UCU ...and related

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ACADEMIC RELATED STAFF: ADMINISTRATORS, LIBRARIANS, IT AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION

No 4 ■ Spring 2012

IN THIS ISSUE:

Message from New Chair, Dan Arthur

Whilst I am pleased and excited at being elected Chair of the Academic Related Committee this year, it is also a particularly difficult time for Academic Related staff. At my own institution – The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine - a management consultant has been given a 6 month contract to restructure our IT, procurement, research grants and personnel departments.

Following a faux consultation with faculties, approximately 90 staff were given notice they were at risk of redundancy even though management alleged numbers would be increasing as a result of the process. With tremendous support from the regional office the largest branch meeting in living memory passed the first ever motion empowering the branch to take all steps up to a local ballot for industrial action. When presented with this management guaranteed there would be no compulsory redundancies and commenced discussion for a meaningful discussion with unions and the possibility of consulting staff who have access to all the relevant information rather than the drip feed members had been receiving to date.

This is a picture that is reflected across the sector. To commence the fight back I call on all members to actively recruit AR staff in their areas and their institutions. We need reps, whether dedicated to AR issues, or just from our staff group, on every branch committee where we have recognition. We need these reps to be feeding back issues to the committee so we can effectively focus our resources. The mixed nature of AR roles means we invariably become involved in a variety of issues. In the midst of this valuable contribution to the union we must make sure we continue to fully and effectively represent all AR staff. AR staff have a proud tradition of being highly active, highly effective members of this union. Let's keep that tradition alive!

To conclude it is my pleasure to thank Patricia Hulme, the previous chair and Eileen Tilley vice chair for their work and support in the last year (two years in Pat's case). Though Pat has been re-elected as a committee member (and vice-chair) Eileen has decided, for now at least, to concentrate on issues within her own institution, Bangor. Thanks also for their service to the Committee to other members who stood down at the annual meeting: Nick James and

Gordon Watson.

I would also like to thank Stefano Fella and Louise Schwartz in the UCU HE Team for their work in supporting - and putting up with - the Committee.

Dan Arthur, Chair, Academic Related Committee

Message from outgoing chair, Patricia Hulme

I write this at a time when life in HE gets even harder for Academic Related staff. There is more and more to do, more challenging tasks to undertake and in many universities the purge of the 'support' and Academic Related staff through restructuring has left departments with fewer people to do what is required. Universities are very fond of restructuring (I have mentioned this many times before). What exactly do we know about restructuring?

Restructuring:

- is usually as a result of a review
- often carried out by external consultants
- the end result will be brilliant (of course) (with fewer staff)
- Schools and departments are merged (resulting in fewer staff)
- Research Institutes become 'virtual' (resulting in fewer staff)
- No one 'belongs' anymore (because of fewer staff)
- AR colleagues are made redundant (leaving even fewer staff).
- AR colleagues become more and more stressed (due to fewer staff).

Who are the 'fewer staff' – usually Academic Related, 'support' or 'back office' whichever word or phrase is used to identify the senior professional staff and those they line manage - restructuring is not usually good news and will mean redundancies for those staff groups.

Along with restructuring we have 'shared services' to contend with. AR Committee members have mentioned shared services on many occasions and on each occasion it was not clear exactly what this would mean in each institution. In recent months the Tory-led Coalition Government have decided to tweak VAT rules to enhance their shared services agenda. The immediate changes in VAT rules brought in by the government make going down the 'shared services' route a more attractive option for Universities.

The government is actively encouraging Universities, NHS Trusts and Councils to embrace shared services as part of their cost cutting exercises. The one group of people this affects in an adverse way are our Academic Related colleagues who work in Finance, Human Resources and Computing - in fact any area of employment which can be shared. Will the finance department for several Universities be at one University? Computing in another? HR in another? Inevitably this will result in redundancies. This is something we as a Committee will need to watch and to share experiences of. No doubt it will be mentioned again and again.

The Academic Related Staff Committee held a successful Annual Meeting in March with AR staff gathering from all over the country to network, discuss, debate and listen to our excellent guest speaker, Professor John Kelly (Birkbeck) on, '*Collective Mobilisation Strategies for UCU'.* We held two workshops and used the annual meeting as an opportunity to debate our Motions to Congress which will be held in Manchester 8-10th June 2012.

