

...and related

THE NEWSLETTER FOR **ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF** IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Representing administrators, librarians, computing and other professional staff in HE

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Chair's welcome: Who are we?



Members of the academic-related committee at a recent meeting at UCU HQ in London

This is the first issue of *...and related*, the newsletter for academic-related staff, as Chair of the Academic-

related Staff Committee, I am very proud to be able to contribute to this first edition.

Who are we? We are university administrators, librarians and IT professionals and the make-up of our Academic-Related (AR) Staff Committee reflects this. Members are elected at our AGM from each of those areas in equal numbers.

More specifically we fill roles such as alumni officers, archivists, brand managers, careers officers, computing staff, editors, environmental officers, estates managers, faculty managers, housing officers, international officers, lab managers, learning facilitators, librarians, planning officers, regional development managers, safety officers, student advisors, student union managers, technical services managers, transport managers, web team managers. In other words, our universities do not operate without us.

For more on the important role that we play, take a look at our manifesto for academic-related staff:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/d/b/ucuarcrelmanifesto.pdf>

In many universities we are no longer called academic-related but have acquired other names as we have been neatly slotted into 'job families'. We are now called AR, APM (administrative, professional and managerial); MPA (management, professional, administrative); professional support staff or support staff.

Since UCU was formed the AR Staff Committee has achieved the following:

- produced a manifesto
- won the right to introduce motions to Congress



- won the right to have two fully voting delegates from the AR Staff Committee attend Congress
- won the right to send someone to be part of the UCU delegation to TUC Congress.

This year, 2010, we submitted four motions and four amendments to Congress and HESC. The majority of the motions had been written by, or had major input from one of the AR Staff Committee vice-chairs, Dorothy Wright, who died suddenly before Congress. Members of the AR Staff Committee and those from the wider academic-related community ensured that our motions were heard (I would not say properly debated) and agreed at Congress. Dorothy continues to be a great loss (see page 7 for our tribute to Dorothy).

What next for AR staff? I find myself writing this as colleagues face the most difficult period in higher education for over 20 years. The coalition government has a reckless zeal to ensure that efficiency savings will be secured by attacking our jobs and pensions. Many AR colleagues are in the invidious position of making staff redundant or facing redundancy themselves. AR staff are probably at the most risk, facing job losses through restructuring, the loss of departments and the loss of libraries. IT is threatened as more and more of it is 'outsourced'. Never forget, AR staff are the 'back office' staff whose contribution to our universities is invaluable but whom the politicians believe to be expendable.

The year ahead will be tough one for all in the public sector and in particular for staff in higher education, which faces the biggest cut of all. We have yet to realise the full impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review or the Browne Report on our universities. We have yet to realise the very real threat to our pensions. Watch this space!

Patricia Hulme,
Chair, Academic-Related Committee

Annual meeting for academic-related staff, 16 March 2011

It is time to start planning for the forthcoming annual UCU members meeting for academic-related staff. This will take place on Wednesday 16 March 2011 at UCU headquarters in Carlow Street, London NW1. It will take place at a critical time for the union, and will provide an opportunity to debate the challenges facing the union in general and academic-related

members in particular, such as the impact of the spending cuts and the government's reforms to higher education; strategies to defend jobs and build the union; and fighting the twin threats of outsourcing and de-professionalisation.

Put the meeting in your diary now and also remember the following dates:

- **Deadline for motions: 23 February**
- **Deadline for registration for the meeting and nominations to Academic-Related Staff Committee: 2 March**

Report of 2010 annual meeting

Last year's meeting held on 10 March 2010 heard reports on the work of UCU in relation to academic-related staff and discussed motions submitted by branches and local associations. There were also a number of prominent national speakers and workshops on outsourcing, and fighting redundancies, as well networking opportunities. All motions passed at the annual meeting can be found at:

www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/g/p/acrelannual2010_motions.rtf

Spread the message!

Please pass this newsletter on to other academic-related members (or potential members). Encourage them to join or get more involved! To join UCU see: www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2283

To be added to the academic-related mailing list or if you have any questions on academic-related matters, contact **Stefano Fella, National Industrial Relations Official (with responsibility for academic-related matters)**, sfella@ucu.org.uk See also UCU's webpages on academic-related issues: www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2097



National dispute update: UCU united

At the special HE sector conference in Manchester on 25 November, UCU delegates noted that for the second year running UCEA has:

- refused to negotiate a nationally agreed approach to improve job security and defend provision
- failed to act to address equality matters
- offered a real-terms pay cut.

Delegates agreed that if the employers continued to refuse to talk to us about measures to improve job security, and if they continued to attack our pensions, then we would ballot for strike action and action short of a strike early in the New Year.

UCU will continue to talk to the national employers to try and resolve the current disputes but members should start preparing for action to defend our jobs, defend our pensions, and to defend education.

