIE are concerned that there may be a second round of job losses if sufficient proactive steps are not taken to identify new roles for the “Transition team”- a group of workers who will span WIE, the CES and CPE over the next academic year.

Some of the assumptions upon which the reorganisation is predicated, including intra-departmental cooperation and the stability of Government policy for teacher training, are optimistic. The plans for the CPE are very preliminary depending on what the government decides to do about ITT. The university is only prepared to guarantee one year’s funding and we believe a much more definite medium term commitment is required. In addition, neither centre has a director in post; we don't know how many of the new academic posts for the CES will be

based entirely in it and how many will be joint appointments with other departments and how existing academic staff will fit in.

As education is being reorganised and rationalised at Warwick, the University has taken a decision to pause recruitment to the undergraduate degree next year with a view to relaunching a fundamentally redesigned version of it with fewer students in 2015. It is certainly not the usual practice at Warwick to stop recruiting while a degree course is being redesigned: the normal practice is simply to revise the course and launch it as a replacement. We have highlighted that pausing recruitment will surely mean a substantial loss of student fee revenue – given the course has an annual intake of 90 – which will be significant in a department that is already losing money – even if the pause is only for one year. Management have said that this “loss” is built into their assumptions. We can see that there may be some positive aspects to this but meaningful action to build for the following intake must take place soon in order to ensure the long term viability of undergraduate education studies at Warwick.

In closing, while we welcome the University’s statements demonstrating a commitment to the principle of retaining education, avoiding compulsory redundancies and to redeploy staff where possible, we believe the plans need to be rooted in meaningful sustainable actions to build for the future.

## **The benefits of union membership and the foolishness of not joining**

Universities are increasingly more difficult places to work these days. With ambitious senior staff setting the agenda, trying to rise up in the league tables and the implementation of ever more subjective line management, staff at all levels are facing a lot of risk. We are told that we are all in this together, not true. Many senior staff in the University have decoupled from us. They have enjoyed large pay increases, paid for by our pay cuts. However, the detrimental changes to your pension, pay and conditions of service would have been worse without the UCU trying to defend your hard won rights.

When things go wrong, people turn to UCU. With many staff suddenly finding themselves needing the help of union caseworkers and legal aid, it has never been more important to be a union member. Yet too many colleagues have not joined. They seem to think they only need to do so when they have a problem, and that they can free ride on all the other things the union does on their behalf – such as national pay negotiations, administering the USS pension scheme, negotiating local terms and conditions, dealing with management over redundancy and restructuring, and so on.

The union can only offer limited support to such people: it is rather like expecting to get fire insurance after your house has caught fire. And the union would be a lot stronger, to the extent that many of the problems arising from bullying management would not even arise, if it had

more members. It is in everyone's interests to join the UCU. If you are reading this and you are not a member, you can join on-line: [www.ucu.org.uk/join](http://www.ucu.org.uk/join).

## Anti-casualisation

After a recent series of meetings and information gathering, it has become clear to UCU that it is more important than ever for Warwick to sign up to the framework agreement for hourly-paid staff. This would ensure that the work that hourly-paid staff do for the university is linked to an appropriate academic role with the same employer responsibilities for support. We have asked the UCU West Midlands Regional Office for support in negotiations on this matter and we will keep members informed about progress.

## REF developments

Warwick UCU met recently with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to discuss the REF. In August, heads of department will send some staff a letter informing them that they will be excluded from the REF. Staff will be told the reasons for their exclusion, which may be due to quality, quantity, or strategy. The last depends on the ratio of staff to impact cases in the unit of assessment. Under Warwick's REF Code of Practice, appeals against exclusion can only be made on the basis of discrimination. Warwick UCU has called for a wider appeals process and pointed out that, without such a process, taking a grievance would be the only option available to individuals.

Warwick UCU has asked that there should be no detriment for those staff excluded from the REF. The DVC has said that he would consider this. He stressed that the REF is separate from performance management and that exclusion on its own would not lead to performance management.

