

Important information for UCU Members at Warwick University

Your union on campus

November 2016

EU Referendum

Letter to the VC - Update

The UCU committee has sent the outcomes of the Warwick UCU Open Meeting on the EU Referendum Result and a request for a formal written response to Vice Chancellor Croft. (A copy of this was circulated to members via email).

Recommendations included:

- Support package for EEA staff
- UoW to underwrite cost of applying for UK citizenship for new and existing staff
- Continuity of service for staff on casualised contracts (because of the link with citizenship)
- Given the implications for research funding, an assurance that individual revenue generation will not be used as a metric in any future redundancy situation

The VC has contacted us to let us know that he will provide a full response following the all staff meeting that was held on 26th October 2016. We'll publish details once we have more information.

Referendum Impacts

Number of EU students applying to UK universities drops by 9%

The number of EU students applying for places at UK universities has [dropped by 9%](#), according to UCAS figures released yesterday. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt [said](#): We don't think the [delay confirming the deal for EU students](#) was helpful, and fear continued confusion over what the vote to leave means for universities is likely to harm our chances of encouraging students and staff to come to our universities.

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/inthenews28Oct2016>

National Demo



national union of students



University and College Union

The National Union of Students (NUS) and the University and College Union (UCU) have joined together to organize a national demonstration in central London on Saturday 19 November.

The demonstration - 'United For Education' - represents a rallying call for free, accessible and quality further and higher education across the UK, and a demand to end the marketisation of university and college education.

With coordinated education demonstrations due to take place in numerous countries around the world, the demonstration will also represent a call for international solidarity and opposition to all forms of racism and xenophobia. Students and lecturers in the UK in particular will be calling for government to ensure that universities and colleges remain open, accessible and inclusive following the Brexit vote.

UCU Warwick has donated funds towards the hire of a coach from Warwick and we encourage as many of our members as possible to take part in the demonstration. If you are planning to attend, please let us know so that we can put you in touch with other people.

UCU national information:

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/Nov19>

Warwick SU information:

<https://www.warwicksu.com/ents/event/13970/>



When is a victory not a victory?

In September, the University announced that it was doing away with Spinal Point 3 on the pay scale so that all directly-employed staff received, at least, the £8.25 advocated by the Living Wage Foundation. The casual observer might think this was great achievement which the trade unions should have celebrated. Well, not quite.

Last February, all four campus unions (UCU, Unite, Unison and UCATT) asked that the University become accredited by the Living Wage Foundation. This hasn't happened. Instead, last July, management made a one-off payment to staff on Spinal Points 3, 4 and 5 so as to bring their hourly-rate up to £8.25. This was backdated to November 2015, but anyone who had left by July got nothing. Last month, they imposed the pay claim, even though we are still in dispute, and removed Spinal Point 3. This means 63 cleaners in their first year of service (and any new starters - mustn't forget them) will get an extra 16.5 pence per hour. If all the cleaners worked full-time (which they don't), this largesse would cost the university the princely sum of £20,000 for the whole year. In the context of a £30 million annual surplus, this represents a very modest gesture, indeed. And don't forget that cleaning services were restructured last Christmas in a move designed to save the university around £350,000 a year.

Moreover, the Living Wage Foundation rate is set on 1 November each year, so, already, all staff on spinal point 4 and 5 have fallen below the new Living Wage Foundation rate of £8.45/hr meaning we will have to start the tedious and undignified game of catch-up all over again.

So, let's not crack open the champagne just yet. It's good that Warwick has chosen not to outsource their cleaning provision but such a rich seat of learning can surely afford to pay its cleaners a living wage.

NSS Boycott

UCU supports NUS's right to boycott the National Student Survey.

The National Union of Students has now confirmed that it will be organising an all-out boycott of the National Student Survey (NSS).

The aim is to invalidate the data upon which the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will be based, since the NSS will be one of its key metrics. Warwick UCU welcomes this boycott as one of the most effective strategies we have for preventing the implementation of the TEF, the flagship policy at the centre of the government's Higher Education Bill. Members will remember that in March this year our branch called an Assembly where over 100 members of staff voted almost unanimously for a motion expressing our strong opposition to a Bill that seeks further privatisation and marketisation of Higher Education. Our own Vice Chancellor Stuart Croft has since called for a halt to this Bill, especially now that the university sector faces such an uncertain future post Brexit.

Both the UCU National Congress and Warwick UCU have passed policy in support of the right to boycott NSS. We recognise that university staff are under increasing pressure to encourage student participation in the NSS, and that this has an impact not only on our position in University league tables but also determining the allocation of internal budgets. With the support of UCU HQ, we will be working hard to ensure that no department is adversely affected by the 2017 NSS boycott. To find out more, and how you, as an UCU member, can help support this boycott, come to our open public meeting on the Higher Education Bill on Wednesday, 30 November 2016, 12:30 PM in S0.11.

We have recently learnt that Council has volunteered the University of Warwick to take part in a trial of the TEF. This is a particularly worrying development and a challenge to the motion passed by the Assembly. An emergency meeting with the University was called by the SU to ask for this not to be implemented but the response was that this will go ahead.

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

Hourly Paid Teachers at Warwick – What’s going on?