The AR Staff Committee is sending two motions to Congress and two to HESC, and has also tabled amendments to motions put forward by others (again two to Congress and two to HESC). I am always so proud to see members of the AR Staff Committee standing up in Congress waving the flag for

AR staff and by doing so, ensuring that those of us in an AR, support or back office role - wherever we are and whatever we are called - get our voices heard.

This has been more of a 'doom and gloom' article than usual but Academic Related staff are really fearful for their jobs at the moment whether the attack comes from the 'shared services' agenda; restructuring; mergers or closures.

I stood down as Chair of Academic Related staff committee at our annual meeting in March but have subsequently been elected as one of our two Vice-Chairs. I do leave the AR Staff Committee in the very capable hands of Dan Arthur. I enjoyed my time as Chair but feel it is time to hand the baton on. I wish the incoming chair well for the future.

Keep up the struggle and always remain proud of all you achieve for Academic Related Staff.

Patricia Hulme, Chair, Academic Related Committee

Committee Priorities 2012-13

The meeting of the Academic Related Committee on 9 May 2012 agreed the following Committee priorities for the next year:

- Recruiting new and active members and raising awareness among academic related staff
- Protecting terms and conditions of employment for academic related staff
- Campaigning to resist deprofessionalisation and outsourcing and raise awareness of its damaging impact (based on case studies where implemented)
- Playing a full and equal part in action and campaigning to maximise the impact of industrial action

- Dissemination of academic related manifesto
- Communication via newsletters and other means, and development of a network of academic-related reps

Report of Annual Meeting for Academic Related Staff, 21 March 2012

This year's annual meeting provided an opportunity for representatives of academic related members from across the UK to hear from a number of guest speakers and discuss the challenges facing academic related staff in the sector and strategies for overcoming them.

Motions adopted

The official business in the morning saw the adoption of a number of motions on themes including the need to fight attacks on Academic Related jobs, protect terms and conditions and rights to progression, and challenge the threats of outsourcing and shared services. The full text of these motions can be found here: **http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2729**

Guest Speakers

Following on from the official business of the meeting, Ed Bailey and Martin Whelton from the UCU Campaigns team spoke on the theme of ***Recruiting Academic Related Staff***.

This session stressed the importance of recruiting AR staff: We are often on worse conditions and would most benefit from being in a union but less likely to join. AR staff have particular experience and skills that are useful to branches. We have industrial strength: we hold strategic positions in universities. Recruitment across all groups builds the capacity of our branches and increases our credibility with management. It improves our ability to identify issues at work, and what we need to

campaign on and negotiate with employers, and it should bring forward the next generation of activists.

We need to increase our density across the sector: a highly unionised sector is better placed to defend jobs and our terms and conditions. It is important that members play an active role in recruiting non-members, finding out who they are and where they are, and approaching staff directly. The Campaigns Team can assist in this, providing a range of recruitment resources, including posters, leaflets and on-line resources.

In the afternoon, our guest speaker, John Kelly, Professor of Industrial Relations at Birkbeck College (also a UCU activist), spoke on the theme **Collective Mobilisation – Strategies for UCU.** His talk addressed the questions of 'under what conditions will people join a union?' and 'under what conditions will people take action?'.

He referred to the 2001 British worker representation and participation survey which showed that among non-members in recognised workplaces , 56% say they were never asked to join, 20% said they were 'very likely' to join if asked and 75% gave a variety of reasons for not joining (e.g. they get benefits anyway, unions are not effective, cost too much, not for people like me etc). Recruiting and mobilising such staff requires direct contact not low level tactics.

He referred to a number of conditions for people to take action: There needs to be a sense of outrage and anger around a perceived injustice. Participation in collective action requires a target who is blamed for the problems: the government, the pension board, VCs etc. Identifying a target provides a focus for action and the prospect of a change in policy. The perceived costs and benefits of action need to be considered.