We want academic related members to play a full part in the dispute and would be interested in your views as to the specific role academic related members could play in industrial action. **If you have ideas and comments, please contact Stefano Fella, sfella@ucu.org.uk**

For more on the national dispute and updates see: www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4505

Defending your pensions

The employers have been seeking to force through proposals to 'reform' the USS university pension scheme. While UCU negotiators have accepted that there is a need for change and have put forward alternative and sustainable proposals to do this, the employers seem determined to press ahead with their divisive plans, with the aim of reducing what they contribute to the scheme.

For more on the employers proposals and our response see:

www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4598

See also the piece on the Edinburgh University UCU website by academic-related member, Mike Holmes.

www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/UCUEdinburgh/USS+Pensions+Response

Management representatives blocked proposals for an all-member referendum on these proposals, and hired a pension communication firm to conduct a far less robust consultation which presented only their side of the argument. Very few active USS members have responded.



Given the failure to consult properly, UCU staged our own national referendum – open to UCU members and non-members alike. The results of the referendum released on 14 December showed overwhelming opposition to the employers' plans. Out of 31,000 votes cast 96.3% voted against the employers' proposals.

UCU fighting fund

Although taking strike action is a last resort, sometimes it is necessary to do so in order to combat intransigent managements. It's always tough to lose a day's pay, and so UCU has set up a fighting fund to support members facing difficulties as a consequence of supporting the union's actions.

How to donate

Make a direct bank transfer, or set up a regular standing order, to:

Account name: UCU Fighting Fund

Sort code: 08-60-01

Account no: 20179432

Reference: 'Fighting Fund 2010'

or send a cheque (payable to 'University and College Union') to: Fighting Fund 2010, Finance Dept, UCU, Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH

Funding cuts – ramblings from the back office

"It's going to be bad isn't it?" is about the most optimistic assessment I've heard of how the new Con-Dem government is going to cut HE. As if that wasn't bad enough at my institution the management have become incredibly reasonable of late. The more sceptical of us are suggesting that they are trying to soften us up for what's ahead. As somewhere that hadn't really been affected by the cuts of the previous "new Tory" government, they probably have good cause. The other comment I've frequently heard

(often from well established academic colleagues) is that this time it's different. In the past it's been the fixed-term, contract staff that have been in the firing line when times were tough. This time hard funded posts are at risk. What we don't know yet is whether real academic posts will be cut, or whether it's the academic-related/professional support (or whatever they call you now) staff that will bear the brunt as has so often been the case.

In my mind we're damned both ways. Either we're going to be selected for redundancy using some unintelligible system that is neither fair or transparent, or the academic workforce is going to be cut and the workload for everyone, academic and related will reach new and even more mind boggling levels.

At least it was an academic colleague (all be it a well trained one) that reminded HE sector conference that if they're coming for academic-related staff first, where are they going to go next? I must buy him a pint the next time I see him. In a time when every institution is looking for the illusive (and possibly meaningless) 'excellence', management get rid of those of us who are primarily responsible for enabling them to achieve it by broadening the student experience of education.

That's those of us with no career plan, and often no hope of ever identifying one. Those of us who they continue to outsource, even after the numerous disasters that have resulted in contracts being expensively abandoned and services needing to be re-established in-house after the original, faithful, expertise is long gone. I generalise I know, but this is a warning to management that will probably go unheeded.



Will academic-related staff bear the brunt of the cuts?

Maybe it's not all bad news though. The government may be trying to help universities reduce the number of redundancies needed to meet their austerity targets. The impending devaluation of the USS pension scheme is likely to result in a number of senior (in many senses of the word) staff, some of whom may have once called themselves academic-related, seeking to retire sooner, rather than risk what they've earned in the hope of a decent retirement. Rumours from those who have friends in personnel at my institution have mentioned a steady trickle of enquiries. If true this might mitigate the cuts at the other end of the scale that the Tories are going to be forcing onto the sector. Surely only a cynic would put that in writing though?

**Dan Arthur, LSHTM
Academic-Related Committee (co-opted)**



Reasons to be cheerful...

There might be a bit of pessimism in the back office but November saw over 50,000 students and staff march in London against the trebling of fees, withdrawal of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and the whole of the Tory cuts package that will destroy UK education as we know it. Thousands of young people, the supposedly apathetic children of Thatcher, the iPod Generation, took their message loud and clear right to the belly of the beast at Tory HQ.

For the rest of Britain's workers and the poor – those facing redundancies, cuts to pensions, public services and benefits – the students can be a beacon. They represent the start of the fightback for all those who asked 'Why aren't we like the French and the Greeks?'. Students have struck a chord as

Cameron tells us ‘we’re all in it together ‘ whilst his cabinet stuffed full of multi-millionaires lowers corporation tax, the heads of the FTSE 100 have given themselves a 55% pay rise and multinationals and the super rich get away with over £120 billion of tax avoidance and evasion.