Warwick University is one of the HE institutions in the country which perhaps relies most heavily on the work of casualised staff to carry out core teaching – 70% according to recent UCU figures. At the forefront of this atypical army of academic labourers are the so-called ‘sessional teachers’ – often PhD students paid by the hour to teach seminars, demonstrate in labs and mark work. The University relies heavily on this labour, yet working conditions are disadvantageous. Sessional teachers are not employed by the university but treated as contractors, with few rights and no employment security. Their rates of payment vary heavily across departments, and in many cases, they are not paid for many of the hours they work – in preparing for classes, giving feedback or answering students’ queries.

Following the Teach Higher fiasco in the summer of 2015, the University introduced a pilot, the so-called Sessional Teaching Payroll (STP), supposed to deliver a “fair, transparent and consistent approach to the recruitment and remuneration of our hourly paid and sessional teaching staff”. STP has been running in six departments (SMLC, Maths, CLL, PAIS, Philosophy, Sociology and Chemistry) since 2015/16, with History joining this year.

New pay frameworks for sessional teachers are being developed, and it is planned that a new STP will be rolled out across the whole University from 2017/18 onwards. Conditions under STP are an improvement from the previous VAM payroll system – but under many accounts they are still not good enough. Whilst the new pay rates will be linked to existing spinal points, equal treatment for hourly paid staff is still not on the cards – as sessional teachers would still not be considered as employees of the University. Even under the new framework, many hours of work (for example, hours spent on emails and admin) would still be unpaid, and deep discrepancies in rates of pay persist between Faculties and departments – with tutors in the Sciences facing the worst conditions, being paid in some cases as little as £11.18 per hour for lab demonstrating. Ensuring that fair and harmonized conditions for hourly paid teachers are actually rolled out consistently across the University remains therefore a key point of contestation.

To ensure that conditions under the new frameworks are improved before the new system is rolled out across the board, hourly paid tutors are getting themselves organised through a campaign coalition, Warwick Anti-Casualisation. The group, which works closely with Warwick UCU and the Students’ Union, ran a Teaching Diaries survey last academic year to reveal the extent of unpaid work carried out by hourly paid tutors at Warwick. The survey revealed that 24% of tutors who took part were paid less than the National Minimum wage once all their actual hours worked were accounted for! A petition will soon be launched to demand that conditions under the new STP follow four key principles: all hours worked should be recognised and paid for; pay rates for tutors should be consistent across tasks; there should be pay harmony across departments; and sessional tutors should be employees of the university, rather than contractors. Applying these principles would ensure fairer treatment for hourly paid tutors, and move Warwick closer to the positive example represented by the University of Essex, which, following a campaign by the local UCU, has recently taken very significant steps to improve its model of employment for graduate teaching assistants.

If Warwick is serious about its commitment to high quality teaching, as it has been at pains to stress in current debates, then this would appear to be at odds with the way in which its teachers are engaged. Warwick should thus follow closely in the steps of Essex: staff, students and the quality of teaching and learning have everything to gain from putting an end to the entrenched casualization that sessional teachers in the University currently face.

What can you do to support?

Sign the petition demanding fair pay and conditions for hourly paid staff.

If you are a hourly paid tutor or a casualised member of staff, you can get involved in Warwick Anti-Casualisation!

Visit our Facebook page or email warwickanticasualisation@gmail.com to join the mailing list.

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

Lecture Capture

Despite university senior management continually reassuring UCU that lecture capture is 100% voluntary we continue to hear of cases where staff are put under pressure by their departments to record their lectures, or are asked to make onerous alternative arrangements. Additionally the university continues with its lecture capture 'task and finish' group, which seems to presume the wider use of lecture capture.

While we recognize and accept that lecture capture can be useful for students with special educational needs, we do not accept that this should be available to all students.

We have questioned the passive acceptance of lecture capture on pedagogic grounds – we've yet to see any evidence of its efficacy - queried issues of intellectual property and copyright, and demanded assurances that lecture capture will not be used for performance management / staff surveillance.

We have submitted a statement to the task and finish group which includes a demand that if there is to be any change to lecture capture policy, then this should be subject to Senate's scrutiny and not just steering. In the meantime we would like to hear of any instances where you have been pressured into recording lectures. Please contact our administrator Claire Duffy.

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!

UCU Caseworkers

UCU relies on volunteers to run the branch and fulfil the various functions. We need to boost our numbers of active caseworkers as a top priority. Caseworkers advise and support members facing any employment-related difficulty. Their work is arguably the most important potential benefit that any individual member can get from membership. Increased case numbers and team members leaving Warwick have placed greater strain on the current team. If we cannot meet future demand we will all be losers, and face exposure to greater levels of employment risk.

Caseworker Training

There will be a caseworker training session on Monday 28 November between 13:00 and 15:00 in room 0.011 Scarman Road. Lunch will be provided.

Rebecca Stewart from Regional Office will offer a training session for new caseworkers. The session will be quite informal and will cover some basics of being a UCU caseworker, such as interviewing members. Rebecca will also cover the most common aspects of the law which caseworkers are likely to come across such as discipline and grievance, settlement agreements and the Equality Act. There will also be an opportunity to talk to more experienced caseworkers.

Places are still available. Please contact Claire Duffy, our administrator if you would like more details at administrator@ucubarwick.org.uk

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