Mobilisation is facilitated where there is a view that many others will participate in the action (solidarity); that the action enjoys widespread support beyond the union; that the opponents are weak and/or divided; that the costs of the action will be small; and the action is likely to be effective. Local and national leaders are critical for mobilisation, in promoting a sense of injustice, encouraging group solidarity, promoting appropriate attributions of blame, encouraging collective action and building broader coalitions. These are all elements of a 'narrative' that links themes together.

Following on from this stimulating talk and wide-ranging and enthusiastic discussion it provoked, the meeting divided into two workshops, with subsequent report backs to the full plenary meeting.

Workshop 1*: Mobilising Academic Related Staff*

This workshop focused on the role of AR members in fighting cuts and defending terms and conditions, the role of AR members in Industrial Action, and how AR members can work to improve recruitment, campaigning and local activity.

In terms of the role of AR members in fighting cuts and defending terms and conditions, the discussion focused on the particular attributes that they could bring to Union activity: AR staff often have more transferable skills and broader employment experience; the ability to harness new technology and access to important information. They are often in a central position to collate and disseminate information. They are also often in a position to withdraw crucial services and have a major impact.

In terms of the role of AR members in Industrial Action, the discussion focused on the leading role they can play in organising strike action and ASOS, developing

communication, lobbying and campaign activities and using traditional and new media. In terms of improving recruitment/campaigning/local activity, the discussion focused on the importance of working with other organisations, and colleagues in FE, using particular events to communicate our message, the educational role of trade unions, and demonstrating the success of trade unions in resisting cuts and defending terms and conditions.

Workshop 2: *Outsourcing, Shared Services and Restructuring: Challenging the threats to Academic Related Staff*

Discussion in this workshop focused on the areas of work that are most vulnerable to the outsourcing and shared services agenda, the way in which the restructuring agenda is used as an opportunity by institutions to outsource, and strategies for fighting outsourcing. Among the areas which were viewed as particularly vulnerable to outsourcing were IT provision, including email outsourcing/cloud computing – for students and staff, foreign language provision, management consultancy, internal audit and estates/facilities. Other examples given were printing, catering, nursery provision for students and staff, and services for disabled students. Another related phenomenon which was noted was the tendency for universities to set up their own wholly owned subsidiaries and transfer services to them (with staff on inferior terms and conditions).

In relation to restructuring, it was noted this often involved institutions bringing in private consultants with little understanding of the public ethos of universities. Senior managers are also often brought in from the private sector with little understanding of the sector and how it works. Restructuring exercises are increasingly prevalent as a response to funding changes and the pressures of sector wide ranking exercises such as the Research Excellence Framework.

Restructuring often leads to deprofessionalisation of services. Services get reduced, or staffing gets reduced with the expectation that less staff do more work. Central services are often more vulnerable. Staff working in academic departments often have greater voice, but are vulnerable to being restructured into a centralised service. Restructuring often finds unions ignored and marginalised, although contempt for their views and the views of staff in general has often served to bring staff closer together and act as a mobilising tool for the unions. Staff are sometimes surveyed on their views on restructuring, but results are often manipulated to suit a particular response or action that was never requested.

In terms of strategies to fight these trends, discussion focussed on the need for campaign materials, sharing of information and campaign techniques, and mapping of the extent of outsourcing and shared services across HEIs. Where private companies are involved, it is worth highlighting always that a company's ultimate aim is to make a profit. Management proposals are often evidence free. Exposing this can prove a shock to management and academic colleagues.

Getting as much information on the companies involved is important in running campaigns, and Freedom of Information Requests should be utilised to get this information. Highlighting the potential damage to the University's reputation is important - conducting surveys and petitions can be useful here. Mobilising academic staff is important – they are not always directly affected but are indirectly. The impact on academic work if the services provided by AR staff are threatened thus needs to be highlighted. Nevertheless, it was noted that management will often ignore union campaigns unless there is a credible threat of industrial action.

Membership of Academic Related Committee 2012-2013

Elections are held each year at the annual meeting to 5 two-year positions on the Academic Related Committee, together with elections to any positions made vacant by a member leaving the Committee before the end of their two-year position. Where vacancies remain after the election, the Committee is entitled to co-opt members, taking into account gender balance, and balance between members in administrative, library and computing roles. A number of co-options were made to vacant positions following the elections at the 2012 annual meeting. At the meeting of the new Academic Related Committee on 9 May, Dan Arthur was elected as the new chair of the Committee. Patricia Hulme and Jo Taplin-Green were elected vice-chairs.