A week later, on 24 November, students protested in equal numbers in their towns and cities culminating in a wave of University Occupations not seen for generations – many of these are still ongoing as we go to press. The protests continued on 8 and 9 December to coincide with the House of Commons vote on raising tuition fees to £9,000, and there are more in the pipeline...

**Lesley McGorrigan, Leeds University
Academic-Related Committee**

Report on UCU Congress 2010

The 2010 Congress in Manchester was historic for the Academic-Related Staff Committee as it was the first one to which we could send two independent voting delegates.

The Committee submitted four motions in total, two to Congress and two to the HE Sector. The two Congress motions covered:

- i) de-professionalisation of services which support learning, teaching and research (motion 5), and
- ii) outsourcing of IT and data privacy (motion 82).

The HE sector conference motions covered:

- i) promotion and professional development for academic related staff (motion HE21), and
- ii) hidden and mental health discrimination (HE41).

All motions were successful and carried with a healthy majority.

In addition we submitted amendments (again successfully adopted) to other motions related to points based immigration (Congress 61); attendance at work during inclement weather and travel disruptions (Congress 92); and staff reductions and protection of workloads (HE23).

For full texts of motions adopted see:

www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4412

As in previous years the Committee hosted a fringe meeting, this year our topic was “outsourcing and

privatisation”. Our primary speakers were Professor Dexter Whitfield, Director of the European Services Strategy Unit – who has written extensively about outsourcing and privatisation – and Jonathan White, Deputy Head of Campaigns at UCU. Even though we were vying for delegates with high profile fringe meetings it was very well attended. Delegates attending the meeting were not necessarily AR staff, given that more and more HE staff are becoming concerned with issues around outsourcing and privatisation.



Delegates at UCU Congress in 2010

Personally I would like to thank all the committee members who spoke to motions, and assisted in the fringe meetings. UCU staff also worked well to ensure smooth running over the three days and are due a great debt of thanks.

I cannot complete this piece without paying tribute to Dorothy Wright (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), one of the Academic-Related Staff Committee Vice-Chairs. Dorothy played a large part in getting our motions written and in spotting those motions that AR Staff Committee could amend but sadly she died before Congress and we did (and do) miss her.

I would like to thank the members of AR Staff Committee and wider AR Staff community who ‘stepped up to the plate’ to ensure that all the motions and amendments had a speaker and that they were carried.

**Patricia Hulme, Nottingham University
Chair, Academic Related Committee**

Outsourcing

Outsourcing of key university services, including library services and IT, is of continuing concern to academic related staff in higher education. This affects our staff directly and also poses serious risks

in terms of cost (often outweighing short term gain), data protection and privacy (particularly in relation to IT services) and a general de-professionalisation of work of vital importance to the academic team, resulting often in a decline in the quality of services available to staff and students. A UCU survey earlier this year highlighted the extent to which outsourcing is impacting on the sector. We would welcome more examples and case studies from academic related members on how outsourcing has impacted on your institution.

Please send any examples, cases studies and information to Stefano Fella, sfella@ucu.org.uk

Role profiles revisited

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many university role profiles for academic-related staff do not adequately describe new technology roles, ie those for computer and e-learning staff. And that staff in these areas have difficulty getting adequate recognition for the complex and detailed knowledge these roles require. Many have reported being under-graded with often unsuccessful efforts to get re-graded on appeal. University HR appear to have great difficulty understanding what the roles encompass.

Considerable work has been done elsewhere which could be used to update role profiles to reflect actual roles eg SFIPlus (Skills Framework for the Information Age) in conjunction with the British Computer Society (BCS).

See: www.bcs.org/server.php?show=nav.7849
SFIPlus levels have been Hay evaluated.

The Academic-Related Committee would welcome feedback and comments from members who have experienced problems or successes in this area.

Please email me directly at Angela.Lamb@ed.ac.uk

**Angi Lamb, Edinburgh University,
Academic Related Committee**

Performance management

A number of institutions have introduced policies on Performance Management – particularly in relation to research performance – that we regard as unreasonable and detrimental. Following a previous request for information we have received a number of examples of such policies in relation to research perform-

ance, and also a few examples of teaching performance management.

These performance management regimes also affect academic-related staff, both indirectly and directly. Indirectly because it is often the academic-related staff that have to collate the data and statistics used to monitor the performance of academic staff, and directly because academic-related staff are also being made subject to performance management regimes themselves.

