

## **Honorary Secretary's Report 2012/13**

This has been a busy year for UCU Scotland, where the union has progressed industrial, political and organising activity. The union has particularly focussed on taking forward the good recommendations from the Von Prondzynski Review of Higher Education Governance, and in working on the Post-16 Education legislation. On the industrial front, reps and officials have been involved in difficult negotiations on redundancies, redeployment and equality issues. UCU Scotland is actively participating in the Build the Union initiative.

### **Organising and industrial issues**

Heriot-Watt branch was involved in very challenging redundancy consultations in late spring – summer 2012, when management decided to cut the workforce at the Galashiels School of Textiles and Design by 10 per cent. Even with the backing of local MSPs, very difficult negotiations ensued, and whilst compulsory redundancies were avoided, staff and unions were deeply unhappy with the whole process and the actions of management. A review of this situation in November 2012 is resulting in revisions to Heriot-Watt's Avoidance of Redundancy procedures.

Following the resolution of a S188 claim at the University of Strathclyde in 2011, new Avoidance of Redundancy and Redeployment policies were agreed at the end of 2012 in line with UCU's model procedures. However, there continue to be difficult negotiations at Strathclyde as courses in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences run down, and many staff remain at risk of redundancy.

In line with UCU's Higher Education Committee priorities, negotiations are well underway at Heriot-Watt and Strathclyde on new Fixed Term Contracts policies. After discussions with management, the University of Glasgow has agreed to review its Atypical Workers Policy, giving UCU an opportunity to limit the use of casual contracts. UCU Edinburgh branch has been particularly active in addressing the plethora of zero hours (known as hours to be notified) contracts at the University of Edinburgh.

UCU Scotland wrote to Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews Universities seeking data on equal pay audits in Summer 2012. Little response has been

received from the HEIs, with St Andrews branch pursuing this with HR, and Glasgow providing information on an Athena Swan initiative. An equal pay audit training event was held for UCU reps in conjunction with the Close the Gap Project in August 2012.

Successful discussions at Glasgow School of Art over the past year have resulted in the institution agreeing to recognise UCU for the very first time. Management had acknowledged that UCU is the largest union at the School, and so formal recognition will provide a step change in how our union can operate at the institution. Negotiations are now beginning on the drafting of formal recognition agreements, as it appears that other campus unions do not have formal written agreements.

Negotiations on contracts at Abertay saw all remaining members on FE64 contracts moved onto the Framework. The University of the Highlands and Islands branch has been participating in a trade union forum which was established in summer 2012. However, the restructuring that is taking place in further education is having an impact on UHI, with staff in IT facing a move to a shared services IT provision. The branch is being supported to deal with this TUPE situation.

St Andrews UCU branch is taking the lead on workloads, as part of UCU's national workload campaign. The branch plans to survey members on hours worked and leave taken, is evaluating current workload policies with the UCU model and is raising the issue at its JNC. A number of branches have been supported to challenge "grade drift" issues, where job descriptions are not adhering to the role profiles agreed at the Framework.

All branches continue to provide significant levels of casework support to members, with fixed term redundancies of members, and redeployment issues remaining particularly challenging. Aberdeen and Edinburgh branches raised specific issues with their own managements when a raft of new vacancies seeking "world leading" candidates were advertised without first being offered to those at risk of redundancy. Redeployment remains a key issue for all branches.

The union has been represented at Scottish Government convened negotiations on the Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme since April 2012. Negotiations have been protracted, due to the interaction with the UK Treasury

and the UK's Pensions Bill. Post-92 branches have been fully updated on latest developments in terms of member contribution increases for April 2013, and new pension scheme design post April 2015. UCU responded to the Scottish Government's consultation on pension contribution increases in February 2013.

For members in Pre-92s, briefings were held in Edinburgh at the end of 2012, to update branches on developments with the ongoing discussion on the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

## **UCU National Recruitment Campaign**

UCU Scotland is participating fully in UCU's UK wide national recruitment campaign. For our union to be effective in individual workplaces, and on a national stage, it is vital that we grow the membership, and stem the recent dip in numbers. Regular updates are provided to the Executive Committee and Officers' meetings, and branches are being supported by staff from the Scotland office. All staff recruitment emails/letters from UCU have been coordinated at Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Strathclyde, Stirling and St Andrews, with many of these lists compiled by branches and UCU staff. Negotiations are ongoing at Glasgow, with a view to management circulating UCU's recruitment email. UCU reps are participating in new staff induction days where they occur, with our reps speaking to new starts at Glasgow, Strathclyde, Heriot-Watt, Dundee, Aberdeen and Queen Margaret universities. Targeted recruitment activity is being supported at Strathclyde, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Stirling, with other branches leading their own initiatives, including Aberdeen, Glasgow Caledonian and St Andrews. Campaigning activities took place in many Scottish branches to mark UCU's "Anti-Casualisation Day" 6 March 2013.