The full Committee membership for 2012-13 is listed at the end of this newsletter.

Academic Related Committee at UCU Congress and HE Sector Conference, Manchester, June 2012

Motions adopted at the Academic Related Staff annual meeting have been subsequently re-tabled in modified form as Academic Related Committee motions to Congress or HE Sector Conference.

These are as follows: i) Congress

- ED13 - Attacks on professional staff
- ROC10 - Opposition & strategy against outsourcing, shared services and restructuring

Amendments have also been tabled to motions OR4 (Managing Sickness and Leave) and EQ16 (Sustainable Working Lives)

ii) HE Sector Conference:

- HE32 - Academic-related terms and conditions

- HE33 - Academic-related representation

Amendments have also been tabled to motions HE10 (Grade Drift) and HE18 (Gendered impact on the HE workforce of cuts)

The numbering above is as per the first report of the Congress Business Committee. See UCU420:
http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu420.rtf

Red-circles at Leeds University… here we go again

Background. Back in 2006, Leeds University red-circled (downgraded) about 100 academic-related staff when it undertook role analysis and implemented the new national pay scale. This blow to their esteem caused great anguish for the staff involved, many of whom had devoted decades to a role they thought was valued.

Disruption. UCU organised a campaign led by the newly designated and degraded 'professional managerial' staff. Academic colleagues showed fantastic support and solidarity, aware that, if management got away with this attack on a small vulnerable group, they too may face the same threat in the future. The media took a keen interest in the Leeds shenanigans.

Success. UCU's campaigning was successful with most staff regaining their grades after some development work on their JDs and roles.   We organised rallies, public burning of the downgrade letters, and staff wrote petitions and letters of protest. However, many staff became ill through the process and others left Leeds for posts at other Universities where staff were valued.

Learning the lessons. We learned a lot throughout the disturbing episode; surely management reflected on their actions too?

In line with its apparent desire for permanent organisational change, management has initiated a review of Student Services. The first outcome was the creation of a new layer of faculty managers (FESMs). We were consulted on the review proposals; staff and the unions fed back concerns about red-circling for School Student Service Managers/Administrators as the new faculty role job description subsumed some of their responsibilities.

Initially, it appeared that management had learnt some lessons and was adopting a prudent approach. They assured us: "It is not expected that any existing staff grades will be affected, although when posts fall vacant it is possible that the roles and grades will be reviewed." (University of Leeds Student Services Review Website, June, 2011)

Some staff face downgrading for the second time. Those were their words; these are their actions: Management has graded the new School roles at 7/6 when the current equivalent roles are grades 8/7. Some staff could face downgrading for a second time and will have to apply and compete for these lower grade posts. UCU asked management to commit to no red-circling but they initially refused.

Caught in a vicious circle?

Double speak. Many members were encouraged by the review project aims, for example: providing consistent, high quality support for all students – who could disagree

with that? The aims included providing clearer pathways to career development for student services staff – ironically now translated as downgraded roles.

A worrying aspect of both episodes of downgrading of roles is that central University managers have initiated the process with little or no reference to the Schools.

Dark cloud over the student experience. UCU wants students to have the best possible experience at Leeds. The affected members feel particularly aggrieved as they dedicate their working lives to improving services for students.

We fought a successful campaign over the summer of 2006 but this left a dark cloud over management/staff relations. We will fight to win again but we challenge our management to explain how undermining the morale of staff at the heart of our student work furthers the University aim of delivering the best possible experience for students.

Action. Our UCU branch is in dispute over these latest proposals to downgrade AR roles and has initiated a campaign. As we go to press a large general meeting has just voted overwhelmingly to ballot for industrial action over several issues, including red-circling, if sufficient progress is not made. Whilst the meeting was taking place, management emailed Heads of Department to inform them that they had never planned to red-circle staff and that they intend to work on individual solutions for staff in the downgraded roles. Staff are sensing the power of the union - but they also realise that we must remain vigilant.

