

University and College Union

Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH, Tel. 020 7756 2500, www.ucu.org.uk

To Branch and local association secretaries

Topic **Minutes of the national executive committee**

Action Branches are asked to note the confirmed minutes of the national executive committee

Summary The minutes of the May 2020 meeting are now available

Contact Alan Scobbie ascobbie@ucu.org.uk

University and College Union

Meeting of **National executive committee**

Location **MS Teams**

Date **1 May 2020**

Confirmed minutes

Present Robyn Orfitelli, Pura Ariza, Bruce Baker, Joan Harvey, Vicky Blake, Joanna de Groot, Justine Mercer, Mark Abel, Mark Pendleton, Kirsten Forkert, Janet Farrar, Lesley McGorrigan, Steve Sangwine, Saira Weiner, Ioanna Ionnou, Philipa Browning, Ann Swinney, Margot Hill, David Harvie, Michael Carley, Chris Jones, Julie Hearn, Maria Chondrogianni, Ariane Bogain, Brian Hamilton, Nina Doran, Victoria Showunmi, Renee Prendergast, Sean Vernell, Christina Paine, Elane Heffernan, Lesley Kane, Alison Chapman, Paul Anderson, Vida Greaux, Carlo Morelli, Julia Roberts, Jackie d'Arcy, Sean Wallis, John Sullivan, Elaine White, Rob Goodfellow, Maxine Looby, Cecily Blyther, Sally Pellow, Ryan Prout, Robert Clunas, Catherine Pope, Justine Mercer, Sue Abbott, Douglas Chalmers (chair), Marion Hersh, Allison Chapman,

In attendance Angie McConnell (trustees) Jo Grady, General Secretary, Paul Cottrell, national head of democratic services, Martin Smith, national head of resources, Catherine Wilkinson, head of constitution and committees, Alan Scobbie, executive officer.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jo McNeil, Amanda Williams, David Limb, Carolyn Campbell, Alastair Hunter, Philip Burgess, Kathy Taylor

2 Chair's business

- 2.1 The chair opened the meeting with a minutes silence for international workers memorial day. The executive AGREED to reduced speaking times given the meeting format.
- 2.2 Sean Vernell challenged the chair's decision not to include his discussion paper on the agenda. The chair explained that the paper had not been submitted in accordance with Standing Order 3.5.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting 13 March 2020 (NEC/1330)

- 3.1 The attendance of Vicky Blake by telephone was added to previous minutes and corrections made to spelling of Julie Roberts and David Harvie. Apologies were corrected to include Philippa Browning.

4 Matters arising

- 4.1 A further challenge to the ruling on the discussion paper was made by Elane Heffernan. This was rejected by the chair as per earlier minute.

5 General secretary's report (NEC/1331)

- 5.1 The general secretary outlined how the union moved to quickly move all staff to work from home. This also involved a guarantee to all staff that no one would suffer financial detriment during this period. Staff were dealing with the same issues at members during this time with home schooling, caring responsibilities and struggling with family bereavements. The general secretary thanked all staff for their work during this time. The executive added their collective thanks for the work of all staff during this period.
- 5.2 The general secretary outlined the union's work during this time in the following areas
 - Meeting with UK government ministers for higher and further education
 - Meetings with the Cabinet Office alongside other public service unions with TUC
 - Working to ensure prison educators were not required to go into unsafe workplaces
 - Providing evidence to parliamentary select committees on equalities
 - Ensuring democratic continuity of the union in lockdown and sharing with all members the paper underpinning that

- 5.3 The general secretary also paid tribute to the solidarity of the Prison Officers Association in supporting the campaign to ensure prison educators were not required to go into prisons during lockdown.
- 5.4 The executive heard reports from each devolved nation on the variations in lockdown and response from devolved governments.
- 5.5 A series of questions were focussed on
- The impact of furlough and lockdown on precarious staff
 - The union's calendar of meetings for 2020/21
 - Commitments to meet with the Minister for Disabilities
 - Protecting union's ability to organise industrial action ballots
 - Developing return to work policies that protect members
 - Sexual harassment

6 Motions from members (NEC/1332A)

- 6.1 Motion one "Equality issues" was proposed by Sue Abbott and seconded by David Harvie. The motion was AGREED 53-0 with 1 abstention.
- 6.2 Motion two "Independent inquiry into BAME deaths of frontline workers and community members" was proposed by Carlo Morelli and formally seconded. The motion was AGREED 53-0 with 1 abstention.
- 6.3 Motion three "Defending trans members and students" was proposed by Mark Pendleton and formally seconded. Amendment one was proposed by Michael Carley which was LOST. Amendment two was proposed by Mark Pendleton was CARRIED. The motion as amended was AGREED.
- 6.4 Motion four "Building a Trade Union movement against Hostile Environment" was proposed by Robyn Orfitelli and formally seconded. The motion was AGREED nem con.
- 6.5 Motion five "Provision of immigration advice" was proposed by Dima Chami and formally seconded. The motion was AGREED nem con.
- 6.6 Motion six 'Education and post-Covid recover' was proposed by Marion Hersh and formally seconded. Amendment 4 was AGREED. The motion as amended was AGREED nem con.

