

Important information for UCU Members at Warwick University

Your union on campus

April 2016

HE Green Paper & Prevent

On Friday, March 11th, VP Stuart Croft held a General Assembly on the Green Paper and Prevent. The Green Paper and Prevent are two key facets of a general assault on the fundamental principles of public higher education – accessibility, democracy and academic freedom.

This article explains why the Green Paper is so dangerous for members of the UCU and why we must continue to be part of nationwide struggle to stop it

The Teaching Excellence Framework, or what we're calling the Tuition-fee Escalation Framework, uses an evaluative set of metrics, and offers 'financial and reputational incentives' to institutions according to where they rank. Determined according to market-based metrics such as graduate earnings, student satisfaction surveys, and access targets, the TEF treats students as consumers to be satisfied and teachers as customer service workers whose job is to provider Satisfaction.

The problems with these measures are myriad. There are numerous issues with student evaluations as a measure of merit – the proven bias against female, gay, and ethnic minority instructors or the focus on focus on "satisfaction" over excellence, for instance. Moreover, to compare the wage potential of a philosophy graduate against one in the STEM's presumes the purpose of the university is purely vocational.

The TEF is not about teaching excellent, but a tool of marketization that enables management to pursue course cuts in non-transactional departments, and to bully and control an already over-burdened workforce staff to provide increased services with less resources.

The Tuition-fee Escalation Framework is also part of the Green Paper's larger plan to uncap and deregulate tuition. Universities that score well in the TEF will be permitted to raise tuition fees above the current cap of £9000 per year. Alongside of this, the Green Paper states that the power to raise tuition fees will no longer require the backing of Parliament and will lie with the Secretary of State. While Jo Johansen says they won't rise above inflation, there are no guarantees and as history has shown, many reasons to be sceptical.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the Green Paper's vision for the future of the University is that it wants to remove universities from the Freedom of Information Act. Their justification for the exclusion – to create a level playing field with private providers – suggests the extent to which the Green Paper views universities not as institutions of public education, but corporations competing for student shares.

Finally, while not explicitly stated, the Green Paper must be understood within the larger attack on secure, stable work in the University. The Green Paper both exacerbates and depends on the increasing problem of casualization. Not only will the TEF disproportionately affect casualised staff who are already often working 2 or 3 times the hours they're paid for, but casualised staff are less able to resist these modes of marketization. In this way, as in numerous others, the casualisation of the academic workforce is an effective tool in forcing it to accept new working practices.

To get involved in fighting the Green Paper:

- Join the UCU
- Join staff on the Warwick Prevent and Greenpaper Working group
prevent.greenpaper@gmail.com
- Get involved with the Campaign to Defend the Public University
<https://heconvention2.wordpress.com>

Trade dispute between UCU and employers concerning the 2016/17 claim regarding pay and terms and conditions

The ballot closed at noon on 4th May 2016. Almost two thirds (65.4%) of members who voted backed strike action and over three quarters (77.3%) voted for action short of a strike.

You can view the full scrutineer's report at <http://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/2810/46874/1086/1/>

The vote follows a marginally improved offer of 1.1% from the employers, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), which the union has described as 'insulting'.

The union's national representatives will meet on Friday (6 May) to discuss the ballot result, before a decision is made on what form the industrial action will take and when it will begin.

The union said universities could afford to pay more and that the latest offer does little to address the real terms pay cut of 14.5% suffered by higher education staff since 2009. The squeeze on staff salaries comes at a time when pay and benefits for university leaders has increased, on average, by 3%, with the average pay and pensions package for vice-chancellors standing at over £270,000.

Are you prepared to take industrial action consisting of strike action?

Number of ballot papers returned: 21,141
Number voting YES: 13,775 (65.4%)
Number voting NO: 7,292 (34.6%)
Number of papers found to be invalid: 74

Are you prepared to take industrial action consisting of action short of a strike?

Number of ballot papers returned: 21,141
Number voting YES: 16,270 (77.3%)
Number voting NO: 4,770 (22.7%)
Number of papers found to be invalid: 101

Pay a Living Wage!

UCU, together with the other campus unions, is putting pressure on University management to pay the Living Wage to all staff. In a year where the University's Remuneration Committee can pay the outgoing Vice-Chancellor a 'good-bye' gift of £92,000, it is quite extraordinary that the University is unable to pay its lowest paid staff - of which there are over 350 - a level of income needed to provide an acceptable standard of living in the UK to ensure good health, development and social inclusion.

Following pressure from all unions, and in response to a letter from the campus unions to our new Vice-Chancellor on his first day in office, management has agreed to pay a 'one-off cash payment' - in reality a tip - to all salaried staff whose pay during the current financial year is less than the level determined by the Living Wage Foundation. Whilst this move is applauded, it is imperative that University management provides a permanent solution and does so as quickly as possible.

The Living Wage enables workers to cover the basic cost of living. It is not a legal requirement but there are other, even more compelling ethical, moral, social and business arguments for adopting it. Every staff member plays a vital role in the success, development and growth of the University and its through their hard work that we won the Times Higher Education University of the Year Award in 2014/15 and in the same year celebrated a special milestone - our 50th Anniversary. The University is one of the largest employers in the region and claims to be an organisation that values its workforce so lets start valuing all our staff by paying everyone a fair wage and become a Living Wage Foundation employer.