What you can do. Write to the VC, Professor Michael Arthur,

m.j.p.arthur@leeds.ac.uk, and the PVC for Student Education, Professor Vivien Jones **v.m.jones@adm.leeds.ac.uk**, to tell them what you think of downgrading academic related student services roles.

The last word. "We trained hard, but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganised. Presumably the plans for our employment were being changed. I was to learn later in life that, perhaps because we are so good at organising, we tend as a nation to meet any new situation by reorganising; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization." (Charlton Ogburn, Harper's Magazine, 1957)

Lesley McGorrigan, National Academic Related Committee & Convenor, Leeds AR Group

The UCU Occupational Stress Survey, 2012: Why Workplace Stress among H/FE Librarians and Information Staff is often neglected?

You will probably be aware that UCU are now collating their 2012 survey, *"How stressful is your workplace?"* In putting together this potentially significant research UCU has been seeking data to pinpoint the "most and least" stressful colleges and universities to work at in the UK and to campaign for improvement. The UCU Survey draws on the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards Indicator Tool plus questions specifically developed by UCU. The survey also seeks to map instances of "harassment and bullying".

This research utilises ACAS definitions, under which specifically: "Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour. Harassment is legally defined as violating a person's

dignity or creating a hostile working environment. It is illegal when on grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion/belief or age." Librarians and Information Staff are often perceived as being immune from these potential violations, unwanted organisational pressures and inter-personal disputes. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Indeed a series of workplace surveys in the last decade have shown that librarians and information workers are particularly "stress prone". Librarians are often vocally unhappy with their workplace, finding their job repetitive and unchallenging, according to psychologist Saqib Saddiq.

In an influential report to the British Psychological Society (that, not incidentally, demonstrated a startling one in three UK workers suffer from poor psychological health) Dr Saddiq surveyed nearly 300 people drawn from five occupations. They were fire-fighters, police officers, train operators, teachers and librarians and were intended to cover the working spectrum, with librarians thought to be the least stressful occupation. What a fallacy that turned out to be!

The research looked at nine recognized psychological "stressors", such as how much control workers had over their working day, their workload and how much they earned. It also looked at absenteeism, job satisfaction and whether work stress spilled over into their private life. Librarians and Information Staff widely complained about their physical environment, as well as claiming their skills were rarely fully recognized and about how little control they felt they had over their career.

So while fire-fighters and police are trained to deal with the unique stresses that their jobs undoubtedly entail; Dr Saddiq emphasized that, "because librarians are less

likely to have these support systems in place, they are frequently more vulnerable".

Consequently, responsible managers in the library and information services area must develop an awareness of the specific medical and legal consequences of a rapidly changing working environment, including manifestations of stress. A growing body of quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that automation and rapid organizational change in libraries and information services pose particular problems for staff- and that these are physical, psychological and organizational.

Physical symptoms stem from use of computer technology, eyestrain, headaches and backaches; poor ergonomics at computer workstations, Repetitive Strain Injuries, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, and overexposure to Visual Display Units.

Psychological maladies include the struggle to cope with the increasing skills demanded by new technology and the pace of inter-departmental change. Primary organizational stressors include coping with "Information Overload", back-stopping due to increasing budget cuts, and increasing uncertainty about job roles in the library and information services sectors. In addition, these sectors are just as badly affected by issues of bullying and harassment at work, and therefore face their own inter-personal and management challenges. This is borne out not only by anecdotal narratives but also by the statistical information compiled by UCU.

So what can we expect from the latest UCU Stress Survey? Reporting on past UCU data UCU's Stephen Court told the NIACE/UCU conference in November 2011 that workplace stress, bullying and harassment were serious threats to university and college environments. There was significant reportage of all three phenomena across the H/FE sectors, as had also been demonstrated by the *UCU Negative Behavior*

at Work Survey of 2008. It seems that stress at work, and bullying/harassment are actually on the increase and while it would be inappropriate to pre-judge the results that will come from the UCU 2012 survey it seems likely they will be depressing reading.