If any staff face exclusion on the basis of quality, the DVC said that the possibility of submitting their outputs in a different unit of assessment will be considered when appropriate. If the ratio of staff to impact cases in the other unit of assessment precludes submission in that unit, cross-referencing will be considered.

In line with the policies of the REF panels, double-weighting of outputs is being considered on a case by case basis. The DVC has said that double-weighting is based on the scope, reach, or significance of the output and that a 2\* output could be double-weighted if it met these criteria.

Warwick UCU has noted that the subjectivity and the lack of transparency in the assessment of outputs may result in grievances. The DVC has again emphasised that exclusion from the REF on its own would not lead to performance management.

If you know of anything contrary to this happening, please email Claire Duffy: [xuaut@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:xuaut@warwick.ac.uk)

## UCU Stress Survey highlights lower than average well-being amongst Warwick UCU members

The UCU Stress Survey 2012 used the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards indicator tool to examine five components relating to members' levels of stress:

1. Workload demands
2. Relationships and bullying
3. Control
4. Peer and managerial support
5. Change

Results are presented by institution. For a fuller breakdown see the pages at <http://www.ucu.org.uk/workloadcampaign>.

Warwick UCU members reported lower than average well-being (though never in the lowest 20 institutions) across each of the 5 measures, save for control which was above average.

Warwick UCU has drawn attention of some of these findings to University management in line with UCU's call to seek local agreement between management and staff on tackling some of these problems. These issues are clearly present across the whole HE sector – UCU estimates that UCU members' well-being is lower than for the general population – and are more keenly felt at Warwick than elsewhere.

We acknowledge that the University's PULSE survey has a much wider brief than employee well-being yet, significantly, it does not pick up on the measures of workload demand. This illustrates the value of the UCU Stress Survey and UCU's new campaign to resist increasing workloads (for more details, see UCU link above).

Points of concern for UCU members at Warwick:

1. Approximately 33% report having unachievable deadlines always or often
2. Over 50% report always or often having multiple demands which are difficult to combine
3. Over 80% feel they have to work very intensively often or always
4. Over 55% say that they always or often feel pressured to work long hours

## Students occupy Senate House

Warwick students began an occupation of Senate House on 14 June. The group is protesting "widening inequality within higher education [driven by] the marketisation and privatisation of universities": <http://theboar.org/2013/06/14/students-occupy-senate-house/#.UcLL0-xwZjo>

The Warwick UCU branch committee supports the students' objectives of resisting marketisation and privatisation in universities. UCU 'think that the interests of our members, of the students and parents who are at the heart of education and of the wider society we serve, are best served by an education system that is funded and controlled by the public and that is democratically accountable to the citizens of the UK.' See: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/stopprivatisation>

## A worse deal for student loans

The Guardian has outlined how, 'A confidential report commissioned by the government has proposed redrawing the terms of student loans taken out over the past 15 years, that would make them more expensive to pay back for 3.6 million borrowers in England alone'. See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2013/jun/13/raise-interest-rate-student-loans-secret-report>. UCU condemned the government's plans, with national President Simon Renton saying, 'Ministers need to confront the reality that their costly experiment is failing students and taxpayers, and damaging our universities. It's time we had an honest debate about better ways to fund higher education.' See <http://www.ucu.org.uk/6673>. Campaign for the Public University also posted more analysis of the report: <http://publicuniversity.org.uk/2013/06/14/2290/>

## Early Day Motion against gay-to-straight conversion therapy

Hull and East Riding Labour LGBT+ Network's Early Day Motion against gay-to-straight conversion therapy has just been tabled by a cross-party group of MPs. Please see for more detail: <http://www.hulllabourlgbt.net/blog/early-day-motion-against-conversion-therapy/>

Their request is that as many members as possible, in as many constituencies as possible, email their local MPs asking them to lend their signatures to the EDM.

You will find a draft letter as a template to work from in the link above.

For information on UCU's LGBT policies and to get yourself added to the UCU LGBT members' email list visit: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1939>