

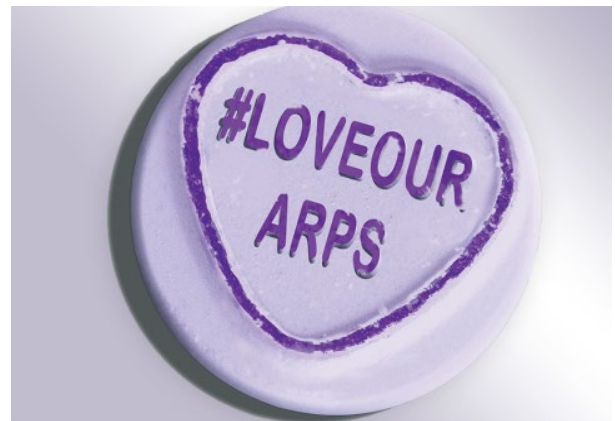
...and related

The Newsletter for Academic Related and Professional Services Staff in Higher Education

Welcome to the Spring 2022 edition of ...and related

ARPS staff are often the key activists in branches, but membership density in academic-related/professional services teams can be low. Since union strength is crucial to ensure we win for members, the ARPS committee are keen to do what they can to support branches to recruit and organise these

staff. This newsletter looks at the resources and practices available to branches to help with this work and reports on the Annual Meeting and the new ARPS committee.



Getting ARPS staff organised

As the marking and assessment boycott gets underway and branches with a mandate are continuing with ASOS, the thoughts of those without a mandate are turning to building their branches. While some branches have substantial ARPS members across their organisation, for some it's concentrated in specific areas or not at all. This can change and to support to branch committees and activists doing this, UCU has produced a briefing with ideas on [Organising ARPS Staff](#)

The perception of UCU as a 'lecturers union' can be challenged by working with ARPS staff to raise their profile in branches and to highlight when work is being done by branch committees and activists to support ARPS issues. The organising guidance includes a [model claim on workload, career progression and pay](#), significant issues for ARPS staff, which branches can use to call their organisations to work towards better conditions. It also highlights the things that you and your colleagues can do to build visibility, connecting existing members and ensuring that they have a voice within your branch.

The national committee exists to represent the interests of ARPS members across UCU so please get in touch if you think there are things we can better support. Members of the committee are also available to speak at branch meetings if that would be useful to branches building ARPS membership. Please contact the Committee Secretary with such requests – Jenny Lennox at jlennox@ucu.org.uk

Amy Ryall, Open University

Sussex UCU ARPS Case Study

Over the past two years as Learning and Communications Rep on Sussex UCU branch committee, I've increased ARPS membership in my institutional division by a third by establishing regular members' meetings and helping to dispel the myth that UCU is only for academic staff.

The Library where I work is a large employer in the university and very unionised across the three campus trade unions (UCU, Unite and UNISON), and the Library has three reps from each union. Since the pandemic began in early 2020, these nine reps mobilised quickly to work together, organising via WhatsApp and attending joint negotiation meetings with Library leadership to represent our members and advocate for improved health and safety measures within pandemic working conditions. This joint working and solidarity have continued and extended beyond the library, with tri-union working groups on health and safety, anti-racism and trans and non-binary inclusion.

I am currently leading planning and negotiations for the establishment of a joint **Union Learning Agreement** between the three recognized campus trade unions and HR, which is close to being approved and implemented. This has been another positive way in which to work with our sibling unions, as well as to learn and advocate for the learning and development needs of the diverse breadth of the university workforce. As Learning Rep I get significant statutory facilities time for this role (1.5 days per week of my FTE role), which allows me to do this work and it is an excellent way of foregrounding the value of ARPS strengths. I think **the ULR role** is a really good fit for an ARPS member and would be happy to talk with any members or reps in other branches who'd like to consider taking on such a role.

The fact that there are three ARPS members on the UCU Sussex branch committee has helped to build trusting and collaborative relationships with our sibling professional service members on campus, which has helped build solidarity complementary tactics in combined joint negotiating committee meetings with management. ARPS reps have also worked together with Unite, UNISON and Students' Union activists on campus-wide campaigns, for example to end outsourcing at Sussex.

We plan to further strengthen the representation and community-building of UCU ARPS members by organising regular ARPS members' meetings and forums and feeding in member interests to local negotiations on the ongoing Four Fights and USS disputes.

Alice Corble, University of Sussex

Report back from Academic-Related Professional Services Staff (ARPS) National Annual Meeting, 17 March 2022

The Academic Related, Professional Staff (ARPS) Annual Meeting was held 17 March 2022 via Zoom. A full set of papers can be found here. Here is a short summary of the day.

The meeting was chaired by Paulina Hoyos, University of Manchester who introduced the first speaker Vicky Blake, UCU President Vicky took a moment to recognise staff at Goldsmiths faced with threats owing to redundancies as a result of restructure and the need to stand in solidarity with members as the dispute continues. There was a huge amount of work to be done and the Vicky called for delegates to hear each other and work together. She was proud to be ARPS and to be a part of the Love Our ARPS campaign!

Panel discussion - The role of ARPS in the changing face of HE

Three speakers spoke and questions and discussion followed.

- J Clarke from People & Planet shared the different ways in which the role of ARPS could support change in HE for climate justice and help to push the campaign forward.
- Pete Wood spoke about how ARPS staff could work together to challenge casualisation and shared on what has worked well for the Anti Casualisation Committee.
- Chloe Nast explained the situation at Goldsmiths where members at the time of the meeting were currently on strike action. A new scheme brought in has led to a number of issues including the downgrading of roles, loss of staff expertise and overworked staff. UNISON has since joined in the dispute.