UCU reps training has taken place in Edinburgh in early 2013, unfortunately a number of other courses, including health and safety and equality reps training have been cancelled due to lack of numbers. In December 2012, UCU wrote to all HR Directors, where we have recognition, to remind them of the need to support trade union training and provide facility time to enable our reps to be effective. Negotiating meaningful facility time agreements remains challenging for many branches, due to competing demands and intransigent management, but more positive arrangements have been negotiated by reps at Dundee.

## **Scottish Constitutional Discussions**

UCU Scotland is taking the ongoing Scottish constitutional debate seriously. Following on from the initial debate at Scottish Congress in 2012, a starter paper with a specific focus on higher education and the constitutional discussion, has been developed by the Education Committee, and disseminated for discussion in branches and further afield. A panel discussion at Congress 2013 will explore this further, and include input from the STUC, NUS, Universities Scotland, and an academic with research specialism on this matter.

UCU Scotland's motion to UK Congress 2012, on the changing political and policy context, was carried, and devolved policy contexts have been explored to a greater extent across the union, including Terry Brotherstone's presentation on the Scottish HE Governance Report at the National Higher Education Committee meeting in May 2012. UCU Scotland Officers, along with St Andrews Branch, has proposed that UK Congress 2013 convenes a fringe meeting to explore these matters further.

UCU Scotland has fully participated in the STUC's "A Just Scotland" initiative, with members and officers attending the consultation meetings which were held across Scotland in September 2012. The Executive Committee is then due to host specific discussion with Michael Russell MSP, and possibly a second discussion following a recent approach from the Better Together campaign.

## **Political Work**

As always we have been particularly active on the political front, meeting regularly with the Cabinet Secretary and appropriate MSPs.

## **Higher Education Governance**

Since the publication of the Governance Review prior to the last Congress, progress has been slow on governance changes but has been a major part of our work with a UCU fringe meeting at the STUC congress and a STUC seminar in October. In June 2012 the Minister announced two strands to the response to the Von Prondzynski Report with a Scottish Code of Governance in the short term and in the longer term a Universities Bill. He announced that the Chairs of Court would lead the Code development which would include the staff and student voice. However, the steering group decided to ignore the Parliament

and employed consultants to collect yet more evidence on governance for the Code. UCU has sought to influence the development of the Code in meetings, during Parliamentary evidence sessions, with MSPs, and through the media. This culminated in the recent evidence sessions to the Scottish Parliament Education Committee where UCU condemned the Code development process and the Chairs of Court were forced to defend the lack of meaningful consultation and the delay in the Code drafting. Even the Minister stated that he regretted the lack of staff and student involvement in the steering group in his evidence and that he expected the Code to implement the Governance Review recommendations.

### **Post-16 Education Bill**

Since the last Congress the Post-16 Bill has been introduced which includes a section on good governance and will reference the Code of Governance, as noted above. UCU has responded to the Bill consultation and gave oral evidence to the Education and Culture committee on 19 February 2013.

The widening access mechanisms within the Bill are to be included in the new outcome agreements between universities and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). In our evidence and in discussions with the SFC, UCU has stated that staff should be involved with employers in developing the outcome agreements. The Bill legislates to enable HEIs to charge Rest of UK students tuition fees, and UCU has very clearly opposed the introduction of RUK fees, and argued for a least worst option of a flat rate fee that is cost-neutral for institutions to avoid a market in students from elsewhere in the UK, and for legislation on bursaries. UCU has expressed concerns about the scope of powers to review course provision in the bill which was reported by the Scottish press and THE.

### **Funding Allocations**

UCU gave evidence on the Budget Bill for 2013/14, in autumn 2012, which increased the overall funding for universities from the Scottish Funding Council by 5%, but nearly all universities are seeing a real terms cut in their core grants due to top slicing. UCU has expressed concerns that the SFC is diverting funds from the core areas of teaching and research to fund projects which will increase the bureaucracy in obtaining grants although we welcomed the increased places in support of widening access and postgraduate students.

## **UCU Events**

The themes of good governance, funding and the Post-16 Bill have also been addressed in meetings with the STUC, the SFC and MSPs during the course of the year. In particular the move to outcome agreements has been discussed with higher education representatives. We held the UCU Scotland Presidential reception in the Scottish Parliament on 9 May 2012 and have participated in rallies against cuts in further education.

## **STUC**

With a complete delegation, UCU made a significant contribution to the STUC 2012 congress in Inverness. For the first time we also arranged a fringe meeting at the Congress on governance, at which Professor Von Prondzynski addressed delegates, along with Terry Brotherstone and NUS's Robin Parker. UCU submitted three motions on Post-16 education, health and safety issues in Universities and on overseas students and workers which were all passed as was an emergency motion on the Zimbabwean six. Our amendments to motions on Occupational Segregation, Education Cuts and pensions were accepted and passed.

