

Joint University/UCU Committee

22/01 A meeting of the Joint University/UCU Committee was held on Tuesday 1 February 2022 at 11.30 remotely, via Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Sally Pellow, President of Reading UCU [*Chair*]
Dr Ian Bland, UCU Representative
John Brady, Director of HR
Dr David Field, UCU Representative
Moray McAulay, UCU Regional Official
Claire Rolstone, Assistant Director of HR (Advisory Services)
Professor Robert Van de Noort, Vice Chancellor
Professor Parveen Yaqoob, Deputy Vice Chancellor
Katie Smith, Senior Governance Officer [*Secretary*]

Apologies:

Dr Richard Messer, Chief Strategy Officer & University Secretary
Nat Willmott, UCU Representative

22/02 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

22/03 Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

a) Minute 21/31 *Membership and Terms of Reference 2021/22*

In relation to ensuring the accessibility of meeting documents, the Committee was advised that the Head of Governance would ensure that guidance was reinforced in future communications with Committee Secretaries. This would also be considered by the relevant working group.

b) Minute 21/34 *Report of the Vice Chancellor*

It was confirmed that the November report to Senate had been circulated.

c) Minute 21/34 *Report of the Vice Chancellor*

It was confirmed that a paper had been circulated which explained how the University was ensuring its procurement processes were responsible and aligned with its Strategy.

d) Minute 21/35 *Report of the President of Reading UCU*

The Deputy Vice Chancellor confirmed that feedback had been provided to Health & Safety Services regarding the fact that Health and Safety Coordinators could further reinforce the help they could provide with risk assessments.

e) Minute 21/36 *Update on the local UCU claim*

In relation to the action to establish which branch colleagues would be involved in the gender pay gap element of the claim, the President of Reading UCU advised that UCU were not yet in a position to progress this, given the strike action and continuing work on the first element of the claim. The Director of HR observed that key University colleagues were also currently focused on the production of the annual Gender Pay Gap Report, however it

programmes based on three indicators continuation, completion and progression outcomes

To agree a limit on contributions in the future so members pay no more than 9.8%

The UCU Regional Official noted the clear prioritisation from the union to maintain the benefits of the USS pension scheme for scheme members and the intention to find a negotiating settlement to this dispute that would not require further industrial action. UCU representatives hoped that progress could be made by working with the University on this matter. The Vice Chancellor advised that such decisions needed to go through a process and could not simply be decided by themselves. Despite the very short timescale given, the Vice Chancellor would endeavour to work with relevant colleagues and proceed through the appropriate decision-making process, including working with UEB/ Council/ Committees of Council as required, and respond by the deadline.

Action: Vice Chancellor

The Vice Chancellor was asked to comment regarding the financial implications of the changes to contribution rates contained in the proposals and responded that a full analysis would be required and consideration would also need to be given to additional aspects such as long term sustainability.

It was noted that there had been three days of industrial action in December and behaviour was understood to have been respectful on both sides. Although UCU had chosen to not put a picket line at Pepper Lane on this occasion (due to this being a Covid-19 testing area) it reserved the right to do so next time; the Vice Chancellor confirmed that not having a picket line at Pepper Lane was much appreciated and contributed to the health and safety of colleagues as well as the wider community.

The President of Reading UCU noted that this would be covered as part of the Phase 1 work, but wanted to raise the matter of the cost of living increases from the summer and to suggest that salaries be kept in line with this, rather than the pay freeze continuing. The Vice Chancellor noted that it was in the interest of all parties for the pay freeze not to be implemented it was hoped for a positive outcome following discussions, however this was dependant on student growth in relation to the cost of the pandemic. It was confirmed that the next meeting regarding Phase 1 was scheduled for 23 February.

22/06 Update on the local UCU claim

This item was covered elsewhere in the meeting.

Items brought forward by the University

This item was covered elsewhere in the meeting.

Items brought forward by Reading UCU

This item was covered elsewhere in the meeting. sewhereew