Formal business

This included a report on the work of the ARPS Committee by Jenny Lennox, Committee Secretary, over the previous year and the election of Chloe Nast, Goldsmiths and Lauren Sandford, University of Liverpool to the ARPS Committee.

The following motions were also passed unanimously and will be taken to Congress

- Motion 1 - HESA Data
- Motion 2 - Downgrading and casualisation

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

The new committee are keen to facilitate dialogue and discussion between ARPS members in branches. One of the ways that members can get involved in this, share expertise and ideas, is through the ARPS email discussion list. A digest of messages will be delivered straight to your inbox and you can engage with it from there. It's a good way of connecting up branches, asking for advice or sharing knowledge, as well as for finding out what's going on in other branches.

Links for joining can be found here - [UCU - UCU activist email lists](#) - you will need your membership number to access this bit of the website.

- Motion 3 - Careers Services: informing students and supporting the low carbon economy (amended version)
- Motion 4 - Relationships with other unions

Discussion groups

After lunch the delegates went into smaller groups to discuss ideas for the ARPS committee workplan for the coming year. Some great ideas came out of these groups and the ARPS Committee are currently looking at these and will use these to form the basis of their workplan.

It was a great day and good to see so many different branches represented. The ARPS Committee will be considering whether to keep the online format or revert to the in person for 2023!

Eleanor Madley, University of Sheffield

Meet the 2022-2023 Academic-Related and Professional Services Staff Committee

Amy Ryall (Open University, Chair) -

I work in external and public engagement, connecting academics with external partners and audiences and have been doing this role since 2012, first at the University of Sheffield and for the past year at the Open University. I came to HE from the museums sector.

At Sheffield I was on the branch committee and set up an ARPS group for staff there. I've been similarly involved at the OU, working with existing ARPS reps to support a small working group and group to enable ARPS staff to discuss matters pertinent to them.

This is my second term on the National ARPS Committee.

Chloe Nast (Goldsmiths, Vice-Chair) -

I have been in an ARPS role at Goldsmiths since I started in 2005. From starting out as a research administrator to a government funded research grant, then moving in to departmental administration to returning as a research administrator, this time supporting academics in the Department of Sociology.

Since 2019, I have also been membership officer for the branch and ARPS rep. This is my second term on the National ARPS Committee.

Vicky Blake (UCU President) -

I am currently serving as UCU President, on secondment from a role in Widening Participation at the University of Leeds. I have been on NEC for a number of years and was the Branch President of my branch before taking on the President role. I work hard to ensure that UCU represents the interests of all of its members.

Alice Corble (Sussex) -

I have been a member of ARPS staff in HE for over ten years, at Goldsmiths, King's College London, and now Sussex, working in a range of library service roles. My current role in library learning and teaching support services involves developing decolonial knowledge and practice.

I've been the Learning Rep and Communications Officer on the Sussex UCU executive committee for the past two years, which has involved raising the profile of ARPS members and building solidarity between ARPS and academic staff members and collaborating with our sibling campus unions on shared campaigns and negotiations.

During the last three rounds of industrial action I have been a key organiser, co-leading our teach-outs programme as part of a Strike Collective and liaising with Students' Union solidarity groups. As Learning Rep I've organised a range of training and development opportunities for members, particularly around EDI-based issues, casework and branch organising skills.

Ann Gow (NEC/Glasgow) -

I am Professor of Information Studies at the University of Glasgow but during my early career held several academic-related posts so am well aware of the key issues for HE staff across the spectrum of roles in Universities. I am also a serving member of UCU NEC and believe that by working together we can campaign effectively in defence of members interests.

Estelle Hart (Swansea) -

I work in the postgraduate research team at Swansea University focusing on communications and student engagement. My background is in students' unions and engagement and while I'm a relatively new member of UCU I've been an active trade unionist in previous workplaces. I'm really excited to join the ARPS Committee and help support the excellent work happening in branches.

Rebecca Lewis (SOAS) -

I have been a member of academic-related staff for 16 years, in 4 different HEIs. My work is in disability support.

I am currently at SOAS, as a Disability & Neurodiversity Caseworker. I am the ARPS rep on the UCU Branch committee and have been involved in the current national dispute; GTVO, picketing and talking to members about their concerns.

At my previous institution, City, University of London, I held a number of positions on the Branch Exec, including President, Vice-President and Equalities Officer.

I was proud to lead the Branch in the 2018 strike, where we achieved our biggest turn out up to that time.

Eleanor Madley (Sheffield) -

I've worked in professional services both at Sheffield Hallam and now University of Sheffield for the past 12 years. I currently work in the languages department working with students undertaking their year abroad.

I have just been elected to serve on our branch committee and this is my second year on the national ARPS Committee.

Fiona McGarry (Queen's, Belfast) -

I am Admissions Officer (International) at Queen's University, Belfast and am starting my third term on the ARPS Committee. I am also President of the Queen's branch of UCU.

Sally Pellow (NEC/Reading) -

I've been working as a systems administrator on the SITS student database at the University of Reading since 2005. Much of my work involves liaison with other departments and staff, with a strong direction in project management.

I'm currently UCU Branch President, and became heavily involved in our committee when we had a non-academic staff restructure in 2016: the impact of that restructure on the University was massive and the repercussions are still evident today. More recently, as part of the University's COVID response, I've been a key member of the team that fended off the threat of 500 redundancies.

I am coming to the end of my third year on NEC.

Lauren Sandford (Liverpool) -

I have been working as a PS member of HE institutions since 2005, across teaching, student support and research support departments. In my current ARPS role I support the strategic development of research at the University of Liverpool in the Research & Impact Strategy department. Having been a UCU member since 2018, I have this year joined my branch committee as Secretary to the Branch.