The meeting closed at 16:00

Text of motions agreed

1. Equality issues

NEC agrees that COVID 19 has had wide reaching equality impacts upon our members including for example issues such as disability reasonable adjustments, racism and the detrimental effect on the BAME community as well as the extreme effect for women members with caring roles / schooling and the threats of domestic violence. There are also impacts for LGBT + members and migrant members

We have concern that:

The Head of Equality job still remains vacant although the previous post holder left early 2020

Holding equality standing committee meetings have required strong encouragement from elected members in order to take place and not all have occurred

The Equality reps meeting due on 3 April has still not been rearranged.

We call upon NEC to ensure equality is at 'the heart of the union' and to ensure that these matters are addressed as a matter of urgency

147 words

Proposed by Sue Abbott

2. Independent Inquiry into BAME deaths of frontline workers and community members

The revelation that people from minority groups appear to be over-represented among the coronavirus deaths, by as much as 27%, "confirmed the worst fears" of campaigners who said there was now no question of an excessive toll.

The Guardian analysis found that of 12,593 patients who died in hospital up to 19 April, 19% were Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) even though these groups make up only 15% of the general population in England.

UCU supports the call by Diane Abbott MP, Stand Up To Racism and others for an independent inquiry into the massively disproportionate deaths amongst BAME frontline workers & communities.

104 words

Proposed by Carlo Morelli

3. Defending Trans Members and Students

NEC notes:

The government's announcement of three principles guiding responses to Gender Recognition Act reform - 'protecting' single sex spaces; making sure that transgender adults can live lives without fear of persecution; and 'protecting' young people from 'irreversible' decisions

This union's longstanding commitment to inclusion, and the extension of trans and nonbinary people's rights, including revision of the GRA

NEC believes:

That these principles are based on factual inaccuracies and place trans people's health and wellbeing at risk, particularly young people

That they also pose grave risks to Gillick competence, which allows young people some capacity to consent to medical treatment, including abortion and contraception

NEC resolves:

To publicly oppose further delay to GRA reform;

To publicly condemn the attempted erosion of the rights of children and young people;

To provide branches with updated guidance on how to support trans and nonbinary members and students and campaign against these proposals.

150 words

Proposed by Mark Pendleton

4. Building a Trade Union Movement against Hostile Environment

NEC notes:

- The Hostile Environment policy worsened conditions for migrants after the passage of the Immigration Act 2014
- That this policy has permeated society to the detriment of people's lives
- Migrants, racialised minorities and the working class suffer the brunt of this policy
- That the Conservative Party have announced plans to escalate the Hostile Environment

NEC believes:

- That trade unions have a history of fighting for justice
- That UCU has led in the fight against the Hostile Environment among UK trade unions

NEC resolves:

- To work with other trade unions to build a movement in the UK against the Hostile Environment.
- To campaign for inter-union solidarity to strengthen our position in fighting unjust and racist immigration policies.
- To establish a joint-TU conference which addresses the concerns around the Hostile Environment and ways in which a joint, united front can combat this.

150 words

Proposed by Robyn Orfitelli, seconded by Dima Chami

5. Provision of Immigration Advice

NEC notes:

- That the UK immigration rules have ballooned in size and complexity and now run to over 1000 pages.
- That employers in HE and FE do not routinely make immigration advice available to current or prospective staff
- The current COVID-19 pandemic and its impeding consequences leave migrants in legal limbo, compounding their vulnerability
- That lack of advice can have significant repercussions for individuals who are left to navigate a complex system alone.

NEC believes:

- That employers should proactively provide legal advice on immigration matters to prospective and current staff and postgraduate research students free of charge
- That employers should have a nominated immigration adviser who has OISC Level 3 Certification

NEC resolves

- That UCU should campaign for all employers to provide current and prospective staff and PGR students with OISC Level 3 immigration advice free of charge

· That UCU should make OISC Level 3 immigration advice available to members

150 words

Proposed by Dima Chami

6. Education and post-Covid Recovery

NEC notes:

1. The crucial role of post-16 education in prosperity, individual development and post-covid recovery

2. The likely negative impact of Covid on college and university finances

3. The risks of job losses and increases in casualisation

4. The importance of education for (young people) who do not have employment

NEC agrees to launch a UK-wide campaign, call for support from trade unions and community organisations and ask GS to write to PM for:

1. Removing college and university fees

2. Additional fully funded places at less prosperous and struggling institutions so all young people can have a college or university place.

3. Significant increase in government funding to make up any shortfalls

4. Full support for health service, disability support needs and economic recovery

5. Cancellation of Trident

6. Progressive ring-fenced increase in taxation to cover the costs e.g. 2% over £30,000, 4% over £50,000, 6% over £100,000.

150 words

Proposed by Marion Hersh