If you have any such examples of where performance management systems are impacting on academic-related staff in your institutions, please send them to Stefano Fella, Secretary to the Academic-Related Committee, sfella@ucu.org.uk

Academic-related staff and green campus management

The UCU environmental conference was held on 18 November 2010, and was an opportunity for activists to discuss ways of promoting sustainable development and carbon reduction at the sector, national and international level. A workshop on promoting carbon reduction on University campuses highlighted the need to work together with student



representatives and influence management. We have a number of academic related members (or potential members) working in estates, facilities and environmental management, who can make a direct impact on the ground and also contribute to our environmental work locally and nationally.

If you think you can make a contribution or have ideas and best practice to share, please contact UCU's environmental co-ordinator, Graham Petersen at gpetersen@ucu.org.uk

See also the UCU environment webpage for more information on our work in this area and for our conference report:

www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3386

Dorothy Wright remembered



Occasionally, very rarely, one meets someone whose enthusiasm, energy and commitment to a cause can be honestly described as absolute. Dorothy Wright was a case in point.

I worked closely with Dorothy on the Academic-Related Staff Committee and more generally on academic-

related matters for many years, and during that time it seemed that she grew immensely in confidence, to the point where her forceful and articulate contributions to Congress and other union conferences as well as her determined, focussed and thoughtful contributions to the work of the Committee often played a major role in driving forward action on behalf of academic related staff. She also built the union at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and played an active role in UCU's London Region.

She would often be frustrated by the barriers she felt she (we) faced, sometimes perceiving deliberate obfuscation by 'union bureaucrats', and often confronting managers head-on, often disappointed to the point of distress when progress was difficult to achieve because of real or perceived entrenched interests. She would never hesitate to take on any issue about which she felt strongly, and those responsible for her frustration or anger would have to be prepared to face the consequences, and had better be able to justify themselves.

However, in dealing with people who could be manipulative and downright nasty, but were outwardly successful and content, she refused to stoop to that level herself and so despaired of ever winning anything significant or achieving contentedness in work, the union or life in general. She just could not bring herself to play out a role.

She put this limitation down to her Asperger's syndrome, a condition which also had the positive effect of inspiring her to campaign on behalf of people with disabilities, in particular hidden ones. In private, she would regularly question herself. Not her fundamental beliefs, which were unshakeable and in-

variably based on a deeply-felt sense of humanity, but her ability to make progress toward actualising those beliefs, particularly worrying about her ability to 'understand people'. Underlying her 'in-your-face' personality was a vulnerability which arose from the mismatch between her ideals and beliefs and the world she had to deal with.

This made it difficult for her to accept or believe how significant her contribution was, and I don't think she had any idea how much that contribution was appreciated by her colleagues.

Even when she was at odds with someone in an internal union debate, at the same time as fighting her corner (which was almost always the right one!) she would often express her dislike of having to argue with someone she liked on a personal level. This depth of humanity was something many people around her admired, even found inspirational. Sadly the ideals on which it was based were something she mistakenly believed she couldn't live up to herself.

Nick James
Academic-Related Committee
(with thanks to Geoff Williams)



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UCU**

the trade union for
academic and academic
related staff in the UK

Why you should join UCU today

UCU is the largest trade union and professional association for researchers, academics and academic-related staff in the UK. We negotiate terms and conditions of employment both nationally and locally.

YOU HAVE NEVER NEEDED YOUR UNION MORE THAN NOW

In the current economic situation it is more important than ever that you join your union. UCU is fighting hard to protect jobs and defend education across the sector.

Every member of staff who joins makes us stronger and better able to look after those employed in our colleges and universities.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

If you have problems at work you can contact your branch for advice, representation and legal help. Experienced local officers are supported by full-time regional and national officials.

Your union tackles a range of issues – redundancies, reorganisation, fixed-term contracts, bullying, workload and inequalities are just some of the challenges we face on behalf of our members.

As a member you have a say in how to improve your workplace. Your local branch is consulted over a wide

range of issues and policies – just get in touch and let them know your views.

AS A UCU MEMBER YOUR VOICE IS HEARD

UCU gives its members a voice. We represent the profession when speaking with ministers, MPs, professional bodies and other organisations.

We raise issues that are important to members such as professional standards, the need for proper education funding and for equal treatment of part-time and fixed-term employees.

YOU'RE BETTER OFF IN A UNION

Research has shown that union members are likely to get higher pay, more annual leave, better sickness and pension benefits, have safer workplaces and are more likely to be able to take advantage of flexible working.

You will benefit from a range of financial products at discounted rates and you can claim back income tax relief for part of your membership subscriptions.

As a member you also have access to the services of The College and University Support Network which offers 24/7 support by phone or online. However you need to join before encountering a problem – that's why it's important to join us today.

It's your career. It's your union. Join today: www.joinonline.ucu.org.uk

**Join UCU today.
The more staff that join us
the more we can achieve**

**Join
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