One of the main debates at the congress was on constitutional change. The STUC stated it is involved in a broad civic based movement to challenge the traditional party lines and to move forward the debate. A composite motion to that effect was passed which meant the STUC did not directly support either side in the referendum debate. There was also a fringe on this topic which included speakers from other organisations and contributions from UCU delegates.

Mary Senior serves on the STUC General Council. UCU participates in the STUC's HE/FE Forum, along with twice yearly STUC meetings held with the Scottish Funding Council and Universities Scotland. UCU has wholeheartedly supported STUC events including the St Andrew's Day Anti Racism March and Rally, and the 20 October anti-austerity march and demonstration. Davidson Chademana serves on the STUC Black Workers' Committee, Sharon Sweeney serves on the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee, and Marion Hersh was elected in September to the first STUC LGBT Committee. UCU had a delegation at the STUC's inaugural LGBT Conference, as well as delegations at the STUC

Black Workers, Disabled Workers, and Women's Conferences in 2012. Full delegation reports were provided to the Executive.

## **Action on resolutions from Congress 2012**

### **1 Higher Education Governance in Scotland**

### **2 Scottish Governance Report**

### **3 Independent Review of HE Governance**

- Pursued the full implementation of the Scottish Governance Review recommendations, via political activity, campaigning and work with the NUS, STUC and other campus unions.
- Supported UCU briefing to rest of UK reps on Governance Review.
- Supported UCU Scotland branches to use the recommendations in their own HEIs.
- Freedom of information requests were sent to all Scottish HEIs to seek their response to the Review, but were met with a blank response.
- The governance code development has been criticised but we have engaged with the process and helped branches in their evidence sessions.

### **4 Glasgow Caledonian University Staff Survey**

### **11 INTO at Glasgow Caledonian University**

### **12 Glasgow Caledonian University London**

- Correspondence with the GCU Principal on the issues raised in the motion led to an initial meeting between the Scottish Official and the Principal, and a further meeting involving Branch Representatives the Scottish Official and the HR Director.
- Continued to oppose the operation of private providers in HE in Scotland, particularly in GCU and Strathclyde.
- Continued to question the use of HEI funds for projects such as GCU London.

## **5 Post-16 Education**

## **6 Institutional collaboration in delivering post-16 Education**

- Pursued the policy objectives outlined in the resolutions on funding, fees, structures, research, governance and access to learning, via our political and campaigning work particularly in evidence sessions on the Post-16 Bill.
- Pursued UCU Scotland policy on mergers, and the continuation of the Scottish four-year honours degree in political and campaigning activity.
- Regular meetings held with NUS, STUC and other campus unions.

## **7 Health and Safety issues in Universities**

- Raised issues within the resolution at the STUC Congress.
- Liaison with branches on TUC Education health and safety reps, however the training set for 2013 was cancelled. Ongoing discussions with a view to hosting the Health and Safety training at Heriot-Watt.
- Provided support to branches on health and safety matters.
- Provided support to branches on pursuing management on conducting equality impact assessments, via Close the Gap training August 2012.

## **8 Performance Management and Development**

- Continued to provide support to branches on performance management issues.
- Noted and supported the HQ work and branch survey on Performance Management (surveys sent to Abertay and Strathclyde branches).
- Collated information on the performance management schemes in Scottish HEIs, linking with the UCU HQ activity to help develop best practice.
- Continued to pursue issues of arbitrary performance management in the work on governance.

## **9 Workloads**

- Supported branches to negotiate on workload models, to promote work-life balance, with focus on St Andrews branch.



### **13 Overseas Students and Workers**

- Liaised on this matter with Universities Scotland, NUS and Scottish Government.
- Raised at the STUC Congress, and at STUC LGBT Congress.
- Pursued in representations to the UK Government.
- Raised with the Cabinet Secretary for Education.

### **14 UCU and Constitutional Change**

- Motion forwarded to UCU UK Congress.
- Continued the discussion on constitutional change within UCU Scotland by developing a discussion paper for branches, organising the debate for congress, participating in the STUC debate, and at UCU UK level.

### ***Delegations 2012***

*STUC Congress: Tony Axon, Dave Anderson, John Biggam, Marion Hersh, Michael MacNeil, Lesley McIntosh, Vince Mills, Carlo Morelli, Angela Roger, Mary Senior, Kathy Taylor and Gordon Watson*

*STUC Equality Conferences:*

*Black Workers' Davidson Chademana and Abdul Majothi*

*Disabled Workers' Sharon Sweeney*

*LGBT Workers' Anja Finger, Marion Hersh and Lena Wånggren*

*Women's Lesley McIntosh, Irene Reid and Mary Senior*

*UCU Congress Gordon Watson*

***Angela Roger***

***Honorary Secretary, UCU Scotland***