UCU is expecting management to present proposals on this issue during the summer term. UCU will maintain the pressure on management to ensure that we work to win the Living Wage for everybody who works at the University of Warwick.

You don't need to face it alone

If you're facing problems associated with your employment at Warwick and are a UCU member, you can rely on our help. We have a team of personal caseworkers, all volunteers, who are trained to provide support, advice and representation on a range of issues from contract renewal to potential disciplinary action or harassment. If you are being disciplined, or taking a grievance against another member of staff, you have a legal right to be accompanied by a union representative.

If you find yourself in this situation and would like to speak, in confidence, to one of our caseworkers, email our administrator, Claire Duffy at administrator@warwickucu.org.uk

Join your union online at: www.ucu.org.uk/join

Angry and Ashamed - Pay Attention to Pay or Pay the Price *Warwick UCU Branch President*

I always leave UCU Pay Briefings feeling very angry and slightly ashamed. Angry because the figures are truly shocking. The pay of people on the main 51-point salary scale has declined by 14.5% since 2009/10, even though annual surpluses across the sector have increased by 74.7% and reserves are up by 57.4%. And ashamed because I haven't done more to mobilise members around this issue. With so much information coming out of UCU Head Office, it's easy to lose sight of the two things that matter most - job security and being paid a fair rate. I love my job and don't care that I earn a fraction of what many people working in the corporate sector get. But I do care that:

- the Warwick staff who clean the toilets and unlock the classrooms are struggling to make ends meet;
- male academics at Warwick earn, on average, £11,293 more than their female counterparts, reflecting a disgraceful national trend;
- Warwick, like most universities, uses a veritable army of "atypical" academic staff on highly-casualised contracts. In 2014/15, there were 75,560 atypical academic staff working in UK Higher Education, over 2,000 of whom worked at Warwick.

These are the reasons I'm fully behind the pay claim submitted in March by the HE unions (UCU, Unison, Unite, GMB and EIS). A 5% increase for everyone on the national pay spine is affordable; tackling the gender pay gap and the sector's over-reliance on casual contracts is imperative. I don't want to go on strike, but if the employers refuse to budge on these issues, I'll be right there on the picket line. I'm not in favour of avarice and greed, but I am in favour of affordability and fairness.



Women in HE effectively work 6 WEEKS a year for free due to an unfair gender gap.

Warwick ranks 11th in a table of the largest gender pay gaps for all academic staff in Higher Education.

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7959/Holding-down-womens-pay-updated-Apr-16/pdf/ucu_IWDpayreport_rev_apr16_.pdf

Academic Female Salary: £47,527
Academic Male Salary: £58,820

UCU have made a specific demand in this year's national claim to UCEA asking for action to close the pay gap by 2020.

Calling non-academic members!

We want this newsletter to speak to all members, not only academics. If there's something we're missing, get in touch!

Talking Union – TUC Interactive guide

The TUC have published a guide to help you talk 'Union' to your colleagues.

"Kicking off a conversation with a colleague about the union is often the most difficult thing to do. There are a number of reasons why someone might be hesitant to start this conversation. To help you tackle this the TUC has produced an eNote with useful tips and guidance to get you talking union."

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/node/124475>



Join your union online at: www.ucu.org.uk/join

Casework support – A note of caution

As members will know, one of the main ways in which Warwick UCU helps members is on a one-to-one basis via our team of volunteer caseworkers. Caseworkers will tell you that this job is challenging but also extremely rewarding.

Locally we try to support all members who request casework support. However access to LEGAL SUPPORT is subject to satisfying Regional Office that

- The member has completed 90 days' qualifying period (or joined at the earliest possible opportunity)
- The issue was not in progress before the member joined

Each year we get many requests for support from people who have joined with issues in progress and wish to access support. The Union is a self-help group, not a service which people pay for and we are keen to hold ourselves to that ethos.

Please urge colleagues to join UCU at the earliest possible opportunity.

Calling for new caseworkers

Are you able to give up some time to assist members with personal cases?

We are looking for new members to join our existing group of caseworkers. Full formal training is provided and there are many opportunities to learn informally from members of our dedicated team. You do not need to be a Perry Mason or a Horace Rumpole (more contemporary examples are no doubt available); you are NOT a legal adviser. Casework often involves advising members of choices or potential ways of resolving issues and allowing the member to come to their own conclusions.

I'm interested, but not sure I can spare the time

Caseworkers take on cases when they have time to do so. Casework fits around your normal work activities and commitments and not the other way round.

If you would like to know more about what is involved and would like to speak informally to any of our caseworkers, then please email administrator@warwickucu.org.uk

Warwick UCU Website - warwickucu.org.uk

The Warwick UCU website has been revamped – we would be interested in hearing your views on this and what else you would like to be able to find on this site.

Please let us know what support requirements you have (or have heard of) by completing the online poll.



Do you have a story to tell?

We aim to send out this newsletter quarterly, and want all members to feel that they have a stake in it. If you think you have a story to tell, some interesting news, an idea for an item or perhaps a suggestion for something that would be worth following up, please get in touch with us at: administrator@warwickucu.org.uk

Please ensure that you mark your email NEWSLETTER.

Don't miss the next Branch Committee Meeting
2nd Wednesday of every Month
Contact: administrator@warwickucu.org.uk for details