Far from being remote from negative experiences and stressors at work, H/FE library and information services staff are working just as much on a painful coal-face as other colleagues. And when it comes to redundancies and departmental cuts - like other academic-related professionals - they are taking a disproportionate brunt of the institutional misery which is rampant in the UK University and college sectors. So the next time someone tells you being a librarian or information worker is a "soft job" feel free to read them the riot act! Even better, tell them about UCU's Stress Survey.

Terry Duffy, Glyndwr University and Academic Related Committee

Where have all the librarians gone? – appeal to AR library members

Academic Related members in UCU (and previously AUT) have traditionally come from the 3 staff categories of Administration, Library and Computing. However, in recent years we have noticed a decline in the number of library members coming to our annual meetings and standing for the national AR Committee. We would be interested in hearing from library members out there, as to why this is happening. At present we have only one library member on the Committee, but would like to encourage more library members to come forward for possible co-option. If you are a library member and are interested in being co-opted onto the Committee, please contact the Chair, Dan Arthur (**dan.arthur@lshtm.ac.uk**) or Vice Chair (and library member) Jo Taplin-Green (**J.Taplin-Green@lse.ac.uk**).

Sick Policies - The Bradford Factor and its impact on Mental Health

In parliament Lord Stevenson of Coddenham has been taking the Mental Health Discrimination Bill through Parliament which calls for changes to the Mental Health Act, Juries Act, Companies regulations and School governance regulations. Currently under the Mental Health Act 1983 a Member of Parliament automatically loses their seat if they have been detained under the act for more than 6 months.

So you can commit perjury, pervert the course of justice, take bungs, and fiddle any amount of money from the taxpayer and retain your seat in Parliament even on the Privy Council, but heaven help you if you feel so bad about doing so that it causes or exacerbates your depression!

You cannot sit on a jury if you are a "mentally disordered person" not some Victorian law that hasn't been repealed but one from 1974, (an age where the police still regularly took bribes from journalists!) In 2007 you became prevented from becoming a school governor if you had been detained under the mental health act. In 2008 it became possible to remove you as a director of a public or private company "by reason of your mental health" (steal billions from the taxpayer and you get a bonus!).

Far from this new debunking of the mental health myth by a hopefully more informed and enlightened parliament, coupled with the new protections for all variants of the differently-abled offered and enforceable under Equality Act the trend in our workplaces appears to be regressing, with punitive sickness absence policies. Such policies whilst not explicitly named as such within institutions frequently come under the heading of Bradford Factor policies and they are not to be welcomed.

As explained in Occupational Health at Work (2006, 2(5) p.28-29), Bradford factor policies were "originally designed for use as part of the overall investigation and management of absenteeism" However, in contrast, "if used as part of a very limited approach to address absence or by setting unrealistically low trigger scores, it was considered short-sighted, unlikely to be successful and could lead to staff disaffection and grievances." The use of the Bradford Factor thus "often provokes heated debate."

A Bradford Factor policy works by laying down specific instruction for instances of sickness absence, where before this would usually have been subject to the line manager's discretion subject to caveats in extreme circumstances. If during any 6 month period you have a set number of instances of absence or above a certain number of days you trigger the staged process, which usually goes like this:

A stage 1 meeting where you, your line manager and a representative from HR meet to discuss what they can do to help. I know of members for whom this has been the first opportunity to speak about reasonable adjustments, and let us not forget that the Equality & Human Rights Commission guidance states that the onus is on the employer to be proactive in looking at reasonable adjustments and that they should consider any requests the employee may put forward.

The get out of jail free card of course is the term "reasonable" a convenient catch-all evidenced by the phrase "you shall undertake tasks your line manager deems reasonable" (If your line manager themselves is not reasonable you could always for now have them detained under the Mental Health Act!)

After your initial stage 1 meeting employees will usually be given a 'reasonable period of time in which to demonstrate an

improvement in their attendance.' Should they still have what is often referred to as "unacceptable absence" during this time (note a subjective definition again) you become eligible for progression to Stage 2 (the only progression many ALC2 Academic-Related staff will see during their time!)

