

Branch Briefing

Agenda

- Update on proposals from UUK and UCEA
- Update on strategic choices facing us
- Potential BDM questions
- Opportunity for questions

USS – Joint Statement from UUK & UCU

- *We jointly agreed to prioritise the improvement of benefits to pre-April 2022 levels, where this can be done in a demonstrably sustainable manner;*
- *We are committed to working together so that this, and future, valuations are undertaken on a moderately prudent and evidence-based basis, taking account of the open and long-term nature of the scheme ... so that we do not return to dispute at each valuation;*
- *We agree ... to work together on a constructive dialogue with the Pensions Regulator (tPR) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).*

Four Fights

- Agreement has been reached on terms of reference for detailed negotiations covering a review of:
 - the UK HE pay spine (by end of October),
 - Workload (February 2024),
 - contract types (February 2024) and
 - equality pay gaps (by end of October).
- The Joint HE Trade Unions and UCEA will now consult their respective constituencies on these terms of reference as a basis for commencing those negotiations over pay-related matters.
- *UCEA has agreed to consult its members, with a positive recommendation to take action on zero hours contracts, ...we would expect indefinite contracts with a fixed or minimal hours to be the general form of employment relationship between employers and employees in HEIs.*
- On pay, an impasse, rather than an agreement, has been reached.
- We have not accepted the pay offer and remain in dispute over pay.

Update from UCEA

- *The pay uplift is at a level which many employers will find financially challenging. UCEA has gone as far as it can in balancing a meaningful uplift with the viability of HEIs across the sector. In a number of HEIs, jobs will already be at risk as a result of this pay uplift.*
- *It should be absolutely clear that UCEA has no ability to improve upon the 2023-24 pay award.*
- *If the Joint Higher Education Trade Unions are willing to enter into negotiations on the basis of the Acas terms of reference, UCEA remains ready to begin talks on the understanding that no further industrial action, including ASOS, is called during these talks.*

Deal or No Deal...

- Ending a dispute as always messy and confusing.
- We don't yet have "**deals**" to put to members with recommendations from the Negotiators
- We have **proposals** which can form the basis of **further negotiations** with UCEA based on the agreed terms of reference.
- Those **negotiations** MAY result in **deals** which, subject to the decisions of the HEC, could be put to members in a formal consultation
- On USS, we have an agreement in principle
- Question – Would further industrial action provide leverage in these negotiations or is the **threat** of industrial action more effective?

Industrial Landscape

- FBU settled at 7%
 - Health unions are settling at 5%
 - RMT are settling at c4.6%
 - NEU have paused action and are awaiting talks
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- We have achieved a restoration of 35% in pension cuts, a ban on ZHC, terms of reference for negotiations on a reform of the pay spine, casualisation, workload & pay gaps, and a 5-8% pay rise

Scenario One – Bank and Build

- We continue with the negotiations with UCEA, pausing industrial action but with the leverage of an aggregated ballot
- This leads to agreement on
 - a reformed pay spine
 - an end to ZHC
 - Framework Agreements on Casualisation, Workload, and Equality Pay Gaps
- These agreements are supported by members
- Negotiations using these framework agreements commence at local level (offering the opportunity for branch building and organising)
- We build the Union for further action on pay and conditions at a local and national level

Scenario Two – Reject and continue

UCU leaves talks with UCEA and uses re-ballot to call further strikes and MAB

- UCEA refuses to participate in further talks until Spring 2024
- No potential deals on casualisation, workload, pay spine reform, and pay gaps
- UUK propose their own deal
- Continued strikes/MAB fail to move employer
- Members leave, activists disillusioned, union damaged

UCU leaves talks with UCEA and uses re-ballot to call further strikes and MAB

- This action forces the employers to negotiate a 10% pay deal and immediate binding industry-wide agreements on workload, casualisation, and pay gaps
- **Unlikely**

Branch Delegate Meeting – potential questions

1. The other trade unions involved in the pay dispute (Unison, Unite, GMB, and EIS) have decided to move forward in negotiations with UCEA over the terms of reference negotiated at Acas - do you think we should **join them in these negotiations**?
2. Do you support UCU members being formally **consulted** over the proposals that have been agreed with **UUK** to **restore benefits and lower pension contributions**?
3. Do you support UCU members being formally **consulted** on the proposals that have been agreed with **UCEA** on **pay, ending zero-hour contracts, workloads, casualisation and closing equality pay gaps**?
4. If members agree to continue taking industrial action, do you **support** beginning a **Marking and Assessment Boycott over the pay dispute** from w/b 17th April?
5. If the members agree to continue taking industrial action, do you **support** beginning a **Marking & Assessment Boycott over the USS cuts** imposed in April 2022 from w/b 17th April?

Next Steps

- Continue GTVO to win re-ballot
- Consult with Branch members in advance of BDM
- BDM on 29th March
- HEC on 30th March
- Re-ballot result on 3rd April
- SHESC on 19th April