Stage 2 of the process can, at the discretion of your line manager begin the issue of formal notification in a first written warning, progression to a stage 3 is a final written warning and a stage 4 is dismissal on the grounds of incapability due to ill health. Generally throughout this process line manager's discretion can be used, giving something of a postcode lottery as to how this policy will have been implemented from one department to another. As yet there is also no concession to time off due to disability within these sickness absence policies and it is therefore questionable as to whether this is in fact in direct contravention of the law. The nature of the policy itself is certainly likely to increase levels of stress which in almost all circumstances is shown to have an exacerbating effect on existing conditions as well as being completely detrimental to staff morale.

It is no understatement to assert that such policies will also disproportionately affect academic-related staff over academic colleagues. The nature of our work generally means time spent in specific offices, during specific hours doing a very specific job. We often have far less autonomy of presence or time than academics do. An academic department frequently has a different type of hierarchical structure with academic roles necessitating time spent on their own reconnaissance though there is evidence of this changing across the country as the culture of managerialism we have long been used to gets introduced into the realms of our academic counterparts.

Due to our circumstances periods of absence will be noticed far more often, and line

managers themselves are under more pressure to be seen to be doing something about it. In a sector where staff morale and faith in our employers has plummeted in recent years whilst stress and workload has increased this type of policy is just one more indicator of how employers are shifting from a default position of trust to one of guilty until you can prove yourself innocent. Academic-related and disabled staff alike have every reason to fear these moves. If the sickness absence policy has not been changed recently, then you can expect it to do so. If it already has, then read the small print!

Dom Kingsmill-Stocker, Loughborough University, Academic Related Committee

Profiling Academic Related Members

The Academic Related category covers a swathe of professional staff operating in a myriad of roles in Higher Education, many of which have become more prominent in recent years. Some of the people employed in these roles may not initially realise that UCU is the union that represents them. It is important that we spread the message to them that UCU represents them and that they can, and should, play an active part in the union. We are seeking to profile members employed in different academic related roles. In this issue we get a view from an active member employed as Head of an Alumni office. If you have any ideas for other roles that should be profiled and (more importantly) can provide us with such a profile, please get in touch (contact Stefano Fella, **sfella@ucu.org.uk**).

Why I joined UCU - *Alice Perry, Head of Alumni, LSHTM*

Alice Perry is Head of Alumni at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Alice is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Alumni Office, which includes responsibility for alumni events, communications, volunteering and annual giving.

Alice has over 9 years experience in Higher Education marketing, and before joining the School in 2008, was Deputy Head of Alumni and Development at University of London International Programmes. Alice is a Chartered Marketer, holds a BA from Durham and a Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

"When I first started working at LSHTM, colleagues recommended I join UCU. I have always supported trade unions and appreciate the positive impact they have on the workplace. I was also deeply concerned about unfair changes to public sector pensions. On the other hand, I wasn't sure if, as a non-academic, I would enjoy the same benefits as academic members of the UCU so was initially hesitant about whether to join.

I got talking to a friend at a different university. Her department was restructuring. She was a union member and spoke very highly of the advice and support she was offered during this difficult period. Her positive experience helped persuade me to join UCU.

Shortly after I followed her advice, I learned that my own department was to be restructured and a large number of posts were to be made redundant. It's a familiar story to many people working in higher education right now. I will always value the emotional support and excellent advice offered by my local rep. I was really glad I had listened to people's advice and joined when I did! If you wait until the worst happens, it's often too late. I now actively encourage all my colleagues in academic-related jobs to join UCU. It's great to see so many people at work following my advice.

From promoting equality and diversity in the workplace, to standing up for pensions and supporting staff in difficult times, the UCU membership is well worth the monthly subscription!"

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: **http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2283**

To be added to the Academic Related mailing list, for hard copies of this newsletter or the Academic Related manifesto, 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 the UCU webpages on academic related matters: **http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2097**

To contact the AR committee either to get more involved or to talk about recruiting AR staff see the Committee list below.

ACADEMIC RELATED COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2012-2013		
Dan Arthur, Chair **dan.arthur@lshtm.ac.uk**	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Computing Category
Patricia Hulme, Vice Chair **patricia.hulme@nottingham.ac.uk**	Nottingham University	Administrator Category
Jo Taplin-Green, Vice Chair **J.Taplin-Green@lse.ac.uk**	London School of Economics	Library Category
Terry Duffy **terenceduffy@hotmail.com**	Glyndwr University	Administrator Category
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